

**LORANNE AUSLEY**  
STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 3

**THE AUSLEY UPDATE**



As we enjoy the holidays, I hope you are finding peace and joy. I love this time of year and cherish the opportunity to spend quality time with friends and family.

## PREPARING FOR SESSION 2022

My office has been busy gearing up for the 2022 Legislative Session. It's an even-numbered year, so Opening Day is just around the corner - on January 11 which will be here before we know it. I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet with constituents and public officials in each of our eleven counties, and appreciate everyone who has shared an idea, a funding request or suggestions to improve the quality of life in District 3.

We completed our sixth and final pre-Session committee week this month and two of our bills are already moving through the committee process. SB 792 creates a bill of rights for kids in out-of-home care, and is an idea brought to me by an impressive group of young adults who have firsthand experience with the foster care system. SB 864 sets up a cost-share program for agricultural producers who have a positive impact on conservation efforts in an effort to incentivize practices such as timber farming and aquaculture that have a measurable impact on water quality and quantity. It is encouraging to see folks from the agricultural and environmental communities coming together to find ways to work together to protect our precious natural resources. I am happy to report that both bills passed their committees unanimously, and look forward to continued dialogue on these important issues.

## FOOD INSECURITY

Food issues have been on my mind again this month. Some of us may be worrying about expanding waistlines at this time of year – yet far too many District 3 families don't have enough to eat. I joined my South Florida colleague, Sen. Shevrin Jones (District 35),

and a panel of experts for a Facebook Live event discussing the issues surrounding Food Insecurity in Florida. Sen. Jones and I had a frank conversation with Robin Safley (Feeding Florida), and Paco Velez (Feeding South Florida) about the harsh realities of food insecurity. We also explored and shared innovative programs from across the state that are working hard to help Florida families find “food for today, food for tomorrow, and food for forever.” If you weren’t able to join us, you can [watch it here](#).



Our local Second Harvest of the Big Bend continues to do great work, and I always enjoy seeing firsthand how the food distribution process works. From packing and sorting in the Tallahassee warehouse to the delivery at each distribution site, it takes a lot of resources and a lot of dedicated volunteers. Second Harvest relies on community partner organizations, each with their time-honored and tested methods of unpacking, sorting, and distributing in a way that best meets the needs of their own community. This month we bagged Florida sweet potatoes in the warehouse (thanks to Rep. Tant for organizing), and helped on the ground with distributions in Jefferson and Madison Counties. Thanks to all who support these really important efforts to help our neighbors, especially at this time of year.



**BROADBAND**

The Florida Rural Economic Development Summit took place in St. Augustine where I joined DEO officials, county commissioners and industry experts for a panel on Rural Broadband. We had a great conversation about the status of the statewide mapping efforts, workforce shortages, and how to ensure that Florida's smallest counties get our fair share of federal broadband dollars. It was great to connect with so many folks from across Senate District 3, and to be there in person to accept FREDA's Legislative Champion award.



## NATIONAL PRECISION AG CONNECTIVITY TASK FORCE

On the national level, it is a great honor to have been appointed by the Federal Communications Commission to serve as a member of the Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States (Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force). As I learn more about the agricultural operations across SD3, I realize how important precision agriculture is to conservation efforts. Precision agricultural practices, such as fertilization and irrigation, are very effective ways to conserve water and limit the harmful effects of pesticides and fertilizers. However, the very real problem is that most agricultural operations are in rural parts of our country and therefore NOT served by high-speed internet. My experience representing a mostly rural district with a significant lack of broadband gives me a unique perspective to contribute meaningfully to the Task Force—and I am looking forward to bringing innovations and good ideas home to help me to deliver even more for District 3.

# AUSLEY'S HIGHLIGHTS



Thanks so much to the dynamic duo of Commissioner Dianne Williams-Cox and Althamese Barnes for keeping the spotlight on social justice and the struggle for true equity through the *Journey to Emancipation Conference*. Sponsored by the John G. Riley Center/Museum and the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network, the Conference brought together a knowledgeable and diverse group of speakers that shared current Florida statewide initiatives that impact the preservation and conservation of African American history. It was an honor to be able to provide greetings to this distinguished group.



Enjoyed a visit with some great professionals at the Florida Electric Cooperatives Association – we talked about the importance of building relationships with local elected officials and grassroots advocacy, and of course, the conversation included one of my favorite subjects - rural broadband!

Got to spend some time with an incredible group of business and community leaders from around Florida participating in Florida TaxWatch's Citizenship Institute. I joined Former Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp, Office of Economic & Demographic Research Coordinator Amy Baker and Sarah Nortelus, Deputy Director of Administration Department of Legal Affairs, for an in-depth discussion about the State's budget development process. Might sound a little on the dry side, but not when every cent the state spends has to go through this process - and always has to balance!



It warms my heart to see so many local holiday events planned expressly for the benefit of others. I hope some of you were able to visit the charming Polar Bear Express in Bristol, which benefits the Veteran's Park and the Women's Recovery Center. The Polar Bear Express includes a real-life train ride around Veterans' Park through thousands of lights and life-size scenes, many created by SD3's very own Melissa

Durham. Hats off to Melissa and her team of selfless volunteers - this is truly a labor of love that offers a magical experience for so many.

## CONGRATULATIONS

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# CONGRATULATIONS

**FLORIDA STATE SEMINOLES WOMEN'S SOCCER  
2021 NATIONAL CHAMPIONS**

Huge congratulations to the Florida State Seminoles Women's Soccer team for bringing home their THIRD National Championship! FSU Women athletes continue to dominate and inspire. Thanks for showing little girls (and not-so-little girls) that anything is possible!

Senate District 3 has some amazing high school football! CONGRATULATIONS to the Madison County Cowboys - State Champions! In a different bracket, Florida High reached the semi-finals, and many other local teams made the playoffs. Way to go!

## LOOKING TOWARD 2022

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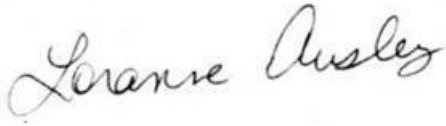
As 2021 comes to a close, I see plenty to celebrate. Number one is the vaccine and booster against Covid-19, which is allowing families and friends to gather safely once again. As we navigate the new Omicron variant, it is a reminder for all of us to do our part, get boosted, and follow CDC guidelines so we can see our local restaurants filled to capacity and tourists can enjoy our gorgeous and unique corner of America. To our front-line workers, who have borne the brunt of this long pandemic, I once again give my humblest gratitude. You have kept our communities running. While the pandemic certainly isn't over, I encourage everyone to continue to follow CDC guidelines and get vaccinated and boosted.

Second, we celebrate the passage of the Federal Infrastructure Bill. This Federal legislation earmarks close to \$25 billion for vital projects in Florida, including roads, water, electric vehicle charging stations, and, yes, broadband! I am committed to seeing that District 3 receives our share. These dollars will keep us competitive on a global scale, and can truly be transformational for rural Florida.

I wish everyone a safe and festive New Year! I am looking forward to a

productive 2022, where we mobilize our resources to lift everyone up by working together on shared goals. With your help, we will keep working together to improve the lives of every citizen in District 3.

Sincerely,



Lorraine Ausley  
Senator, District 3

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