



SENATOR AARON BEAN

PROUDLY SERVING DUVAL AND NASSAU COUNTIES
THE 4TH DISTRICT



Breaking News

Senator Aaron Bean to Serve as Senate President Pro Tempore



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - On November 17th, Senator Aaron Bean was unanimously elected by his fellow senators, and consequently sworn in, as Senate President Pro Tempore for the 2020-2022 term.

"As you know, Senator Aaron Bean has a contagious energy, boundless compassion for our state's most vulnerable, and an abiding respect for each person he meets," President Wilton Simpson remarked in a message to the senate. "First and foremost a

family man, devoted to his wife Abby and their boys Bradley, Gray and Walker, Senator Bean brings a diverse range of personal and professional experiences to the Senate that allow him to relate to people from all walks of life and to build consensus without compromising principle."

Normally a day of pomp and circumstance, the organizational session was smaller this year because of the COVID-19 virus. With heartfelt comments, Bean was nominated by Senator Jeff Brandes of St. Petersburg and Senator Kelli Stargel of Lakeland seconded the nomination. Although there were far fewer attendees than in a normal year, Senator Bean was able to be joined by his wife, Abby, for the ceremony. In accepting the nomination, Senator Bean addressed the senate from the dais, and spoke passionately about his parents and the lessons of growing up in a large family. The full content of his speech follows:

"Thank you President Simpson and Senators for this tremendous honor. To Senator Brandes and Senator Stargel, thank you both for your kind words. Fellow Senators, I stand before you today, humbled for the opportunity to serve you and the citizens of the great state of Florida. In running for and serving in public office, having support is a requirement. Like many of you, my family has allowed me to pursue public service. The reason I am standing here, is because of my wife Abby. She is my advisor, campaign manager, partner, confidant and best friend. Thank you Abby - I love you.



When we first ran for the Legislature in 1999, our three sons Bradley, Gray and Walker, were known as the "Bean sprouts," two were in diapers and our oldest, Bradley, was 5. I am grateful to each of them for their support. All of our sons are taller than I am now-and Bradley was just

elected to the City Commission of Fernandina Beach.

Just a moment ago, I talked about the importance of first times. (*Senator Bean also nominated President Wilton Simpson during the session, and this refers to that speech*) There are also last times. For the senate class of 2012, including President Simpson, Senators Gibson, Stargel and Brandes - this is our last two years in the Florida Senate. Senator Hukill was to be with us, but the Lord called her home earlier than expected. Sometimes, we never know when the last time will be.

My father was the son of a coal miner in Kentucky. He served his country - crossing the ocean to arrive on the beaches of Normandy on day 5 of the D-Day invasion and spent his 19th birthday carrying a machine gun across Europe. He was awarded a purple heart. My Mom had not traveled and had never even seen the ocean. So, when my Dad was offered the opportunity to teach at Fernandina Beach Junior High School, they jumped at the chance to follow the American Dream and raise their family in the Sunshine State.

When my father arrived at his shop class, he was surprised to find that there were no classroom materials. Instead of thinking about what might have been, he decided - "Let's make the best with what we have." My Dad had his students bring in something broken from home- kitchen chairs, vacuum cleaners, even a grandfather clock-and together the class worked to fix each item. I believe the greatest lesson we can learn is making things work with what we have.

When I say that my parents raised a family, I mean they *really* raised a family. I am the last of nine children. Somehow they kept us all fed and clothed, on a teacher's salary. We lost my 94 year old mother in April of this year. At her service, I said one of the reasons she was amazing was because I never knew we were poor, until I was in college.

My parents were part of the Greatest Generation. The generation that saved the world from tyranny, came home to build families and businesses, and made our country the greatest in the world. In those times, instead of complaining, people just forged on- knowing that if they worked hard and made the best out of what they had- the American Dream would be a reality for them and for their families.

My fellow Senators, those days are here again. We are in the midst of a pandemic that has wrought pain and suffering on families, businesses, and our American way of life. We have literally walked through the "valley of the shadow of death." So, for me, during my last term in the Senate - my focus will be on making the best out of what we have.

- We have a college and university system ranked as the best in the nation.
- As my parents knew, we have some of the most beautiful beaches and parks in the world.
- We have a diverse economy other states dream about.

Just as it was for many of our parents and grandparents, Florida remains that beautiful dream for many across our country. Can you imagine how many people save all year long just to come and spend one week in Florida? And we... live here.

We have been through the valley, but together we will scale the mountain.

As we embark on what for some, is their first time, and for some, will be their last time, let's work together-with what we have. Let's keep Florida the symbol of the American Dream-the best place to enjoy our freedom as we live, work, raise a family, start a business, or retire.

I look forward to serving with each of you.

Senators- Florida is a resilient State, and the best is yet to come! "

[Watch the Organizational Session](#)

Governor Signs Specialty License Plate Bill (HB 1135/SB 412)

One of Senator Bean's bills was recently signed by Governor DeSantis adding 33 new specialty license plates to Florida's list. This legislation created such plates as America the Beautiful, Florida Stands with Israel, University of Georgia, Walt Disney World, Ducks Unlimited, Jacksonville

Jumbo Shrimp and others. It requires 90% of the proceeds go straight to charitable organizations, streamlines the fee process and insures that 90% or more of the money raised from specialty plates goes to the charity mission.

If you're in the market for a new license plate, go to the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' website or contact your local tax-collector's office. It takes 3,000 pre-sale vouchers to launch these new plates, so go ahead and sign up!

[Link to FLHSMV Website](#)



HB 61 (SB 136) Adoption Benefits

Another priority bill sponsored by Senator Bean allows certain military veterans and service members who adopt a child through the state's child welfare system to receive a monetary benefit of \$5,000 per child, or \$10,000 per child if the child has special needs, through the State Employee Adoption Benefit Program. *Not only does it save Florida money, it works to give every child a family.*

Currently, such monetary benefits are available to employees of agencies, public schools, charter state schools and the Florida Virtual School. The bill also clarifies, for purposes of qualifying for the benefit, that an employee of a state agency may include other-personal-services (OPS) employees who have been employed full-time or part-time by a state agency for at least one year.

[Florida Times-Union Opinion Column](#)

Senator Bean Recognized



Aaron Bean with **Dr. Frances Bartlett Kinne**, former President of Jacksonville University, and Chancellor Emeritus. *Picture from January, 1987.*

Jacksonville University Alumni of Excellence Award

Each year during Homecoming & Family Weekend, Jacksonville University announces a new class of Distinguished Alumni award recipients.

"We received a record number of nominations this year for our most prestigious alumni awards, and we are proud to announce this diverse group of outstanding alumni who will join their predecessors as Jacksonville University Alumni of Distinction," said Lauren Griffith, who heads the Office of Engagement.

Typically, each award winner gets the opportunity to stand in front of their peers on D.B. Milne field, shake hands with the president and pose for a photo. However, Homecoming & Family Week 2020 has been completely virtual in response to COVID-19 and current social distancing standards



on campus.

"We had to pivot to make this year's Homecoming & Family Week festivities come to fruition, but we are proud of the Dolphin spirit that our alumni, families and fans have shared so far this week," said Mary Anne Jolly, director of Alumni & Family Engagement. "The announcement of our annual Distinguished Alumni award winners doesn't look the way it normally does, but we are humbled to be able to continue this great tradition with our most robust class yet."

Award winners are nominated by their peers. They are Jacksonville University graduates demonstrating significant professional accomplishments, community and philanthropic engagement and continued support of their alma mater.

[Link to the article in the online Wave Magazine](#)

Florida Dental Association

Champion for Dentistry Award

Dr. Lewis Earle Legislative Service Award

[Link to FDA on Facebook](#)



ALS Association Florida Chapter Ambassador of Hope

[Link to ALS Association on Facebook](#)

Newsworthy

[Florida Politics:](#)
Aaron Bean named President Pro Tempore of Florida

[WUSF News:](#)
Facing Budget Shortfalls, New Senate Leadership

[Fernandina Beach News-Leader:](#) Bean Appointed to State

[Herald Tribune:](#)
Anglers can Support Fisheries with New Specialty

[WJCT:](#) Jumbo Shrimp License Plate would Fund St. Johns

Congratulations



Nassau County Council on Aging

[Fernandina Beach News-Leader](#): The Nassau County Council on Aging broke ground in preparation for improvements to its senior center in Hilliard Monday, Nov. 16. NCCOA Board Chairman Geoff Clear announced that \$600,000 in state funds were awarded with an additional \$69,000 raised in local donations.



Past Presidents Suzanne Steffen, Marilyn Showalter, Julie Robertson, Sue Dwyer, Mary Powell, Jeri Johns, Barbara Willard and Kay O'Rourke with Senator Bean.

Woman's Club of Fernandina Beach 100th Anniversary

Senator Bean joined several past presidents and visiting officers from around the state at a special tea at the clubhouse November 15th and recognized the club with a state proclamation.

The proclamation recognized the club's 100 year empowered commitment to Fernandina Beach and listed many of its accomplishments.

[See the full text here.](#)

"Find it in Florida!" this Upcoming Holiday Season



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Florida is a diverse state filled with beautiful landscapes and unique attractions. Many Florida businesses and retail stores have suffered severe losses this year due to COVID-19. This season we can do our part to help our communities and their economic prosperity. When you are checking off your Christmas list, remember to #FinditinFlorida and shop local.

