



## This Week in Session

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Week Six of the 2021 legislative session is now complete. Please see my update below. While vaccines are still being administered, I still encourage you to continue practicing social distancing. We are in this together!

### Legislative Update: Week 6

#### SB 84: Retirement

- This bill closes the state pension plan to new enrollees, except for specific members, and requires participation in a 401k investment plan.
- I voted **against** this bill because of concerns about forcing individuals to have a retirement plan reliant on investment instead of a traditional pension.

#### SB 86: Student Financial Aid

- The state university system's Board of Governors, the State Board of Education and Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida would create lists of undergraduate and graduate degree programs they deem not likely to lead to employment
- A previous amendment removed the provision that would tie Bright Futures funding to these lists
- I voted **against** this bill because the removal of the statutory requirement that we will pay out 100% and 75% of tuition and fees for students is the state of Florida defaulting on a promise we've made to our students

## Notable Moments



This week, the Lombardi Trophy came to visit! I'm so proud to see the Tampa Bay Buccaneers represented on the Senate Floor! This trophy represents all their hard work and dedication on the field. Here's to



I visited Piney Point Plant this week with Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried to examine the emergency, and discuss ways to hold this private corporation accountable. You can watch our press

# Piney Point

This week, we all watched with great concern as Manatee county residents were evacuated and millions of gallons of water were pumped into Port Manatee and Tampa Bay. Since 2003 local officials have expressed concern over these holding pools. No one paid attention for years and now, the company is bankrupt and taxpayers are footing the bill for the fix. Meanwhile our Tampa Bay, our manatees, our sea grass beds, and our waterways pay the price. As a state and a people we must do better to prioritize these issues before the situation becomes dire.

On Wednesday, the Senate passed an amendment which will provide \$3 million towards the \$200 million total required to clean up and restore Piney Point. The rest of that money will be distributed by the legislature from the American Rescue Plan. This is the start of a solution to protect the residents and our Bay.

## Here in Hillsborough

Hillsborough County

### COVID-19 Update

**68,225** TOTAL CASES

**992** TOTAL DEATHS

**9.47%** POSITIVITY RATE

**80.44%** HOSPITAL OCCUPANCY

**197,209** RESIDENTS VACCINATED 1ST DOSE

**202,347** RESIDENTS VACCINATED 2ND DOSE

If it's non-essential, we encourage everyone to:

**Stay home and #StopTheSpread.**

Data courtesy of Hillsborough County COVID-19 dashboard, as of 4/9/21

Case numbers in Hillsborough county remain high, so please continue to take precautions.

Wear a mask, maintain a distance of at least six feet around others, avoid large crowds, and wash your hands frequently.

County and city mask orders remain in effect.

More on Hillsborough County's mask order can be found [here](#).

More on The City of Tampa's mask order can be found [here](#).

You can stay up to date with case numbers in our county, [here](#).

## Vaccine Update

All Florida residents are now eligible to receive any COVID-19 vaccine as prescribed by the FDA. The Pfizer vaccine is authorized for persons 16 and up. The Moderna and Janssen (Johnson and Johnson) vaccines are authorized for persons age 18 and up. All individuals under the age of 18 receiving a vaccine must be accompanied by a guardian and complete the COVID-19 vaccine screening and consent form. To download a copy of the form, click [here](#).

### No appointments are necessary at the following sites :

- Raymond James Stadium (4201 N. Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa): **open daily from 8 am to 7pm.**
- The Tampa Greyhound Track (755 E. Waters Ave.): **open daily from 7 am to 7 pm.**
- The Children's Board (1002 E. Palm Ave., Tampa): **open Monday-Saturday (except for the fourth Thursday of each month, including April 16 and May 14) from 9 am to 5 pm.**

### Appointments required at the following sites:

- Ed Radice Sports Complex (14720 Ed Radice Drive, Tampa): **open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday**
- TPepin's Hospitality Centre (4121 N. 50th St., Tampa): **open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday**

- Vance Vogel Sports Complex (13012 Bullfrog Creek Road, Gibsonton): **open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday**

To make an appointment, create an account through [patientportalfl.com](http://patientportalfl.com).

**Additionally**, Tampa Family Health Centers have drive-thru pop-up vaccination sites at various locations depending on the day. No appointments are needed and information on when and where these sites are operating can be found daily on their website [tampafamilyhc.com/covid-19-updates2](http://tampafamilyhc.com/covid-19-updates2) and on their twitter @Tampafamhealth (<https://twitter.com/tampafamhealth>)

**Homebound residents** can contact the Florida Division of Emergency Management to get on a list for vaccination at home. Email [HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com](mailto:HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com) to receive a survey that will determine your eligibility.

**Homebound veterans** can fill out a form at [floridavets.org/homeboundveterans](http://floridavets.org/homeboundveterans) or call **850-487-1533**, extension **9**, to make an appointment for home vaccination.

**Veterans**, including those who aren't enrolled in VA medical care, as well as family members, can now get a vaccine at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital **as long as they meet Florida's vaccination eligibility guidelines**. The drive-through vaccination clinic is at the USF Yuengling Center Parking Lot, 12499 USF Bull Run Drive, Tampa, FL 33617. Those eligible can schedule their appointments at [tampava.eventbrite.com](http://tampava.eventbrite.com). For more information, click [here](#).

The Federal Retail Pharmacy Program has made COVID-19 vaccines available at the supermarkets listed below. Appointments are mandatory and can be made at the links provided.

- [CVS.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine](http://CVS.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine)
- [Walmart.com/COVIDvaccine](http://Walmart.com/COVIDvaccine)
- [Samsclub.com/covid](http://Samsclub.com/covid)
- [Publix.com/covidvaccine](http://Publix.com/covidvaccine)
- [Winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine](http://Winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine)
- [Frescoymas.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine](http://Frescoymas.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine)
- [Harveyssupermarkets.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine](http://Harveyssupermarkets.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine)

## In The News

- [\*\*Controversial Bright Futures bill clears Senate\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Florida Senate passes \\$95B budget proposal, changes to come\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Florida Senate approves \\$3 million for Piney Point cleanup\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Press conference: Florida Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried, Senator Janet Cruz address Piney Point leak\*\*](#)

## Stay Connected

Team Cruz is practicing social distancing, but you can still stay in touch with my office. In addition to email and social media links below, you can call **813-348-1017**.

Email

