



From the desk of Senator Barbara Sharief



A Senator on a Mission

2025 Legislative Update
April 7 - April 11

District 35

Cooper City Davie Hollywood Miramar Pembroke Pines Southwest Ranches Sunrise Weston

Dear Constituents,

This week marked a significant milestone in my legislative journey. I had the honor of presenting my very first bill on the Senate floor—***SB 304: Specific Medical Diagnoses in Child Protective Investigations***—which passed unanimously.



I'm proud to champion this legislation, which brings us one step closer to a more just and informed child welfare system.



“This legislation means ensuring that parents are not presumed guilty based on flawed medical opinions or unchecked biases, which has been an issue and uphill battle in our painful experience, causing continued litigation for my children to be returned” said one parent advocate, Tasha Patterson. “This law has the power to prevent devastating injustices and give families a real chance to be heard and protected.”

Valentina Villalobos Esq., Juvenile Dependency Attorney for Elite Child Advocacy stated, “As an attorney who represents both parents and children, I supported this bill because I have seen firsthand how devastating misdiagnoses of child abuse can be for the entire family, both the parents and the children who have to be wrongfully ripped away from each other. I testified in committee that the Child Protection Team doctor on the Patterson case answered “I don't know” 113 times in a deposition about other possible conditions that could have explained the injuries instead of abuse- I think this clearly demonstrates that there is a problem. Child Protection Team doctors cannot possibly be experts in all medical and genetic conditions that can otherwise present as possible abuse.”

Candice K. Brower, B.C.S. said, “As the first line of defense for parents in juvenile dependency cases, the Offices of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel have represented hundreds of parents around the State who have fallen victim to false accusations of abuse. As described in this good bill, the conditions that can mimic signs of abuse are far more rampant than child abuse itself. Further testing is paramount. Countless families have been torn apart throughout Florida because of a lack of time to obtain proper diagnosis and treatment. Patterson’s Law will help ensure that children are not wrongfully separated from their families while also protecting the health and safety of children with medical conditions that makes them vulnerable. Thank you for your sponsorship of this long-awaited law for the protection of Florida families.”



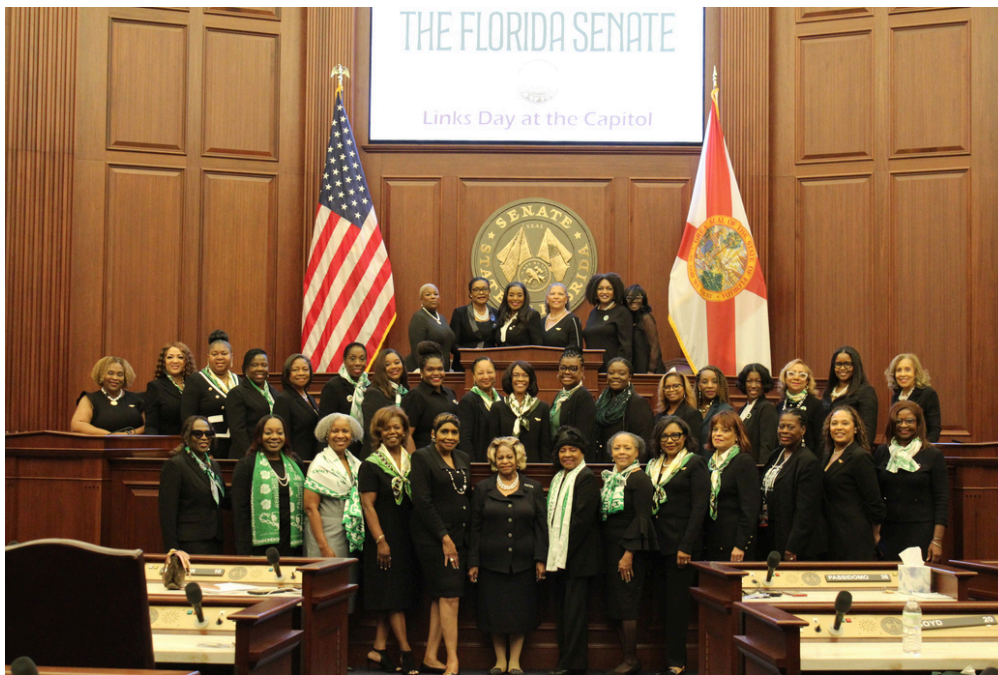
SB 306: Managed Care Plan Network Access passed unanimously in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services and is now advancing to its next committee stop in the Florida Senate. This legislation has received broad support from healthcare advocates, community leaders, and fellow lawmakers for its meaningful enhancements to healthcare access for Medicaid enrollees throughout the state.

UCF Day at the Capitol

I had the pleasure of welcoming some of the brightest students from the University of Central Florida to the Capitol for UCF Day. I enjoyed meeting students from a wide range of academic programs, including Engineering, Health Sciences, Political Science, and Nursing. Their enthusiasm, determination, and unmistakable Knight pride were truly inspiring.



As the proud parent of a UCF alumna, this university holds a special place in my heart. I was especially thrilled to take a photo with Knightro, UCF's beloved mascot. The energy, spirit, and sense of community these students brought to the Capitol embody the very best of what UCF represents: excellence, resilience, and a deep commitment to service. **Go Knights—Charge On!**



Links Day at the Capitol

The Links, Incorporated is an international, not-for-profit organization that stands as one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations. Standing among these trailblazers in our signature white and green reminds me how truly blessed and humbled I am to be linked in service, friendship, and purpose. Here's to continuing the work, making an impact, and uplifting our communities—together!



Behind the scenes with the Florida Channel!

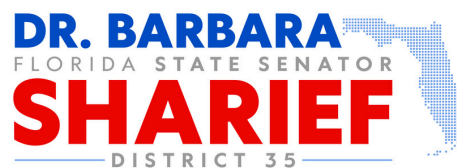
Grateful for the opportunity to share my story, my passion, and the work we're doing to serve the people of District 35 and the entire State of Florida. Stay tuned—this is just the beginning!



As your Senator, I'm dedicated to standing up for the people of District 35 and the State of Florida every step of the way this legislative session. My work is rooted in purpose and driven by the needs of our community. I'm honored to continue pushing forward, focused and unwavering - as a Senator on a Mission.

Dr. Barbara Sharief

Senator Dr. Barbara Sharief



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