



# STATE BUSINESS AGENDA

Building a Positive Business Environment  
While Enhancing Our Community's Quality of Life

## The Voice of Business:

-  Business & Community Resiliency
-  Economic Development
-  Education & Workforce Innovation
-  Health & Workforce Wellness
-  Natural Resources
-  Transportation & Infrastructure
-  Tax & Regulation



## WE SUPPORT

### Business & Community Resiliency

- Funding and incentives for local governments to harden and rapidly restore critical infrastructure by adding redundancy, capacity, cybersecurity, and inter-community connectivity to all major utilities.
- Investments to increase the capacity of roads, bridges, seaports, and airports while expanding the use of smart technologies to help facilitate a safe and efficient evacuation, the ability to return to work or home, and supply chain resilience enabling continuous distribution of critical food and medical supplies to local emergency centers during times of need.
- Uniform standards for emergency communications between businesses, utilities, local governments, and emergency teams to better identify, mobilize, and deploy personnel and resources essential for rapid disaster recovery.
- Continued and expanded financial support for barrier island beach renourishment projects and methods to improve the sustainability of future renourishment efforts.
- Policies that expedite permitting processes for disaster recovery, infrastructure hardening, and energy resiliency to ensure faster recovery from natural disasters and mitigate added costs based on delays.
- Grant programs and expansion of emergency bridge loan parameters to facilitate investment in preventative measures and business recovery.

### Economic Development

- Continued funding for the Jobs Growth Grant Fund as well as the development of future workforce training programs and community infrastructure.
- Funding for Visit Florida to ensure the state is a premier destination for visitors nationally and internationally.
- Modify population size requirement for designation of rural area of opportunity to support rural economic development.
- Continued expansion of workforce housing solutions, including fully funding Sadowski funds for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership program (SHIP) and the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program.
- Grant programs and expansion of emergency bridge loan parameters to facilitate.

## THE VOICE OF BUSINESS - ABOUT THE CHAMBER

Founded in 1889, the Manatee Chamber of Commerce has been the voice of businesses in the greater Manatee County region for more than 135 years. We support strengthening business development and expansion opportunities, enhancing workforce development resources, improving our natural environment, expanding access to quality early learning and post-secondary education, broadening access to health care, and investing in area transportation networks and key infrastructure.

With the support and investment of our 2,200 business members, employing a workforce of more than 75,000+, we work to grow our economy, support the business community, and enhance our region's quality of life.

## Education & Workforce Innovation

### Early Learning

- Policies and investment that expand access for working families to childcare programs that align with the needs of Florida's growing economy to ensure access to quality care.
- Funding for universal full-day Pre-K in public schools.
- A clear and consistent statewide funding formula for school readiness.

### K-12 and Higher Education

- Programmatic and fixed capital outlay funding for Manatee area K-12 and post-secondary schools to build and maintain a skilled workforce and talent pipeline.
- OPPAGA review of the impact of mandates, legislation, and regulations on school operations, finances, and school choice options.

### Workforce

- Measures that expand participation in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, investments in workforce education programs, and performance-based industry certifications in high demand fields including STEM-related careers.

## Health & Workforce Wellness

- Expanded access to and participation in education and training within the medical field, including the funding of additional medical residency slots to attract more physicians to Florida, create jobs, expand the pool of healthcare workers, slow our rate of exporting Florida-educated physicians to other states, and address employee shortages in the healthcare sector.
- Florida-based solutions, including capitalizing on federal dollars, to decrease insurance costs, increase coverage and improve access for Florida's uninsured and underinsured residents.
- Measures to expand access to behavioral health prevention and early intervention, treatment, and supportive services including funding to address the mental health crisis occurring at the VPK through high school levels.
- Measures that positively impact access to care and outcomes, including increased access to worksite wellness programs, telehealth, innovative programs, pilot projects, new technology, and Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs).

## Natural Resources

- Allocation of funding for water resource projects including water quality improvement with a focus on reducing harmful algae blooms and alternative water supply development.
- Funding of stormwater improvement projects to improve resiliency, capacity, and safety.
- Allocation of funding for Florida Forever for acquisition of conservation lands throughout the state.
- Nature-based shoreline protection, including living shorelines and other ecological stabilization methods.
- Legislation that creates a more transparent regulatory process with increased accountability as well as reduced costs, unnecessary duplication, and avoidable burdens on stakeholders, and measures to better facilitate urban redevelopment.



## WE SUPPORT

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Consideration of all alternatives and funding sources that will maximize east-west and north-south capacity throughout the County, including prioritization for additional capacity as part of the Bradenton-Palmetto Connector Study.
- Allocating all Transportation Trust Funds available to support transportation projects in the FDOT work program.
- Prioritize safety, including FDOT Target Zero initiative, to reduce transportation-related serious injuries and deaths across Florida.
- Regional solution-based transit projects, including integrated multi-modal options, acknowledging Manatee County growth towards Hillsborough County and addressing gaps.
- Legislation that authorizes a sustainable revenue stream, including capturing revenue lost from electric vehicles and other diverse modes of transportation, for local and state governments to improve aging transportation infrastructure.
- Funding and programs that increase broadband and cellular accessibility and resiliency including encouraging private investment in the deployment of infrastructure including rural and underserved areas.
- Funding for FDOT statewide priority projects through which SeaPort Manatee could leverage federal grants, private funding, and other sources for development of cargo capacity and laydown area.

### Tax and Regulation

- Preserve all trust fund dollars for their intended purposes.
- Legislation that provides additional stability, capacity, and affordability in the commercial and residential property insurance market.
- Modifications to social benefits systems that will allow for a gradual exit-path for working families, including enhanced access to childcare benefits, and eliminate the unintended consequences of the "benefits cliff" for our workforce.
- Continued efforts to reduce business-related taxes including the Communication Services Tax (CST) and Florida's corporate income tax.
- Revisions considered for the property tax system should not shift additional burden to businesses/commercial properties.



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