



# THE MAYFIELD MINUTE

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**Vero Beach Office:**

1053 20th Place  
Vero Beach, FL 32960  
(772) 778-5077

**Tallahassee Office:**

317 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
(850) 488-0952

**Toll Free Numbers:**

Phone – (866) 857-7289  
Fax – (888) 544-0393



Florida's Old and New Capitols

## EDUCATION REFORM



In spite of the difficult budget times facing Florida and the nation, the Florida House continues its commitment to creating an excellent educational environment in our state. In spite of facing a \$3 billion budget shortfall, I am pleased that we were able to actually increase per student funding in our children's classrooms by \$111 million over last year's funding levels.

Not only does the budget show our continued commitment to education, the Florida House passed numerous education reforms to help our students compete and excel in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. I was particularly pleased with the passage of HB 7053/SB 4, relating to Education Accountability. During the 2009 Session, I filed a bill to raise high school graduation standards in science and replace the high school FCAT Science with an end-of-course (EOC) assessment in Biology. Although this bill passed the House with bi-partisan support, it died in the Senate. However, our efforts in 2009 laid the groundwork for the passage of SB 4 during the 2010 Session.

In order to better prepare our students to enter an ever growing global economy, we created a more rigorous high school course schedule under SB 4. These standards will better prepare our students for success in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy that places a premium on knowledge. Data shows, that under the current system, too many of our students are not adequately prepared for college and their careers afterward. We must give Florida's students the necessary tools to compete and succeed, and these reforms help to do just that.

In addition, we kept Florida on the cutting edge of education accountability by replacing several high school FCAT exams with EOC assessments in Algebra I, Geometry, and Biology I. The new EOC assessments will ensure that students across our state are learning the skills necessary to compete in the global economy.

We know it is not only how much we spend on education that matters; how we spend it matters too. By raising standards and demanding accountability, student achievement results are improving significantly.

## FT. PIERCE MARINA



For those of us living in the Treasure Coast area, the destruction of the Fort Pierce City Marina during the 2004 hurricanes is one of those events that had a tremendous impact on the Treasure Coast. The wreckage strewn across the shoreline made national headlines, and the City's decades long effort to revitalize the downtown public waterfront area suffered an enormous set back.

The City of Ft. Pierce has been working for over 5 years to restore the marina. I am pleased to report that progress has been made in this effort and because of a collaborative effort between local, state and federal officials the City of Fort Pierce has received preliminary approval for the marina renovations. On September 3, 2010, I am happy to report that the City received confirmation from the Army Corp of Engineers that they were satisfied with all the conditions and plan to issue their permit.

Should you have any state constituent issues, please do not hesitate to contact Sandi Harpring in my Vero Beach office at (772) 778-5077.

CLICK LOGOS BELOW



**Technology Corner:**

**Twitter**

I will be posting updates on my Twitter account and you can stay up to date by clicking the following logo and following me on



**Session Live:**

You can follow daily events in the House of Representatives at [www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov).



**UNITED WAY AGENCY EXCELLENCE AWARD**

Congratulations to the Gifford Youth Activity Center for receiving the United Way of Indian River County’s Agency Excellence Award. This award is presented to an agency who demonstrates excellence in achieving measurable results and who has made an impact on the community in their reach and in their vision. This is a wonderful accomplishment for Executive Director, Angela Perry and the dedicated staff and volunteers at the center.

**CHINESE DRYWALL IN FLORIDA**

During the 2010 Legislative Session the House passed HB 965 which provides some tax relief for homeowners affected by Chinese drywall (CDW). The bill requires Property Appraisers to adjust the assessed value of affected single-family residential property by taking into consideration the presence of imported drywall and the impact it has on the assessed value. If the building cannot be used for its intended purpose without remediation or repair, the value of the building shall be \$0. If the affected property is homestead property, it will not be considered abandoned if the owner vacates the property during repairs and does not establish a new homestead.



In August my office was provided with a status update on the investigation of imported drywall. As of August 20, 2010, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission had received 3,526 incident reports related to drywall from 38 states. More than 90 percent of the reports are from five states—Florida (58%), Louisiana (19%), Mississippi (6%), Alabama (6%), and Virginia (4%). There are many homeowners right here in Indian River County, St. Lucie County and Brevard County who have homes with CDW.

The Florida Department of Health continues to identify and assess potential human health hazards related to the presence of CDW. Additionally, Sen. Bill Nelson provided information to the Florida Surgeon General which indicated that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are directing mortgage companies to provide forbearance of up to six months for homeowners affected by corrosive drywall. If you have a home with CDW please click the “imported drywall” logo above and you will be directed to the Florida Department of Health’s webpage where you can access the most up to date information.

- **US Consumer Product Safety Commission:** [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)  
Focus: Reporting unsafe consumer products  
Consumer Product Incident Report: <https://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/incident.aspx>
- **Office of the Attorney General of Florida:** <http://www.myfloridalegal.com/>  
Focus: Economic crimes against Florida consumers Drywall case# L093-3-1024  
Consumer Complaint Form:  
<http://myfloridalegal.com/pages.nsf/Main/60FD9BD8FA71A5B185256CD1005EE5C5>
- **Florida Department of Financial Services:** 1-877-693-5236  
Focus: Consumer complaints regarding insurance company actions and your policy.  
Contact Info: <http://www.myfloridacfo.com/Consumers/contactus.htm>