



# THE BERMAN BRIEFING

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SENATE DISTRICT 31

## 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION: WEEK THREE



STATE SENATOR  
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Senate Democratic  
Policy Chair

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### COMMITTEES

Appropriations  
Subcommittee on  
Agriculture,  
Environment, and  
General Government

Finance & Tax

Education

Transportation

Ethics & Elections

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Week Three of our 2021 legislative session is now complete. Please enjoy my update below and as always, know you may reach out to my office anytime.

While vaccines are continuing to be provided, I still encourage you to continue practicing social distancing and safety measures such as washing your hands often. Stay well and healthy.

Our Tallahassee line is 850.487.5031 and my email is [Berman.Lori.Web@flsenate.gov](mailto:Berman.Lori.Web@flsenate.gov).

Happy Spring!

Lori

## IMPORTANT VACCINE UPDATES

The age of eligibility for vaccines was officially lowered to 50+ this past Monday, 3/22. For those who are homebound and need a vaccine, email [HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com](mailto:HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com) with your name and phone number to put in your request. The Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) will contact you within 72 hours to collect more information & schedule your appointment.

**STRONGER TOGETHER ...**

**PALM BEACH COUNTY VACCINATION SITES**

**If you are:**

- Long-term care facility resident and staff
- Person 60 years of age and older
- Health care personnel with direct patient contact
- K-12 school employee 50 years of age and older
- Sworn law enforcement officer 50 years of age and older
- Firefighter 50 years of age and older

Person deemed to be extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 by hospital providers

**You can get vaccinated here:**

- Vaccines for Homebound Seniors E-mail [HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com](mailto:HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com)
- Health Care District of PBC <http://vaccine.hcdpbc.org/> [[vaccine.hcdpbc.org](http://vaccine.hcdpbc.org/)] (by appointment only)
- Florida Department of Health <https://myvaccine.fl.gov/en/site/Palm%20Beach> [[myvaccine.fl.gov](https://myvaccine.fl.gov)]
- Publix Pharmacies [www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/](http://www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/)
- CVS Pharmacies [www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine](http://www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine)
- Walmart/Sam's Club Pharmacies [www.walmart.com/cp/1228302](http://www.walmart.com/cp/1228302)
- Winn-Dixie Pharmacies [www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine](http://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine)
- Walgreens Pharmacies <https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp>
- Federally-Supported Vaccine Sites [www.floridadisaster.org/vaccine](http://www.floridadisaster.org/vaccine)

**If you are:**

- K-12 school employee, daycare and preschool worker or staff regardless of age

**You can get vaccinated here:**

- Publix Pharmacies [www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/](http://www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/)
- CVS Pharmacies [www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine](http://www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine)
- Walmart/Sam's Club Pharmacies [www.walmart.com/cp/1228302](http://www.walmart.com/cp/1228302)
- Winn-Dixie Pharmacies [www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine](http://www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine)
- Federally-Supported Vaccine Sites [www.floridadisaster.org/vaccine](http://www.floridadisaster.org/vaccine)

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\* subject to change

**#PBCStrong #TeamPBC #TeamPBCTogether**

## Bill Action Update

### **SB 224: Sales Tax Exemption**

Heard in the Senate Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee last week, SB 224 passed unanimously. Its next stop is the Finance and Tax Committee. This bill provides exemptions for seniors from sales tax on certain items that encourage independent living, including bed transfer handles, bed rails, grab bars, and shower seats, to improve quality of life and allow our seniors to "age in place".

### **SB 1070: Estates and Trusts**

This bill creates the "Florida Uniform Directed Trust Act" addressing trusts that grant a trust administration power to a person other than a trustee, and create the "Community Property Trust Act" that allows spouses to transfer property into a Florida Community Property Trust. The bill is on the agenda for the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) on Monday, 3/22.

### **SB 196: Lactation Spaces in Courthouses**

This bill requires county courthouses to have a designated space for women to breastfeed. It will be heard in the [Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee](#) on Wednesday, 3/24.

**SENATOR BERMAN'S  
2021 FILED BILLS**

**SB 180** **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
Creates the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to advise the Governor on racial and gender inequities, collaborate with state agencies and engage with stakeholders throughout Florida to develop inclusive practices, work with the Attorney General to identify racist and Jim Crow-era laws needing repeal, and conduct implicit bias trainings within Florida's agencies.

**SB 182** **Risk Protection Orders**  
Recognizes that the combination of mental illness and firearms can be lethal and expands the petitioner categories to enable a parent, legal guardian, sibling, or spouse of a troubled individual to petition courts for risk protection orders.

**SB 184** **Purple Alert**  
Creates the state's first-ever public advisory system for missing intellectually or developmentally disabled adults whose disappearance poses an imminent threat to their safety.

**SB 186** **Domestic Violence**  
Requires those who have committed misdemeanor offenses of domestic violence to surrender, upon conviction, all firearms and ammunition in their possession to law enforcement, so as not to be used to further their violence.

**SB 188** **Solar Energy Systems Located on the Property of Educational Facilities**  
This bill exempts solar energy systems from the Cost Per Student Station calculation placed on Florida's public schools, removing a significant barrier they face when trying to switch to cost-saving solar.

**SB 194** **Crimes Evidencing Prejudice**  
Brings Florida's statutory definition of a disability in line with the Americans with Disabilities Act and defines crimes committed on the basis of gender and gender identity as crimes evidencing prejudice.

**SB 196** **Lactation Spaces in Courthouses**  
Requires all courthouses to have a designated space for women to breastfeed.

**SB 200** **Student Retention**  
Allows parents of K-8 students to retain their children in their grade level if they feel their child has not academically progressed enough and gives parents the flexibility to make the decision in the best interest of their child and provide a statutory option.

**SB 224** **Sales Tax Exemption**  
Exempting seniors from the sales tax on certain items that encourage independent living, including bed transfer handles, bed rails, grab bars, and shower seats, to improve quality of life and allow our seniors to "age in place".

**SB 358** **Water Safety**  
Asks parents of children entering any public or private school system to confirm that their child has had swimming lessons when entering the school system, and allows school authorities to identify students who may not know how to swim and will help put these parents in touch with free or low-cost programs to ensure their child has an opportunity to learn, presuming there is a desire.



## SENATOR BERMAN'S 2021 FILED BILLS



### SB 688

#### Waivers of Exemptions of Applicable Assets

protects Florida residents from unintentionally assigning, pledging, or waiving their rights to assets (such as retirement accounts, annuities and other assets) that are protected under Florida law by requiring that any pledge agreement must specifically identify those types of protected assets in order to constitute an intentional assignment, pledge, or waiver.

### SB 720

#### State Renewable Energy Goals

This critical legislation will require that by the year 2040, 100% of Florida's electricity generation be sourced from renewable energy and that we be carbon neutral by 2050. It will create thousands of good-paying, clean energy jobs and position Florida as a nationwide leader in building a clean future.

### SB 832

#### Town of Lake Clarke Shores, Palm Beach County

Annexes a section of unincorporated Palm Beach County known as "Edgewater Park" into the Town of LCS, creating a seamless delivery of municipal services that are currently shared with PCB, including police, road maintenance, and soon, septic-to-sewer conversion.

### SB 940

#### Specialty License Plates/Disease Prevention & Early Detection

Creates a new specialty license plate for "Disease Prevention & Early Detection" with proceeds benefiting Miami-based Women's Breast & Heart Initiative.

### SB 1036

#### Florida Family Caregiver Task Force

Establishes the Florida Family Caregiver Task Force within the Department of Health to study and make findings regarding the necessary supports for family caregivers and youth caregivers who are assisting the aging or adults with disabilities.

### SB 1038

#### Insurance Coverage for Breast Cancer Tests and Procedures

As a five-year breast cancer survivor, I am keenly aware of how important it is to seek important diagnostic testing following a questionable mammogram. This bill will ensure insurance providers don't charge unlimited amounts for these associated tests in an effort for patients to receive early diagnoses and treatment, keys to saving lives.

### SB 1044

#### Victims of Crimes of Sexual Violence and Sexual Exploitation

Provides that a victim of any crime of sexual violence or sexual exploitation has the right to prevent the disclosure of identifying information or records and prohibits a person or entity in possession of such information from disclosing that information or records without obtaining express written consent.

### SB 1050

#### School Bus Safety

Authorizes school districts to install cameras on district school buses to ensure the safety of students

### SB 1070

#### Estates and Trusts

Creates the "Florida Uniform Directed Trust Act" addressing trusts that grant a trust administration power to a person other than a trustee, and creates the "Community Property Trust Act" that allows spouses to transfer property into a Florida Community Property Trust.

### SB 1252

#### Inland and Coastal Flood Control Funding Assessment

Requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to include an assessment and analysis of future expenditures by federal, state, regional, and local governments necessary to improve resilience to inland and coastal flooding associated with sea-level rise, high-tide events, storm surge, flash flood, stormwater runoff, and increased rainfall in its report.

### SB 1718

#### Renewable Energy Sources

Allows a public educational customer to enter into a contract with a third party to install, maintain, or operate a renewable energy source device. This bill facilitates the use of solar energy.

## LEGISLATION OF CONCERN

### SB 72: Civil Liability for Damages Relating to COVID-19

The bill provides for civil liability protections from COVID-19 related lawsuits to individuals, business, governmental entities, health care institutions and providers as well as other organizations that have "substantially" complied with public health guidelines. The proposal provides blanket immunity, without fully considering protections for employees. SB 72 cleared the Senate Floor on Thursday with an almost party-line vote. The bill was added to the House Floor Calendar for 3/25/2021. If signed into law, it would take effect immediately and apply retroactively.

I voted against this legislation as, among other reasons, I have concerns that plaintiffs who may have lost a loved one, particularly in a health care setting, have no recourse in settling their matter.

### SB 582: Parental Rights

The bill has shown up several times in many iterations over the past decade. SB 582 mandates parental consent for all medicines

administered to a child including birth control and hormones. The bill also provides that opt-in instead of opt-out policy for sexual education. This bill is on the committee agenda for its second committee of three, Education, and is scheduled to be heard 3/23. Its House companion bill is in its last committee but has not been put on the agenda yet.

As I have seen and heard this bill many times in my legislative career, I remain worried that legislation like SB 582 creates barriers, particularly to our youth, in seeking information and/or services, especially when it comes to reproductive and personal health. Studies have repeatedly shown young people are less likely to access much-needed services if their privacy is not protected. This legislation amplifies the wrong message that all children have supportive and open parents. We know that not all of our youth necessarily have this relationship with a parent, or even have a parent in their lives. These false notions should be rejected. I will be sure to vote no on the bill once again as I do not want to see young people bear the consequences or lack the services and help they may need for fear of a parent. Young people should be developing skills for adulthood, including being given the opportunity to make confidential, independent decisions affecting their health and well-being.

### **CARES Food Cards**

As a reminder, Palm Beach County residents who qualified for pre-paid debit cards through the CARES ACT funding for food purchases must activate their cards by March 31, 2021.

Cards not activated by March 31, 2021 will expire, and the funds will be swept and redirected to fund other identified needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Cardholders are encouraged to activate their pre-paid debit cards for food assistance prior to the expiration date.

For more information, call the CSD's Contact Center at (561) 355-4792.

All the best,



Lori Berman  
State Senator, District 31