The LaMarca Letter❗

2024 Legislative Session Update

The 2024 Legislative session has concluded, and I successfully secured many of my legislative priorities and helped pass legislation that will make Florida a more affordable and better place to live. This year's Legislative session was a very busy one for District 100. I filed and ran 7 bills and I was a prime co-sponsor on another bill, all of which passed and will be sent to the governor for signing.

We adjourned the 2024 Legislative Session for Sine Die, on Friday March 8th at 2:25 p.m. Sine Die is a ceremonial tradition that marks the official adjournment of the Legislative Session. In this ceremony, both House and Senate leaders, through Sergeants at Arms, drop a handkerchief to signify that Session has officially ended. The dropping of the handkerchief began in the 1920's in the Old Capitol, when the chambers were not in line of sight, so the House and Senate could be gaveled 'sine die' simultaneously.

A listing of our 2024 legislative achievements are below:

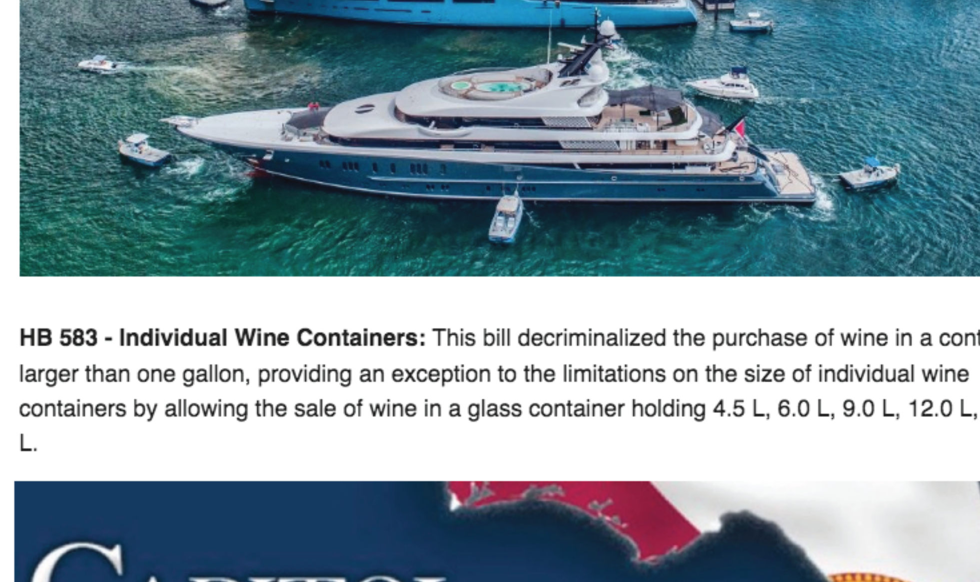
HB 989/991 - Chief Financial Officer/Public Records/Cellular Telephone Numbers Held by the Department of Financial Services (DFS): This bill is the DFS/CFO's Agency package that creates a Federal Tax Liaison position within DFS and also provides that, upon diagnosis of cancer, firefighters are entitled to certain benefits. The bill also provides for the following: additional grounds for qualified public depositories to be suspended and disqualified; reimbursement schedule requirements for emergency services and care under workers' compensation; qualification for all-lines adjuster licenses; authorizes OFR to receive complaints from customer or member who reasonably believes that financial institution has acted in bad faith in taking action restricting access to such customer's or member's account; provides circumstances under which property is presumed unclaimed; provides circumstances under which virtual currency held or owing by banking organizations are not presumed unclaimed. HB 991 was a bill that was linked to HB 989, and provides public records exemption for cellular telephone numbers obtained by DFS through certain insurance license applications. It also provides for future legislative review and repeal of exemption; provides statement of public necessity.

HB 1263/943 - My Safe Florida Home/Public Records for My Safe Florida Home
It was a privilege to carry the My Safe Florida Home program bill again, which appropriates $200 million dollars for grants and eliminates the requirement that DFS maintain a list of participating contractors for the grant portion of the program. Participants in the program may choose any properly licensed contractor to perform home improvements. HB 943 is the public records exemption that protects your data from bad actors after you have applied to use the program.

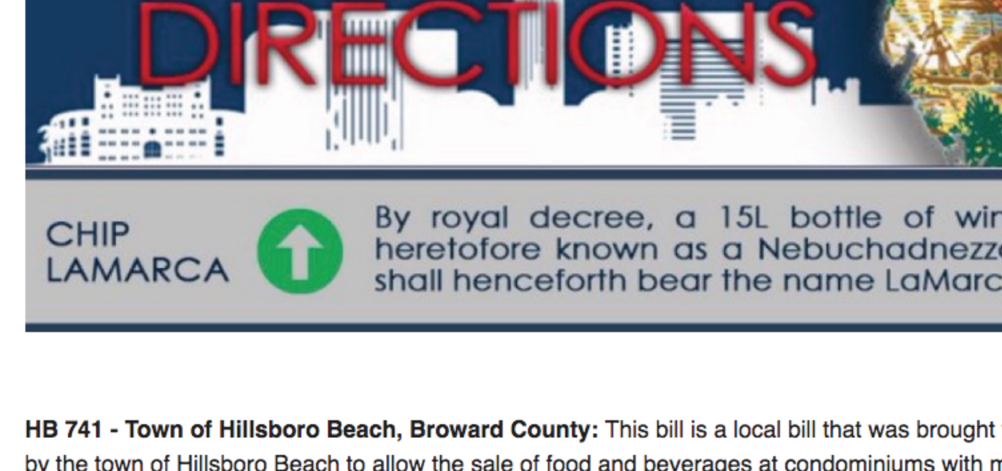
My Safe FL Home
Stronger Homes. Safer Florida.

HB 1311 - The Office of the Blue Economy: This is a bill that I was proud to file with Rep. Kelly Skidmore. The original bill would have created the Office of the Blue Economy in a State University. The focus of this would have been to facilitate research as well as have Florida be the home of innovation for the ocean economy. The good news is that although this bill did not go through the traditional process as an individual bill, we were able to have the bill language added to House Education bill HB 1285 with the name changed to the Office of the Ocean Economy, to be housed at Florida Atlantic University.

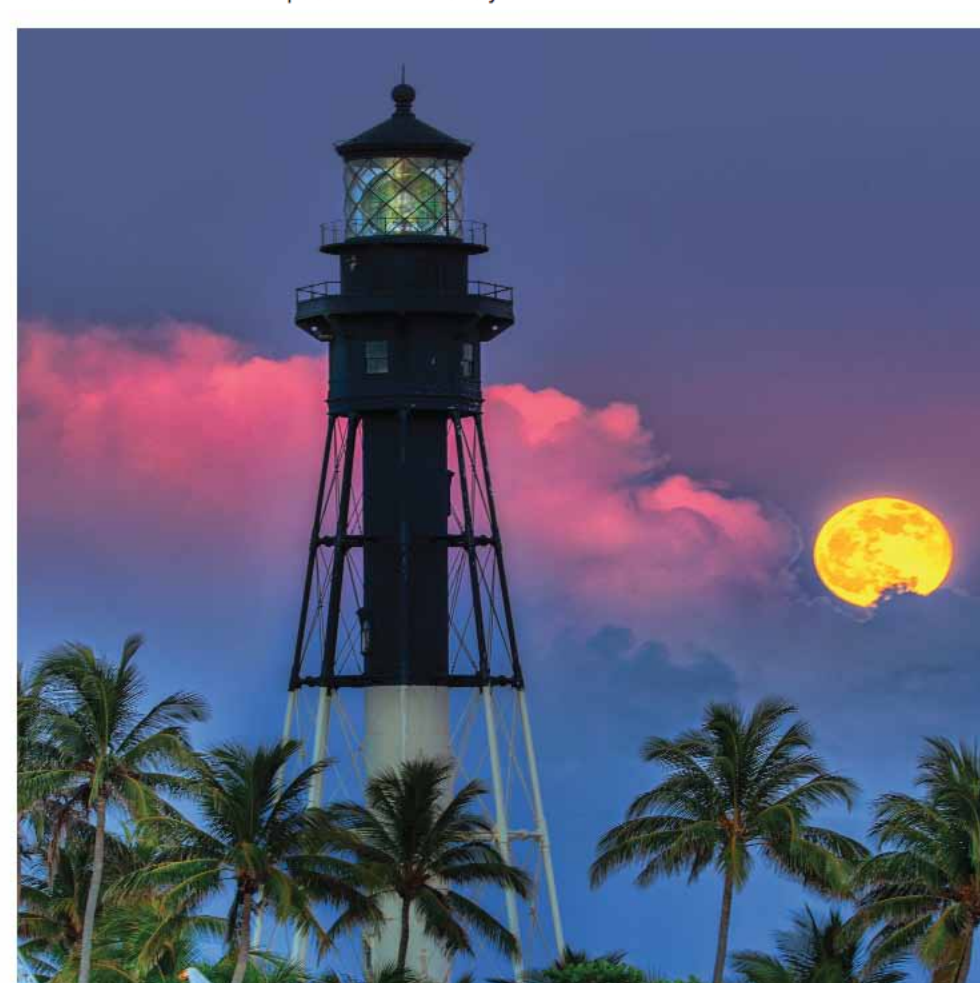
HB 95 - Yacht and Ship Brokers: This bill updates the definition of a yacht to the federal standard of 32 feet and over 300 tons. The bill ensures that a license is not required for a person who regularly conducts business as a yacht, ship broker, or salesperson in another state who engages in the purchase of a yacht in Florida, provided that the transaction is executed with a Florida broker or salesperson. The goal of this legislation is to update the licensing and provide consumer protection.



HB 583 - Individual Wine Containers: This bill decriminalized the purchase of wine in a container larger than one gallon, providing an exception to the limitations on the size of individual wine containers by allowing the sale of wine in a glass container holding 4.5 L, 6.0 L, 9.0 L, 12.0 L, or 15 L.



HB 741 - Town of Hillsboro Beach, Broward County: This bill is a local bill that was brought to me by the town of Hillsboro Beach to allow the sale of food and beverages at condominiums with more than 50 residents. The bill passed unanimously.



HB 161 - Payments for Health Care Providers and Surgical Procedures Under Workers' Compensation: I was a Co-Prime sponsor with fellow Broward member Representative Dan Daley. This bill allows for the increase to the reimbursement for physicians under Worker's Comp to 175 percent and surgeons to 210 percent. This legislation modernizes the program and will increase participation by both physicians and surgeons in Florida, which is important to patient access to care under this program.

Legislative Appropriation Highlights in District 100:
- City of Fort Lauderdale Breakers Ave. Mobility Traffic Improvement: $3,000,000
- City of Pompano Beach Dixie Highway Safety Resilience Project: $1,000,000
- Town of Lauderdale by the Sea Public Safety Facility: $1,000,000
- City of Lighthouse Point Bridge Replacement: $320,000
- Broward Sheriffs Office - Everglades Fire Station 106 Air Boat Storage: $580,000
- Broward Sheriffs Office - Fire turnout gear: $228,092
- Town of Hillsboro Beach Water Treatment Plant Improvement project: $375,000
- Museum of Discovery & Science- Advancing Wildlife Corridor/Education &Workforce: $250,000
- City of Lighthouse Point NE 21st Street Drainage Project: $300,000
- Broward County Schools- Student Athlete Mentoring Expansion Program: $250,000
- Las Olas Chabad Jewish Center- Friendship Circle Grill- Job Skill Training Program: $110,000

Other Broward County appropriations:
- Hillsboro-Deerfield Beach Nourishment Project Beach Project: $300,000
- ArtServe, Inc. Cultural & Museum Grants: $45,842
- Bonnet House, Inc. Cultural & Museum Grants: $72,666
- Broward County Cultural & Museum Grants: $76,221
- Broward Performing Arts Foundation, Inc. Cultural & Museum Grants: $74,666
- City of Pompano Beach Cultural & Museum Grants: $70,777
- Deerfield Beach Historical Society Inc: $18,366
- Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Inc: $44,106
- Museum of Discovery and Science, Inc: $74,221
- The Fort Lauderdale Children's Theatre, Inc: $44,488
- Museum of Discovery and Science, Inc. Capital Renovation: $500,000
- Deerfield Beach Historic Butler House Phase 2 Rehabilitation: $99,487
- Hillsboro IMP Implementation: $1,710,000
- Deerfield Beach International Fishing Pier Repairs: $550,000

You can read the full budget by using the link provided, but have included some important highlights below. 5001The House and Senate agreed to a $117.46 billion budget, which includes record funding for education, public safety, healthcare, transportation, tourism, environment, general government, and economic development. After more than a week of budget negotiations, the Legislature passed the state's Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget.
To Read the full HB-5001

Education:
- $27.8 billion in total funding for the K-12 financing program that includes increases for the Base Student Allocation ($107), mental health allocation ($20.0 million), student transportation ($20.0 million), and safe schools component ($40.0 million).
- Increase of $200.0 million for $1.3 billion total funding to provide salary increases for teachers and other instructional personnel.
- Fully funds the projected student enrollment for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program at $603 million.
- $853 million to support workforce education programs, including an increase of $100.0 million for the Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program ($200.0 million).

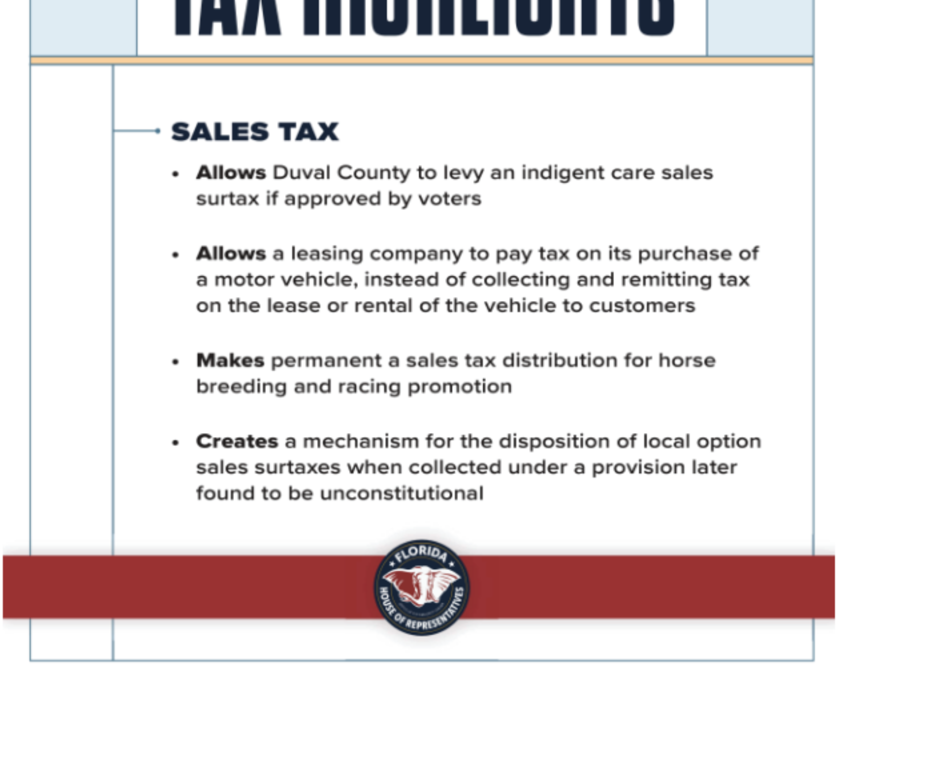
Environment:
- More than $1.1 billion for the protection of water resources, including $745 million for Everglades restoration projects and $330 million for targeted water quality improvements to achieve meaningful nutrient reductions.
- More than $157 million for resiliency of coastlines, including for planning, projects, and coral reef protection.

Children and Families:
- $400 million across three affordable housing programs.
- $363.6 million to provide targeted rate increases to Medicaid and Home- and Community-Based Services waiver providers, including for obstetric care providers and services included in the continuum of care for behavioral health.
- $294.6 million to provide additional support for mental health treatment facilities and to enhance suicide and crisis services

Transportation:
- $5.5 billion for highway construction to include 118 new lane miles.
- $1.6 billion to resurface 2,632 lane miles.
- $149.3 million in seaport infrastructure improvements to ensure Florida's ports continue to have capacity while the rest of the nation struggles from supply chain backups at seaports.
- $726.6 million in scheduled repairs for 65 bridges and replacement of 19 bridges.
- $791.3 million investment in rail and transit projects.

Supporting Florida Arts and Culture:
- $32.4 million for Cultural and Museum Grants to support projects that further the state's cultural objectives.
- $525,000 to support the Florida Main Street Program. This program encourages economic development in Florida's historic commercial districts. There are currently 50 designated Main Street communities throughout the state.

Tax Package:
The Legislature also passed the state's tax package for 2024-25 last week. The tax package features $1.5 billion in savings and includes the popular Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday, two two-week Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holidays, a Freedom Month Sales Tax Holiday, and a Skilled Worker "Tool Time" Sales Tax Holiday. See more tax information below.



Thank you for allowing me to provide you with these important updates as we strive to keep Florida a safe, affordable, and beautiful place to live. As always, it is an honor to represent you as your State Representative in Tallahassee.

Best Wishes ,

Representative Chip LaMarca
Florida House District 100