

DEFEND FLORIDA NEWSLETTER MARCH 11, 2025

TALLAHASSEE UPDATE



Defend Florida Volunteers from around the state met in Tallahassee the week of March 10th to advocate for Defend Florida's bills. Their work is not done, and neither is yours. We need everyone to call, email and write Florida's state legislators, especially their own, to advocate for our bills. We learned that the legislators keep track of the number of emails, calls etc. relating to different bills. It is imperative that Tallahassee legislators get inundated with calls promoting our bills and their sponsors while pointing out the shortcomings in the others like Senator Ingoglia's HB1414 and its companion bill sponsored by Jenna Persons-Mulicka, SB1381.

Each time we visit Tallahassee we learn something. This year, thinking we were ahead of the game as far as writing our bills and getting sponsors etc., we learned that we need to be there in June and July when the legislators are writing their bills. As one Defend team member put it, "I don't want to learn any more lessons. I want to get it right." So, guess what Defend Ambassadors, we're going to Tallahassee this summer.

MEETINGS WITH LEGISLATORS

We had many productive meetings with legislators and garnered meetings with leadership that we didn't expect. One was with Senate Majority Leader Jim Boyd and the other was with Representative Will Robinson, House WIP and Chair of the State Affairs Committee. Both are key to getting our bills heard and passed. Each legislator we met with received a

thank you package of cookies and a one-page flier regarding our bills. Smaller packages were given to their legislative aides as they are the important gate keepers that schedule meetings.

ACTION STEPS (more here)



Fire up your computers and phones and have your best writing pens handy to contact the following on the **House** side:

- State Affairs Committee Chair – Rep. Will Robinson (850) 717-5071
Will.Robinson@myfloridahouse.gov
- Government Operations Subcommittee Chair Rep. Linda Chaney (850) 717-5061
Linda.Chaney@myfloridahouse.gov
- Transportation and Economic Development Chair Representative Jason Schoaf (850) 717-5007
jasonshoaf@myfloridahouse.gov

On the **Senate** side:

- Ethics and Elections Committee Chair – Sen. Don Gaetz (850) 487-5001
gaetz.don.web@flsenate.gov
- Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Econ Development - Sen. Nick DiCeglie (850) 487-5018
DiCeglie.Nick.web@flsenate.gov
- Fiscal Policy - Sen. Joe Gruters (850) 487-5022
gruters.joe.web@flsenate.gov
- Republican Senate Majority Leader – Sen. Jim Boyd (850) 487-5020
boyd.jim.web@flsenate.gov

If they are a committee chair, BCC your email to all members of these committees which can be found at www.myfloridahouse.gov or www.flsenate.gov

DEFENDER OF FLORIDA AWARDS

Defend Florida gave Defender of Florida certificates to the following legislators.

- Representative Webster Barnaby for sponsoring HB1203 - Vote by Mail Security
- Representative Berny Jacques for sponsoring HB831 - Only US Citizens Vote
- Representative Chase Tremont for co-sponsoring HB831
- Senator Ileana Garcia for sponsoring three of our bills
 - SB396 – Vote by Mail Security
 - SB1330 – Only US Citizens Vote
 - SB394 – Technical Security

Make sure you thank these legislators for the kind attention they gave us and for sponsoring our bills.

Here are action steps that ensure your emails get the attention they deserve.

1. If you are contacting a House member, only mention the House bills. Dittos for the Senate.
2. Send your email noting the date and time you sent it.
3. Follow up with a phone call. Tell the legislative aide the date and time it was sent and ask them to print your email and put it on the legislator’s desk.

This greatly increases the odds of your emails getting read by the legislator.

TALKING POINTS

There are four main points to stress when comparing Senator Ingoglia’s HB1414 and its companion bill SB1381 put forward by Representative Persons-Mulicka. Both bills have their good points but there are some poison pills that can’t be ignored.

1. HB1414/SB1381 removes the ability for a Supervisor of Elections to hand count paper ballots in a close election where a recount is generated. They are compelled to only use machine generated ballot images. Evidence shows that this is how the 2020 Georgia election was stolen. Ballot images were duplicated and, in some cases, ballot ‘bubbles’ altered from a Republican bubble to a Democrat one. HB1414 makes it illegal to reconcile the images with the paper ballots to prove there are fewer paper ballots than computer images.
2. PRRs (Public Record Requests) concerning election artifacts, like ballots, will no longer be available. The bill reclassifies those public records to critical election infrastructure. PRRs asking for this information will be rejected. It will be illegal for SOEs to access paper ballot information.
3. The bill is vendor friendly because it compels SOEs to purchase expensive election machinery called Clear Ballot. This will be a burden on smaller counties that could easily hand count ballots in a recount. We were assured by some legislators that the state will pick up the tab for the machines. This is not a good solution from the taxpayer’s perspective because, when they say state, that means you and me.
4. HB1414/SB1381 does not prevent non-citizens, the deceased or people that moved out of state from voting in our elections.

Check out other helpful information here.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-5mYtDNJ-JMGUbc5DGHhGCNwSa2vIGEo/view?usp=sharing>

Goal	HB831/SB1330	HB1381/SB1414
Prevent non-citizens from registering via FPCA	✓	✗
Prevent non-citizens from registering via Florida forms	✓	✗
Systematically detect & remove non-citizens & other illegal voters	✓	✗
Remove deceased & out-of-state movers	✓	Partial
Leverage all state databases	✓	✗

More information and documents are available on the www.defendflorida.org under the Resource Page.

Copy this one-page flier and distribute it to your groups. <https://defendflorida.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/TEC-Flier-2025-1.png>



At a governor's luncheon, President Trump stated that he wants hand counted paper ballots, with single day voting. HB1414/SB1381 goes against that.

You could say:

- Why are you going against what President Trump wants?
- I can't believe you're going in the opposite direction of President Trump.
- So, you support going against President Trump's secure our elections agenda.

DEFEND FLORIDA BRANDING



In an effort to distinguish Defend Florida from other grass roots groups, the logo has been updated. It was used as stickers on the cookie packages and business cards that had the bill numbers on the back. One of the legislators remarked that putting the bill numbers on the back was a smart idea. The new logo is prominent on the Defend Florida homepage. We were pleased to discover that all the legislators acknowledged Defend Florida as a capable grassroots organization, with a positive and respectful reputation.

TWO THUMBS UP

We have been asking for new team members to join us in Tallahassee and Valerie Garth did just that. She drove by herself, found our group and took the bull by the horn. Valerie was instrumental in handing out cookies and fliers to all the freshmen legislators and was a welcome addition to our Defend Ambassadors. Thank you, Valerie. We look forward to working with you again.

Another shout out goes to Tricia Cobb and Tim Horton who joined us. They usually advocate with the Republican Liberty Caucus. Their knowledge and experience were extremely beneficial. Tricia earned the nickname, The "Queen of Tallahassee". Another volunteer, Melissa King, earned the nickname Fireball for the enthusiasm and passion she brought to our team.

Many hands make light work. There are numerous Defend Ambassadors that deserve credit, all from different walks of life and with unique skills that make Defend the competent and reputable organization it is. Thank you all.

Berny Jacques gives Defend Florida mention in the following video at the 2:30 mark.



Listen to Berny at <https://x.com/bernyjacques/status/1901040473189294376?s=12>

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM NEW DEFEND AMBASSADORS

Some team members were new to leading meetings and not just supporting leadership. Through a scheduling conflict by a legislative aide, our team got double booked. Consequently, the team had to divide into two groups with the ‘newbies’ taking charge of a meeting. Melissa King and Debbie Miller found themselves leading a meeting with House WIP Rep. Robinson. He was very cordial and took notes about the loopholes in HB1414. Another new Defend Ambassador, Tamara Fitzgerald, joined to wrap up the meeting with a big red bow.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Encourage your friends and groups to share the newly updated www.defendflorida.org website, newsletter, zoom calls and documents. Register for the Tuesday at 7pm Eastern call on the homepage and peruse the newly added Resource Page. Missed zoom meetings can be watched by going to www.defendflorida.org/p2

PHOTOS FROM TALLAHASSEE



Debbie Faris presents Rep. Barnaby with his Defender of Florida certificate



Representative Barnaby with Tricia Cobb, the “Queen of Tallahassee”



Senator Garcia getting her Defender of Florida certificate and cookies



Rep. Chase Tremont receiving his Defender of Florida certificate



Meeting with Rep. Kim Kendall



Lunch with, left to right, Debbie Miller, Debbie Faris, Ko Robbins, Meredyth Morrow, Melissa King and Raj Dorisamy



Debbie and Melissa up until the wee hours of the morning preparing treat boxes with mints and Hershey kisses inside



After a busy day, dinner and libations with some RLC members at Harry's Restaurant near the Capital



492 cookies were baked for the legislator's Thank You gifts. The cookies and candy treats were a big hit and the talk of Tallahassee.



Meeting with Rep. Linda Chaney's legislative aide



Meeting with Representative Danny Nix

