

THE

# DURAN

*Your Florida Representative*

## DIGEST

Dear neighbors and friends,

On Saturday May 4th, the Florida Legislature completed its work and adjourned for the 2019 legislative session.

This session I proudly served as the Ranking Member in the Health & Human Services Committee and the Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee. As the Democrats' most senior member in the House's comprehensive health care committee, we worked across the aisle to improve and advance policies addressing prescription drug availability, infectious disease elimination programs, mental health services, and the full implementation of the medicinal marijuana amendment. I was opposed to several bills championed by Republican leadership – particularly bills I believe negatively affect our most vulnerable and impact our health insurance markets – however, I focused on building bipartisan consensus to address our state's most challenging issues.

In 2019, I continued my work in sponsoring important legislation and securing appropriations through the legislative process to fund projects in our community. While in Tallahassee, we came together to fight for the people of Miami-Dade. HB 5001, the General Appropriations Act, included funding for over a dozen of my sponsored local budget projects. Better yet, all of these appropriations go towards major issues facing Floridians, including water integrity, affordable housing, mental health issues, and education.

The following "Duran Digest" was prepared to provide District 112 residents with a recap on this year's legislative session. We outlined the projects I successfully sponsored in the budget, issues that impact quality of life, legislation that I sponsored or co-sponsored, and a budget breakdown. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments or concerns you may have.

Thank you for the privilege of serving in the Florida House of Representatives. I am honored to represent my community and hope my work will make you proud.

### Committees

Health & Human Services Committee  
Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee  
Health Market Reform Subcommittee  
Appropriations Committee

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**HB 3987 Children of Inmates Babies 'N Brains Supports Program.** This funding will provide supplemental support services for children ages 0-5 with an incarcerated parent, including home safety visits, disaster planning, ongoing caregiver community supports program, and Ages & Stages Questionnaire Assessments (ASQ) to measure appropriate brain maturation. **\$250,000.00**

**HB 3989 Safe Haven for Homeless Youth.** Representative Duran successfully sponsored state funding to provide transitional housing, and supportive services, including behavioral health and primary care, to LGBTQ youth who have been thrown out of their homes or are running away from an abusive environment. **\$140,800.00**

**HB 3997 Graduate Medical Education - Psychiatry.** This appropriation will support Citrus Health Network's graduate program to increase the number of psychiatrists in Miami Dade County, as it is critical shortage specialty, and provide much needed behavioral and mental health care to our community. **\$480,000.00**

**HB 3999 Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Centers of Miami Dade.** Representative Duran sponsored state funding to support the Rainbow Intergenerational Child Learning Center. This center will provide child care service subsidies to the children of working poor families, providing them with access to safe, affordable, and quality services. **\$100,000.00**

**HB 4001 Miami Dade College - Single Stop Program.** This pilot project will provide mental health and wellness counseling at Single Stop locations on Miami Dade College campuses. The need for mental health counseling is alarmingly on the rise and this funding will go towards maximizing students' access to coverage on campus. **\$50,000.00**

**HB 4003 Coral Gables Water and Energy Efficiency Master Plan.** This funding will provide financial support to the City's ongoing project to optimize energy and water efficiency through renewable energy, building automations, LED lighting, and system upgrades. The goal of this project is a 20% reduction in the City of Coral Gables' energy, water, and greenhouse gas emissions by 2025. **\$220,000.00**

**HB 4007 Casa Familia Village Pilot Program.** Representative Duran successfully sponsored state funding that will help establish a groundbreaking "best practice" demonstration program for permanent supportive housing, serving adult individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). **\$300,000.00**

**HB 4015 New World School of the Arts.** NWSA provides an intensive conservatory-oriented program of academic studies in the visual and performing arts for talented students from around the state. Representative Duran sponsored state funding to help support the school's highly specialized arts curriculum, production expenses, exhibitions, and award-winning educational excellence. **\$100,000.00**

**HB 4017 Housing First for Homeless Persons with Mental Illness.** Representative Duran sponsored state funding to help divert homeless persons with serious mental illnesses, who have a history of arrest or frequent police interactions, into supportive housing with wrap-around services rather than falling into incarceration and the justice system. **\$100,000.00**

**HB 4019 Downtown Miami Pedestrian Bridge - Phase 1.** This funding will provide financial assistance to construct an over-the-water pedestrian bridge underneath the MacArthur Causeway and complete the Downtown section of the Miami Baywalk. The bridge will include mangrove and seagrass restoration at its base, help protect the area from storm flooding and sea-level rise. **\$300,000.00**

**HB 4247 Crandon Boulevard Pedestrian/ Bicycle Safety.** This appropriation will help complete the painting of the Village of Key Biscayne's bicycle path. The County has painted the Rickenbacker Causeway with green paint up to the Village boundaries and this project will extend the painted path through the Village to Bill Baggs State Park, increasing the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on Crandon Boulevard. **\$100,000.00**

**HB 4471 Camillus House Human Trafficking Recovery Program.** Representative Duran successfully sponsored state funding to assist this program, which is designed to provide comprehensive behavioral health and treatment services for adult-aged women who are victims of human trafficking. This is the only program of its kind serving adult-aged women who are victims of human trafficking in South Florida. **\$250,000.00**



**HB 3693 United Way of Florida - Financial Literacy and Prosperity.** The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable tax credit for low to moderate income working individuals and couples, particularly those with children. Through its VITA program, United Way is working to help Florida families receive what they are due. In addition to being a financial boost for working people, the EITC boosts the local economy. Research has shown that the EITC encourages work, reduces poverty, and leads to long-term gains in child health and academic success. **\$500,000.00**

**HB 3729 Miami Biscayne Bay Tidal Waves and Stormwater Improvements.** State funding was secured to maintain the City's waterway systems through stormwater improvements and pollutant control systems to reduce pollutants discharging from street runoff into waterways as well as reduce tidal flooding in critical infrastructure, walkways, and city streets. **\$1,500,000**

**HB 4089 Underline Multi-Use/Mobility Corridor.** For a third year, funds will be used to continue the design and construction off-road Underline urban trail, encouraging the community to walk, bike and take transit to alleviate congestion and improve public safety. **\$1,500,000**

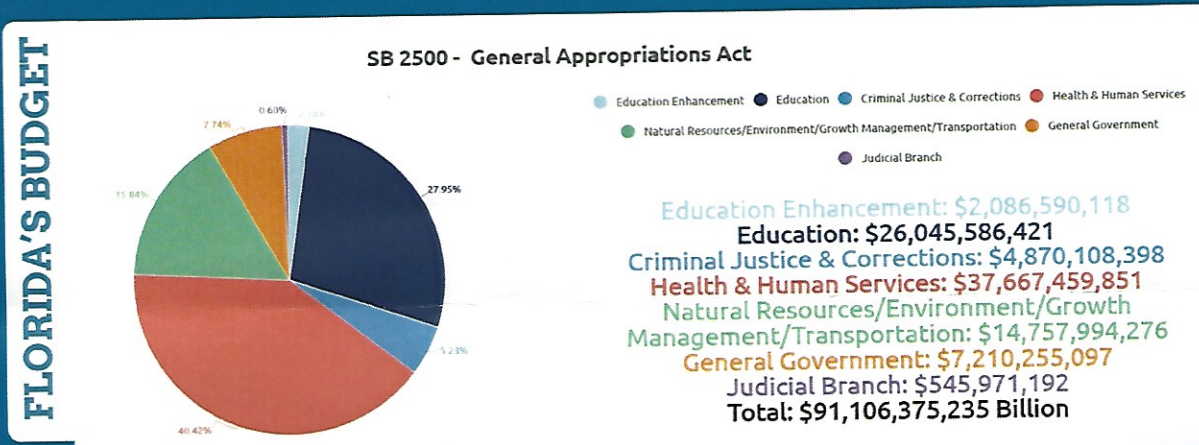
## Legislation that Rep. Duran Sponsored or Co-Sponsored

**HB 171 - Infection Disease Elimination Programs** - This bill, sponsored by Rep. Shevrin Jones and co-sponsored by Rep. Duran, creates a legal mechanism for counties to implement programs that swap dirty syringes for clean ones, modeled on the IDEA Exchange in Miami-Dade County. Needle exchanges have been shown to reduce the spread of blood borne infections—like HIV and hepatitis C—among intravenous drug users. In the program's first three years, the IDEA Exchange has reported to the health department that it has pulled more than a quarter million used needles out of circulation. It hands out Narcan, the drug that reverses opioid overdoses—and, according to the Exchange, making this drug available has prevented more than a thousand overdoses.

**HB 361 - Mental Health** - Rep. Duran, working with Rep. David Silvers, co-prime sponsored legislation that addresses the increased risk of suicide in youth by enhancing the voluntary Suicide Prevention Certified Schools Program and encouraging school districts to adopt a standardized suicide assessment tool that school-based mental health professionals can implement prior to initiation of an involuntary examination. The legislation also optimizes the Department of Children and Families data collection and reporting.

**HB 857 & 7129 - Firefighter Cancer Coverage** - This bill, sponsored by Rep. Willhite and co-sponsored by Rep. Duran, requires firefighters receive full coverage for cancer, including disability and death benefits. The legislation deems twenty-one cancers an occupational hazard tied to firefighting. Firefighters will qualify for that coverage if they meet requirements, such as not using tobacco products for at least the last five years, and will also receive a one-time lump sum of \$25,000 after they are diagnosed.

**HB 1041 & HB 7119 - Tobacco Products** - This year, Representative Duran, through numerous conversations with concerned mothers and constituents, decided to file a bill to statutorily define e-cigarette devices as tobacco products and raise the legal age to purchase tobacco products, nicotine products, or nicotine dispensing devices from 18 to 21. The policy gained vast bipartisan support, successfully passed in the Florida Senate, but unfortunately due to time, was unable to make it to the House floor for a final reading and passage. We will try again next year.



**FLORIDA'S BUDGET**

**Justice & Corrections**

- Provides salary increases for assistant state attorneys and public defenders.
- Increases funding to treat inmates infected with Hepatitis C.
- The Dignity for Incarcerated Women Act provides feminine sanitary products for female inmates.

**FLORIDA'S BUDGET**

**Public Education**

- Adds an extra \$787 million for the Department of Education.
- Increases funds to improve school hardening.
- Adds \$3.3 million additional funds for mental health funding.

**FLORIDA'S BUDGET**

**Environment**

- Record funding for the Everglades Restoration program and water quality.
- Creates the statewide Hemp program.
- \$86 million in beach restoration projects.
- \$100 million for Florida spring restoration projects.



## Issues Worked on that Impact Quality of Life

### Property Insurance Relief & Reform: HB 7065 - Assignment of Benefits

This bill provides an overhaul of the insurance practice known as assignment of benefits (AOB), where property owners in need of repairs sign over benefits to contractors, who ultimately pursue payments from insurance companies. The bill includes certain consumer protection provisions, but also addresses attorney fees by requiring the service provider to give the insurer and consumer prior written notice of at least 10 business days before filing suit on a claim. The legislation will also let insurers offer policies that restrict or do not allow assignment of benefits. HB 7065 seeks to lower the prices and rates of these policies to homeowners.

### Condo Fire Sprinkler Systems: HB 7103 - Community Development & Housing

High-rise condos currently face a Jan. 1, 2020, deadline to install fire sprinkler systems up to code, but the Legislature pushed the dates back for condominiums to get their fire safety systems up to code to Jan. 1, 2024.

### Criminal Justice Reform: HB 7125 - Public Safety

Rep. Paul Renner's criminal justice package reduces occupational licensing barriers for people with felony convictions, limits the number of offenses that can result in driver's license suspension, raises the felony theft threshold from \$300 to \$750, and also eliminates mandatory direct file. Reforms removed from the final bill include judicial discretion in mandatory minimum sentencing, racial impact statements, and an adjustment to the cap on gain time for nonviolent offenders, which could have potentially resulted in \$860 million in savings over five years.

### Texting and Driving: HB 107 - Wireless Communications Devices While Driving

This bill, sponsored by Rep. Toledo and co-sponsored by Rep. Duran, makes texting while driving a primary offense. Although texting while driving was already illegal in Florida, it was a secondary traffic offense, meaning an officer could only ticket an individual for texting while driving if the person had been pulled over for something else, such as speeding. An officer will now be able to pull someone over and give them a citation for solely texting while driving.

### Miami Dade Expressway Authority Bill: HB 387 - Transportation

Rep. Bryan Avila's bill will create a new entity, the Greater Miami Expressway Agency, to replace the Miami-Dade County Expressway Authority. The policy prohibits GMX from increasing toll rates until 2029 and requires a two-thirds vote of GMX's governing body prior to implementing any new toll increase. It limits surtax (half-penny tax) usage to the planning, engineering, construction of, or acquisition of rights-of-way for, fixed guideway rapid transit systems and bus systems, including bus rapid transit systems (BRT) and the development of dedicated facilities for autonomous vehicles. Proceeds from the surtax can also be used for the payment, issuing, and refinancing of bonds.

### Repeal of Smokable Medical Marijuana Ban: HB 7015 - Medical Use of Marijuana

This legislation repealed Florida's 2017 ban on medical marijuana in a smokable form. The bill sets criteria that smokable marijuana will not be available to patients under 18 unless they are terminally ill or have two pediatricians' recommendation.

### School Safety: SB 7030 - Marjory Stoneman Douglas Public Safety Commission

This bill expands the state's Guardian Program to include arming classroom teachers. A provision that is dangerously misguided and is the primary reason I voted against it. **However, the Guardian Program requires the approval of the District School Board and Sheriff's Office.** Fortunately, this provision will never be implemented in our community as the MDCPS School Board have expressed its fierce opposition to the program.

Also, this legislation identifies The Office of Safe Schools to serve as a headquarters for school safety is to create a standardized risk assessment process for dangerous students. Funding will be provided to school districts for establishing or expanding school-based mental care. Each school district will receive a minimum of \$100,000 allocated toward mental health. The plan must include a system that delivers diagnosis, intervention, and treatment of mental health issues. It will also receive more direct mental healthcare employees, such as counselors and social workers, to better align with nationally recommended student-to-staff ratios. Under this bill, students will be required to notify the district of any previous school expulsions, arrests resulting in a charge, juvenile justice actions, and any corresponding referral to mental health services.

### Vote-by-Mail (VBM) Procedures: SB 7066 - Election Administration

This bill moves the request deadline for a Vote-by-Mail (VBM) ballot to be mailed to a voter to 10 days before election; allows a voter to drop off completed VBM ballot at a secure drop box located at each early voting location in addition to the Supervisor of Elections main office in Doral; moves the deadline for a voter to update his or her signature for purposes of validating a VBM ballot to when the VBM ballot is received; extends the cure deadline for defective VBM signatures to 5:00 pm on the 2nd day AFTER the election. Please remember to register or re-register to vote by mail, our democracy works better when all our voices are heard! Visit <https://www.miamidade.gov/elections/vote-by-mail.asp>

### Prescription Drugs Prices: HB 19 - Prescription Drug Importation Programs

Legislation was passed to create prescription drug importation programs that could let state agencies and private pharmacies import less expensive drugs from reputable and regulated suppliers in Canada and elsewhere.

### Working People With Disabilities

During the budget process Representative Duran helped strike an agreement to relax the Medicaid rules under the Working People with Disabilities Program to allow adults with disabilities to earn more money and not lose Medicaid benefits that help them get to and sustain work on a daily basis.

### Florida KidCare Program

Thousands of children in Florida will have greater access to health care now with funding steered to the Florida Healthy Kids Corp., a public-private organization that reduces the cost of health insurance plans to children up to 18 in low- and middle-income families.