



2019 Legislative Recommendations

Local Projects

- **Support operational funding for homeless shelter. Request support \$400,000 in operational funding for First Step Homeless Shelter (Daytona Beach).**

This shelter (now under construction) will serve Volusia County's homeless population with a projected opening in mid – 2019. These funds will help augment local financial commitments and initial year start-up costs. There is significant local funding for this project. City of Daytona Beach has committed approximately \$4 million for construction costs, a 10-acre site, and \$2 million for operations. Volusia County has committed \$2.5 million for construction and \$2 million for operations. Financial commitments have been received from Daytona Beach Shores, Holly Hill, Ormond Beach, Port Orange, and South Daytona in addition to start up donations individual and private corporations.

- **High Tech Economic Development Infrastructure Funding Request - support \$10 million to provide public infrastructure to bring high tech development to the area.**

Volusia County's economic development strategy includes an intentional focus on attracting private-sector aviation or aerospace companies that bring high-wage job opportunities for local university graduates, including those from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU). The county owns approximately 300 acres of commercially zoned land in the vicinity near ERAU's new research park and is ideally suited as a regional employment center in the aviation and aerospace industry. These funds would be to design, engineer and construct needed infrastructure so that the property can be made "shovel ready" for consideration by one or more large regional employers.

Insurance

- **Support legislation to reign in Assignment of Benefit (AOB) abuse and protect consumers.**

Assignment of Benefits (AOB) abuse. More consumers statewide are signing AOB forms to process claims for emergency repair work whereby a third party assumes complete control over a homeowner's insurance benefits. This often inflates repair costs and leads to unnecessary lawsuits, thus driving up the cost of insurance. Since 2000, the number of AOB-related lawsuits has increased significantly. Fraudulent claims and legal fees are a factor in determining premiums, which affects homeowners' insurance policies. Florida already has the highest property insurance rates nationwide because of its high risk of natural disasters.

K-12 Education

- **Restore the state's investment in K-12 education by increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by at least 5% annually.**
- **Increase Safe Schools Categorical allocation by \$100 million to narrow funding gaps associated with mandate to staff one "safe school officer" per school.**
- **Expand current Mental Health Assistance Allocation of \$69.2 million to reduce ratio of students per mental health professional for the second year of this program.**

Higher Education

- **Daytona State College - Multipurpose Workforce Trades/Health Sciences Classroom Building (Deltona Campus).**

DSC has received \$4.2 million in planning and partial construction funds. Programs will train students for high-need workforce programs in machining, nursing, radiography and sonography. The building will replace 14 aging portable buildings currently on the Deltona Campus. Budget Request: \$8.9 million for construction completion and for fixtures, furniture and equipment.

- **Embry Riddle Aeronautical University – Hybrid-Electric Propulsion Test Cell**

ERAU requests \$1.5 Million in matching funds to develop a leading-edge test cell in developing the next generation of aviation propulsion. Budget Request: \$1.5 million with an ERAU match of \$1.5 million

- **Bethune-Cookman University – College of Health Sciences**

The Petrock College of Health Sciences (PCHS) seeks to integrate research and education into community-based health programs and provide training for students transitioning into a health professional education in the fields of aging, health, equity, and health policy. Budget Request: \$750,000

- **Bethune-Cookman University – Entrepreneurship and Economic Development**

Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development provides student experiential learning, development, job creation, and entrepreneurship programs for students and community in the local Daytona Beach area. Budget Request: Continue to support in Access and Retention Funds of \$4,816,239 in the recurring budget.

Health Care

- **Support adequate reimbursement rates for hospitals.**

Hospitals provide \$6.6 billion in care to Medicaid patients, but are reimbursed just \$3.9 billion --- leaving \$2.7 billion in care that is not funded. This under-reimbursement in funding is what forces the cost shift and resulting increases in costs to businesses.

Employment Issues

- **Minimum Wage - while the Chamber does not oppose an increase in the minimum wage, it should be based on consumer price index (CPI).**

Any legislation should provide for an annual review to determine what impact additional increases may have on the economy prior to implementation, which is already current law in Florida. Florida's 2019 minimum wage will be \$8.46 per hour (2018 Minimum Wage was \$8.25 per hour).

- **Background Screening ("Ban the Box") – oppose legislation that prohibits employers from inquiring into an applicant's criminal history prior to the applicant's initial interview and prior to making a conditional offer of employment.**

Excludes: jobs where federal, state or local law require consideration of criminal history; law enforcement; criminal justice; and, volunteers. It impairs an employer's ability to obtain information on an employee's background until after a conditional offer of employment is made.

- **Workforce Housing - use Florida's Sadowski housing trust fund monies solely for housing.**

Recent documentary stamp projections show \$314.08 million. The State Housing Initiatives Partnership program (SHIP), which provides funds to local governments as an incentive to create partnerships that produce and preserve affordable homeownership and multifamily housing..... designed to serve very low, low and moderate-income families. Projected SHIP 2018-2019 show VOLUSIA receiving \$556,800 and Daytona Beach receiving \$99,270. Approximately 43% of Volusia/Daytona Beach residents are in the paycheck to paycheck category thus spending more than 50% of their net income on housing.

Environment

- **Support research/funding to address red tide; accelerate construction of the reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee to alleviate high water discharges; eliminate septic tanks near watersheds/springsheds of priority water bodies, estuaries/lagoons; provide funding for local stormwater projects to reduce nutrient pollution.**

Volusia County recognizes the need to address the catastrophic effects of red tides and algae blooms along Florida's west and southeast coasts. Water quality is a statewide issue that needs dedicated programs/funding i.e. the Halifax River is the northern most basin of the Indian River Lagoon. The nutrient enrichment problems in the lagoon also plague the river.

The intent of the DEP's Septic Upgrade Incentive Program is to convert traditional onsite sewage treatment systems to enhanced nitrogen-reducing systems. Funding for such ongoing programs could be made available from the Legacy Florida program which annually provides \$255 million for water resource enhancements (Volusia County is one of nine counties which is eligible for this program).