

2026



MONROE COUNTY STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Mayor James K. Scholl, District 3
Mayor *Pro Tem* Michelle Lincoln, District 2
Commissioner Craig Cates, District 1
Commissioner David Rice, District 4
Commissioner Holly Merrill Raschein, District 5

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

OCTOBER 2025

MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Mayor Jim Scholl, District 3

Mayor Pro Tem Michelle Lincoln, District 2

Commissioner Craig Cates, District 1

Commissioner David Rice, District 4

Commissioner Holly Merrill Raschein, District 5

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

County Administrator Christine Hurley

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS

House District 120: Representative Jim Mooney

Senate District 39: Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez

MEMBERSHIPS IN LEGISLATIVE ALLIANCES

Florida Association of Counties

Small County Coalition

South Florida Regional Planning Association

National Association of Counties

Gulf States Counties and Parishes Caucus



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA DEVELOPMENT

Staff seeks the Board’s approval of the items proposed for inclusion in the County’s 2026 State Legislative Program. Once adopted, County staff and contracted lobbying teams will pursue all Board-approved legislative priorities, giving precedence to those marked as high-priority for 2026.

Each year, the Board evaluates and endorses the County’s core legislative priorities to guide advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels. While we concentrate on the County’s most critical issues, we also support the broader initiatives championed by the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) and the Small County Coalition (SCC).

In identifying these legislative and policy needs, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and staff review emerging trends and challenges impacting County programs and services. Below are the specific priorities and general focus areas proposed for the 2026 State Legislative Session.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES OUTLINE

Monroe County’s legislative efforts are both incremental and responsive, addressing longstanding needs—such as funding for water quality infrastructure and land acquisition through the Florida Keys Stewardship Act, environmental protections, and preserving the affordability of Citizens wind insurance—while also tackling emerging demands driven by recent legislation. The County’s 2026 legislative priorities are outlined below:

- **Future of County Revenue Sources and Property Tax Proposals:** Monroe County is closely monitoring state legislative efforts affecting property taxes, potentially impacting the County’s most significant revenue source. We will keep the Board informed of developments and seek direction on developing proposals.
- **Future Development in the Florida Keys/ROGO:** Monroe County will continue collaborating with the Florida Department of Commerce to implement the new allocation provisions enacted under Senate Bill 180 during the 2025 legislative session. As an Area of Critical State Concern (ACSC), the Florida Department of Commerce serves as the State’s oversight agency on development matters within the Keys. The County will remain engaged and responsive should any new related legislation be introduced.
- **Water Quality Project Funding:** Secure a \$20 million appropriation under the Florida Keys Stewardship Act to fund critical water quality initiatives, including the County’s canal restoration program. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) manages the distribution of these funds through a grant program specifically designed for qualifying entities in the Florida Keys. Eligible local governments may submit applications for Stewardship funding via DEP’s dedicated grant portal.
- **Land Acquisition Funding:**
 - ✓ **Keys’ Annual Florida Forever Set Aside funding:** Support the continued appropriation pursuant to the \$5 million set-aside in Florida Forever funding, authorized under the Florida Keys Stewardship Act, to enable the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to acquire land in the Florida Keys, helping to protect sensitive lands and private property rights.
 - ✓ **Extension of the \$5M Florida Keys Florida Forever set-aside:** Secure legislation to extend this authority through 20236. The 2016 provision passed in the Florida Keys Stewardship Act authorized \$5M annually for land acquisition in the Florida Keys is set to expire in 2026.
 - ✓ **Secure Annual Land Acquisition Funding:** We will pursue legislative strategy to ensure that

annual funding for land acquisition in the Florida Keys is consistent, regardless of the overall Florida Forever allocation.

✓ **Appropriation Request: \$2.5M for land acquisition**, providing an alternative source of funding for land acquisition, should our set-aside not be funded because the Florida Forever program is once again not fully funded. Should our set aside be funded, then these additional appropriation funds would support land acquisition outside FF boundaries for the purposes of retiring development rights, military encroachment, and affordable housing.

○ **Inclusion in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund:** Advocate for the inclusion of the Florida Keys Stewardship Act within the State's Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF). Funded by documentary stamp taxes via Amendment 1, the LATF supports critical state environmental priorities, such as Everglades and springs restoration. Adding the Stewardship Act to the LATF would elevate its importance and help secure annual funding.

○ **Affordable Wind Insurance:** We will continue to work with legislators, Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) and Citizens Property Insurance Company (Citizens) to find ways to reduce the cost of wind insurance. Affordable wind coverage is essential—not only to maintain current housing affordability for private property owners, but also to ensure that newly built rental housing remains genuinely accessible. In the Florida Keys, where wind insurance is a mortgage requirement, it constitutes a substantial portion of housing costs. Due to our region's high-risk exposure, most residents rely on Citizens—the state's insurer of last resort, with no meaningful competition.

○ **Reinstate 10% cap on annual increases:** We will advocate with Citizens, OIR, and state legislators to reinstate the 10% cap on annual increases (premiums), prevent the transfer of policies to higher-cost private companies, and ensure broad policyholder eligibility.

○ **Property Value Cap:** Increase Citizens' **property value eligibility coverage** cap from \$1M to \$1.5M.

○ **State Flood Insurance Mandates:** In response to recent state mandates requiring Citizens' policyholders to carry flood insurance, even for low-risk homes, we will also address the rising costs linked to FEMA's Risk Rating 2.0, which is increasing flood insurance premiums.

○ **Affordable Housing Initiatives:** Continuing this effort from last session, we will pursue ways to lower housing costs, including:

○ **Construction performance bonds exemption:** Secure legislation to enable Habitat for Humanity to forgo construction performance bonds for new affordable housing development on 99-year leased County properties, to lower affordable housing construction costs.

○ **Ad Valorem Tax Relief:** Secure legislation to authorize local governments to grant ad valorem tax relief on privately owned residential properties that are voluntarily rented at affordable rates, to incentivize long-term rentals over short-term or vacant properties.

○ **Funding for Road Elevation Projects:** The County will continue to advocate for state funding of Monroe's road adaptation/elevation projects submitted through the Resilient Florida Grant Program and support sustained, robust funding for the program in future years. Given that the program's 50% local match requirement presents a significant financial challenge, the County will also advocate for a reduced local match requirement.

○ **Qualifying Threshold for Educational Support Programs:** Continue to support legislation that raises the income eligibility threshold for Monroe County, allowing more children from working families to qualify for and benefit from educational support programs.

○ **ACSC Protection:** The County will continue to pursue exemptions ("carve-outs") from state preemptions that limit or override Monroe County's protective land use and development regulations. This includes preserving the integrity of ROGO, comprehensive plan provisions, and critical environmental protections. This includes narrowing the scope of the newest preemptions in SB 180.

○ **Preemptions, Home Rule and Local Authority:** The County will actively monitor legislative efforts that seek to impose new limitations on local authority including those anticipated around term limits for

Monroe County Board of County Commissioners State Legislative Priorities 2026

local officials, sovereign immunity, and proposals affecting property tax authority. Monroe will continue to support efforts to roll back current preemptions such as those on vacation rentals, contractor licensing, single use plastic bags, and local referenda requirements. Monroe supports FAC's efforts to protect counties' home rule authority.

LOBBYING TEAM

The County uses the following contract lobbying and strategy services to advance Monroe County's legislative goals and secure critical appropriations:

- Robert Reyes of Capital Group
- Frank Bernardino of Anfield Consulting
- Dean Cannon, Ryan Matthews, and Angela Drzewiecki of Gray Robinson
- Nick Iarossi and Andrew Ketchal of Capital City Consulting
- Noah Valenstein of Brightwater Strategies Group

These firms maintain a daily presence in Tallahassee. They leverage their relationships and expertise to advocate for the County's interests across the executive, legislative, and agency branches of state government. The County's Legislative Affairs Director is responsible for managing the lobbying team, maintaining regular communication on legislative, policy, regulatory, and budget matters, and driving progress on priority issues.

During the legislative session, the team speaks daily and holds weekly conference calls to coordinate strategy. The Legislative Affairs Director provides weekly (and as needed, more frequent) updates to the Board of County Commissioners. Each contract lobbying firm submits monthly activity reports, and a comprehensive post-session report is presented to the Board at the conclusion of each session.

KEY LEGISLATIVE DATES

2026 Legislative Session Dates:

- September 17-18: Florida Association of County (FAC) Legislative Policy Conference
- October 15: Approval of Monroe County's Legislative Agenda
- October to December: Committee Weeks
- October/November (date TBD): Delegation Meeting
- November 19-21: FAC Legislative Conference
- January 13: First day of regular session
- January 21: FAC Legislative Day
- Jan/February (date TBD): Keys Day
- March 13: Last day of regular session

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

FUTURE OF COUNTY REVENUES AND PROPERTY TAXES

BACKGROUND/CHALLENGES

Monroe County will closely monitor proposed state legislation and executive initiatives that could **reduce or eliminate property taxes**, recognizing that such changes could have **significant implications for the County's operations and services**. Property taxes are the County's most reliable and flexible source of revenue, funding essential services such as law enforcement, emergency management, public health, constitutional officers, and a wide range of state-mandated programs. These services are vital to the safety and well-being of our community. While Monroe County understands the concerns driving the broader tax policy conversation, we urge caution in pursuing measures that could destabilize local government operations without a clear, sustainable alternative in place.

Locally Controlled Revenue: Property taxes are generated and controlled locally, allowing Monroe County to plan for long-term needs, respond to emergencies, and address community priorities. Reductions or eliminations could create substantial budget gaps, requiring difficult trade-offs, such as service reductions, increased reliance on state funding, or new taxes that may not align with local needs.

Home Rule Implications:

The proposed changes would also represent another example of state preemption—where local decision-making authority is limited by state action. In this case, it would reduce Monroe County's ability to exercise home rule over one of its most fundamental responsibilities: managing the resources needed to serve its residents.

Ongoing Legislative Activity: The Florida House of Representatives has established a **Select Committee on Property Tax Reform** to review existing policies and make recommendations. Meanwhile, the executive branch has proposed its own reforms. The final outcomes could significantly affect property taxation statewide.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ Monitor all proposed state legislation and executive proposals related to property taxation.
- ✓ Assess potential impacts on Monroe County's budget, operations, and local decision-making authority.
- ✓ Keep the Board of County Commissioners informed of developments and request direction as appropriate.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE FLORIDA KEYS

BACKGROUND/CHALLENGES

Area of Critical State Concern

The Florida Keys have long been designated by the State of Florida as an *Area of Critical State Concern (ACSC)* in recognition of their unique environmental resources, ecological sensitivity, and infrastructure constraints. As such, the State—through the Administration Commission—retains oversight of development activity and growth policy in the Keys.

Hurricane Evacuation and Development Permits

State law limits residential development in the Keys to ensure the permanent population can evacuate within 24 hours in advance of a hurricane. This cap is enforced through a building permit allocation system adopted into the comprehensive plans of Monroe County and its municipalities (Key West, Marathon, Islamorada, and Layton). The number of available allocations is based on evacuation modeling conducted by the State.

State Hurricane Evacuation Modeling

The Florida Department of Commerce (formerly the Department of Economic Opportunity) conducts updated hurricane evacuation modeling every 10 years. The December 2023 **Florida Keys Hurricane Evacuation Modeling Report** evaluated the impacts of various growth scenarios on the 24-hour evacuation clearance time. The Board then sought legislation during the 2025 session to increase the evacuation clearance time to secure additional allocations to address legal liability and affordable housing.

LEGISLATIVE MILESTONE: 900 Allocations Secured (2025)

During the 2025 legislative session, Monroe County secured **900 new residential building permit allocations**, increasing the evacuation clearance time to 24.5 hours, through the passage of Senate Bill 180. The 900 new permit allocations will be distributed across unincorporated Monroe County, and the cities of Marathon, Islamorada and Key West to facilitate the development of vacant lots (addressing property rights) and to support affordable housing. The gradual distribution over 10 years will help ensure the new development is matched with the necessary infrastructure.

Moving forward, **continued coordination with the Florida Department of Commerce** will be necessary to implement the provisions of SB 180 effectively. As the State's oversight agency for Areas of Critical State Concern, Florida Commerce will help ensure the allocations are administered in accordance with both state requirements and the County's adopted comprehensive plan.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ At this time, no additional action is required from the Board. With the passage of SB 180, the County is focused on implementation of the bill's provision to allocate 900 additional residential permit allocations in order to move forward with its comprehensive plan amendment to accept Monroe's share. The County will continue to:
 - Coordinate with Florida Commerce to guide implementation of SB 180;
 - Monitor the 2026 legislative session for any new proposals that may impact development policy, growth management, or local preemption.

WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

BACKGROUND/CHALLENGE

The Florida Keys are home to one of the **world's most unique marine ecosystems**, including the only living coral reef in the continental U.S., the hemisphere's largest seagrass meadow, and over 6,000 marine species. This ecosystem is **vital to Florida's tourism and fisheries economy**. Monroe generates \$7 billion in gross sales (FY 2023, Florida DOR). Protecting this fragile environment is a statewide priority, as the economic health and sustainability of the Keys depend directly on clean, healthy waters.

Monroe County faces ongoing threats to water quality from cesspits, runoff, and degraded canal waters. Key challenges include:

- **Strict Water Quality Mandates:** The Florida Keys are governed by the **Federal Water Quality Protection Program**, established with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary designation in 1990. This program mandates advanced wastewater treatment, stormwater management, and canal restoration to protect Sanctuary waters.
- **Wastewater Infrastructure:** As part of its Critical Concern designation, the State required the Keys to implement a centralized wastewater treatment system per FS 381 and 403 standards. Spanning over 100 miles of islands, this \$900 million project included approximately \$100 million in state funding and is now complete.
- **Canal Restoration Needs:** Poor-quality canal water flows directly into the Sanctuary. Testing identified **96 canals with substandard water quality**. Canal restoration is critical to preserving the marine ecosystem and is a requirement in Monroe County’s annual ACSC work plan. Total restoration costs are estimated in hundreds of millions of dollars, requiring continued state support.

LEGISLATIVE MILESTONE: State Funding for Water Quality Protection in the Florida Keys (2016). The Florida Keys Stewardship Act **authorizes \$20M per year for water quality protection** and restoration projects in the Florida Keys. Monroe works each year with our legislative delegation and the state legislature and Governor to secure this \$20M annual appropriation. To date Monroe County has secured \$100M in Stewardship funding.

PROGRESS AND LOCAL COMMITMENT

Monroe County has made significant strides, largely with state support:

- Restored or currently restoring **29 canals** under the Stewardship Act.
- Committed **\$7 million in local funds** to develop the Canal Restoration Master Plan and test restoration technologies.
- Dedicated **\$20 million in RESTORE Act funds** to canal restoration.
- Secured a **\$45 million federal NRCS grant** in 2018 to clear hurricane debris from nearly 200 canals.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT a \$20 million state appropriation** for projects under the Florida Keys Stewardship Act.
- ✓ **SUPPORT funding for Monroe’s projects** submitted in the DEP Stewardship Grant portal.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** inclusion of the Florida Keys Stewardship Act in the **State Land and Water Trust Fund** to secure consistent annual funding for local water quality restoration.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** creation of a **five-year water-related work plan** (modeled after FDOT’s five-year work plan) to guide state funding for local water infrastructure projects and increase available state resources for these initiatives.

LAND ACQUISITION

BACKGROUND/CHALLENGES

In the Florida Keys, the challenge is to balance natural resource protection, public safety, and private property rights. Monroe County and the State of Florida rely on two coordinated strategies that both reduce development pressures: (1) a **carefully managed allocation of development permits** that guides new growth, and (2) **strategic land acquisition** that permanently removes development capacity from environmentally sensitive areas. Together, these strategies protect fragile resources and mitigate the State’s and County’s legal liability from takings and Bert Harris claims.

Because the number of privately-owned vacant lots exceeds the number of available residential permits, acquisition of developable parcels is essential. Without it, the gap between available permits and privately

held development rights exposes both Monroe County and the State to legal risk. Fortunately, many of these properties fall within Florida Forever project boundaries, allowing acquisitions to serve a dual purpose: conserving land and retiring development rights.

LEGISLATIVE MILESTONE: State Funding Commitment to Land Acquisition in the Florida Keys (2016)

Recognizing the critical role of land acquisition, the Legislature included in the **Florida Keys Stewardship Act an authorization for \$5M** annual funding from Florida Forever specifically for land buying in the Keys. The statutory authority for this set-aside expires in 2026.

PROGRESS TO DATE:

The State of Florida and Monroe County have built a highly effective partnership that delivers real results:

- Since the passage of the Florida Keys Stewardship Act, this collaborative land acquisition program has successfully **retired 591 development rights**—directly reducing liability while protecting environmentally sensitive lands.
- With Monroe County investing **\$45.7 million in local funds**, supported by **\$15.1 million from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection** and **\$12.4 million in federal grants through Florida Commerce**, this joint effort is working exactly as intended.

ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAND ACQUISITION:

- **Non-conservation Land Acquisition:** Legislative changes in 2018 allow the State to acquire non-conservation lands within the Keys’ Area of Critical State Concern (ACSC) to retire development rights. However, this requires dedicated State funding to implement.
- **Military Base Buffer Area Land Acquisition:** Hundreds of privately owned parcels remain within the military buffer areas of Naval Air Station Key West. In 2018, legislative changes prioritized NASKW within the State’s military buffer program, but additional State funding is needed to complete these acquisitions and protect base operations.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** the continued appropriation pursuant to the \$5 million set-aside in Florida Forever funding, authorized under the Florida Keys Stewardship Act, to enable the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to acquire land in the Florida Keys, helping to protect sensitive lands and private property rights.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation to extend this authority through 2036. The 2016 provision passed in the Florida Keys Stewardship Act authorized \$5M annually for land acquisition in the Florida Keys is set to expire in 2026.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislative strategy to ensure that land acquisition funding via our Florida Forever set-aside authorization remains stable and protected, regardless of overall Florida Forever allocations.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** appropriation request of \$2.5M for land acquisition, providing an alternative source of funding for land acquisition, should our set-aside not be funded because the Florida Forever program is once again not fully funded. Should our set aside be funded, then these additional appropriation funds would support land acquisition outside FF boundaries for the purposes of retiring development rights, military encroachment, and affordable housing.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** permanent inclusion of the Florida Keys Stewardship Act in the LATF, funded by documentary stamp taxes under Amendment 1, alongside other major state environmental priorities such as Everglades and springs restoration.

ENHANCING MONROE COUNTY'S FLOODING RESILIENCE

BACKGROUND/CHALLENGES

The Florida Keys are one of the state's most vulnerable regions to sea level rise and chronic flooding, yet they are also a **critical driver of Florida's economy, tourism, and military readiness**. Protecting infrastructure in the Keys is not just a local issue—it safeguards statewide evacuation capacity, reduces the risk of costly disaster recovery expenditures, and protects the state's taxpayers from escalating flood losses. Monroe County's road elevation and flood mitigation projects maintain safety, mobility, property values and economic stability in communities throughout the county.

- **Severe Road Flooding:** Persistent tidal and storm-related flooding is impacting communities across the Keys, undermining **public safety, commerce, property values, and quality of life**.
- **Scale of Costs:** A Countywide study completed in 2021 estimated **\$1.8 billion** in costs to elevate and protect Monroe's road system (not including municipal roads).
- **Funding Need:** The scale of this challenge requires layered support—federal, state, and local. Monroe County is pursuing every available funding stream, but sustained **state partnership is essential**.

SUCCESS WITH STATE & FEDERAL RESILIENCE PROGRAMS:

- **Resilient Florida Grant Program (2020):** Monroe has secured millions of dollars from this grant program, but the **50% local match requirement**, funding for ongoing operations and maintenance costs and other issues limit the County's ability to leverage this resource.
- **Army Corps Coastal Storm Risk Management Program:** In 2022, Congress authorized a **\$1.8 billion federal program** for the Florida Keys, identifying over **1,800 homes at risk of chronic flooding** in unincorporated Monroe. Future appropriations will fund mitigation for homes, businesses, and U.S. 1.
- **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP):** Monroe has secured **\$180 million** through HMGP, enabling road elevation projects and providing local match to state programs. These funds are critical but limited and must be paired with consistent State investment.
- Monroe has also secured an additional **\$5 million federal support for flood mitigation** through direct appropriation and Army Corp program.
- **Expanded Land Authority Powers:** In 2022, the Legislature expanded the Monroe County Land Authority's responsibilities to support residential flood resilience, including administration of state and federal grants for home elevations, rebuilds, and buyouts.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT funding for Monroe County's road adaptation/ flood mitigation project for Flagler Avenue** submitted to DEP's Resilient Florida Grant Program.
- ✓ **SUPPORT robust funding for the Statewide Resilient Florida Grant Program**, which has quickly become the backbone of local adaptation efforts.
- ✓ **SUPPORT adjustment of the 50% match requirement** to better reflect the fiscal realities of small counties like Monroe facing large-scale resilience needs.

WIND INSURANCE AND FLOOD INSURANCE

BACKGROUND/CHALLENGES

Property insurance—particularly wind coverage—is essential for the safety, stability, and economic health of Florida's coastal communities. **Citizens Property Insurance Corporation (Citizens)** is the primary provider of wind insurance in Monroe County. It was created by the Florida Legislature in 2002 as a government-backed "insurer of last resort" for homeowners in high-risk areas who cannot find coverage

in the private market. Most properties in Monroe County rely on Citizens for wind insurance, which underscores the lack of meaningful competition in the Florida Keys.

Monroe County already suffers from high insurance rates, which are compounded by annual increases. This contributes to the Keys' affordable housing crisis.

In recent years, the Legislature and regulators have sought to reduce its exposure by raising rates, relaxing the cap on annual increases, and encouraging private insurers to "take out" policies. These measures may reduce Citizens' portfolio, but they are doing so at the expense of affordability and fairness for residents in high-risk coastal communities like Monroe. Without legislative action, soaring insurance costs will threaten property values, economic activity, workforce stability, and the State's own compelling interest in maintaining affordable coverage.

Recent legislation has:

- **Raised the annual cap** on premium increases, implementing a 1% increase each year to 15%. Further, the annual caps do not (but should) include various additional annual fees and assessments.
- Forced Citizens policy holders to transition to private market carriers who select them even if the premium is **higher (can be 20% higher), and whose rates do not have an annual cap like Citizens**. Citizens policy holder consent to changing carriers is no longer required.
- Provided subsidies and reinsurance support to private carriers without tying those subsidies to premium controls for insureds.
- Imposed a new mandate on Citizens policyholders to carry **flood insurance**, even when outside FEMA flood zones. This mandate, while intended to improve coverage, is increasing the financial burden on homeowners. FEMA's new rating scheme Risk Rating 2.0 increases flood insurance rate 18% annually.

MONROE COUNTY CONCERNS

- **Highest Rates in Florida:** Citizens' wind premiums in Monroe are the highest in the state—**175% higher than the median coastal rate**.
- **Strong Building Codes, No Credit:** Monroe has the **most rigorous building standards in Florida**, yet these risk-reducing measures are not reflected in Citizens' rate-setting.
- **Premiums vs. Claims:** Since 2004, Monroe property owners have paid **over \$500 million more in premiums than they have received in claims**—a mismatch that undermines Citizens' rationale for higher rates.
- **Public vs. Private Loss Models:** Citizens relies heavily on **proprietary industry loss models**, which are opaque and fail to fully account for Monroe's stronger building codes and lower relative risk. Florida law provides for a **Public Hurricane Loss Projection Model (s. 627.0628, F.S.)**, developed by the State to be transparent, science-based, and publicly accountable. We seek clarity on Citizens' use and reliance on their models to ensure that fairness.
- **Affordability Mandate Ignored:** Florida law recognizes that "the absence of affordable property insurance threatens the public health, safety, and welfare and the economic health of the State." Yet Citizens has not applied any clear **definition or standard for affordability**, despite statutory direction.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation restoring the 10% annual Citizens rate cap for Monroe County (inclusive of any additional fees/assessments), recognizing the County's **unique affordability challenges, superior building codes and lack of meaningful insurance provider competition**.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** increase to Citizens' coverage limit to **\$1.5 million**, reflecting Keys' property values and avoiding underinsurance.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** rolling back requirement that Citizens' policyholders outside FEMA flood zones must carry flood insurance.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** the legislative advocacy of **Fair Insurance Rates for Monroe (FIRM)**, the community-based organization advocating fair, affordable property insurance in the Keys.

WORKFORCE/AFFORDABLE HOUSING

BACKGROUND/ CHALLENGE

Workforce and affordable housing is a particularly acute challenge in the Florida Keys. High housing costs threaten the ability of public and private employers to recruit and retain essential workers, from teachers and first responders to hospitality and service staff. Without accessible, affordable housing, the Keys risk workforce shortages that undermine the region's economy, tourism industry, and public safety. State policies, funding, and incentives are essential to enable Monroe County to maintain housing options that support Florida's broader economic and social stability.

In the Florida Keys, **unique development restrictions, limited land availability, and high construction costs** significantly increase the expense of developing workforce housing. Monroe County faces particularly acute pressures due to:

- **High land values due to** development constraints by environmental protections and public safety.
- **Limited development capacity** under the County's Rate of Growth Ordinance (ROGO).
- **Escalating housing costs** make it increasingly difficult for private and public sector employers to recruit and retain employees.

LEGISLATIVE MILESTONE: Passage of SB 1456 (2024) authorizing \$35M in Monroe County Tourist Development Council surplus funds for the construction of affordable housing for tourism sector workers.

Meeting the County's affordable/workforce housing challenge requires a **multi-pronged approach:** funding, incentives, and supportive policies. State-level policies that control property insurance costs and limit the proliferation of short-term rentals are critical to local affordability goals. Strategies such as directing affordable housing to commercial areas, combined with robust state funding, enhance the County's ability to develop workforce housing.

STATE FUNDING

State resources remain essential to local efforts, including:

- **Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC)** awards of Tax Credits and **SAIL funding**, which support both preservation and new development of workforce housing.
- **State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) funding** of approximately \$800,000 annually, helping income-eligible families achieve homeownership.

LOCAL EFFORTS

Monroe County and the **Monroe County Land Authority** actively purchase land, provide funding, and implement incentives to promote affordable housing.

Additional local measures requiring legislative authorization include:

- **Construction Performance Bonds Exemption:** Enable Habitat for Humanity to forgo performance bonds for new affordable housing development on 99-year leased County properties, lowering construction costs.
- **Ad Valorem Tax Relief:** Provide authority to grant tax relief for privately-owned residential properties that voluntarily provide long-term affordable/workforce rentals, incentivizing occupancy over short-term/vacation rental or vacancy.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation allowing Habitat for Humanity to **waive construction performance bonds** for new affordable housing on county-leased properties.

- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation enabling local governments to grant **ad valorem tax relief** to properties voluntarily used for affordable/workforce rental housing.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** continued **Tax Credit awards** to Monroe County, including protection of the Florida Keys set-aside. Support continued **SAIL funding** allocations to Monroe County.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** statewide measures that **control property insurance costs** and **limit short-term rentals** to strengthen housing affordability across the Keys.

PROTECTING ACSC PROTECTIONS FROM LAND USE/ DEVELOPMENT PREEMPTIONS

BACKGROUND / CHALLENGE

Monroe County, as an **Area of Critical State Concern (ACSC)**, serves as a statewide model for balancing growth, environmental protection, and public safety. Legislative preemptions that override local land use threaten this balance, risking environmental degradation, loss of community character, and reduced public safety. Monroe County supports sustainable agriculture and workforce housing, but **state incentives and preemptions must not compromise local planning controls** that have been carefully designed to protect the region's unique resources and ensure orderly growth.

Recent state legislation has advanced agricultural development, affordable housing, and post-hurricane redevelopment through **preemptions and incentives**, which can inadvertently undermine local land use authority:

- **Agriculture-related legislation:** There have been several bills passed over the past several years that limit local land use authority over agricultural operations.
- **Affordable housing legislation:** Recent legislation like the Live Local bills provide development incentives that conflict with Monroe County's **ROGO** and other comprehensive plan regulations. While Monroe County supports increasing affordable housing, these incentives must **complement rather than override local planning controls**.
- **Development Preemptions in SB 180:** SB 180 prohibits local governments from adopting more restrictive regulations on development after natural disasters. Counties throughout Florida are concerned about the breadth of this impact and will be pursuing several possible ways to narrow the preemption's scope. Efforts to narrow this preemption will be taken up by the Florida Association of Counties.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation to exempt Areas of Critical State Concern from land use and development preemptions or clarify that any use of or structures on private property remains subject to Monroe's ROGO ordinance, local comprehensive plan requirements, or state and federal environmental regulations.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation ensuring that state efforts to incentivize affordable housing development or protect/advance agricultural interests do not supersede Monroe County's ROGO ordinance and local comprehensive plan requirements or state and federal environmental regulations.

VACATION RENTAL IMPACTS ON WORKFORCE HOUSING

BACKGROUND/ CHALLENGE

Regulation of vacation rentals in Monroe County is a **critical statewide concern**. The Keys are a major driver of Florida's tourism economy, and a stable, locally-based workforce is essential to maintain hotels, restaurants, public services, and emergency response. Unchecked vacation rentals reduce long-term

housing availability, increase rental costs, and threaten workforce stability—issues that ripple beyond Monroe County to affect statewide economic health, public safety, and disaster resilience. State policies should enable local governments to **preserve long-term rental housing and protect workforce housing stock**, particularly in Areas of Critical State Concern.

Vacation rentals exacerbate Monroe County’s **affordable housing crisis** by reducing the already limited rental housing stock available to the local workforce and driving up rental costs. Residential development in the Florida Keys—both market-rate and affordable—is tightly constrained due to:

- State-imposed development limits to ensure a 24-hour evacuation time via the single transportation egress.
- Environmental protections and land scarcity, which further restrict available building sites.

Because new housing units cannot be built in numbers sufficient to meet workforce needs, the **proliferation of short-term vacation rentals has an outsized impact**. Each conversion of a long-term rental to a vacation rental removes an irreplaceable housing unit for local workers. Maintaining a stable workforce is critical to Monroe County’s tourism-based economy.

While Monroe County has some grandfathered regulatory authority over vacation rentals, it is **insufficient to fully manage the conversion of housing units** to short-term rentals or protect workforce housing.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ Support legislation providing a **vacation rental regulatory carve-out** for Monroe County based on its status as an Area of Critical State Concern, enabling the County to amend or update regulations to preserve and increase workforce housing supply.
- ✓ Support legislation safeguarding Monroe County’s **grandfathered vacation rental ordinance**, allowing local governments to update regulations without losing grandfathered status.
- ✓ Support legislation granting Monroe County stronger enforcement tools, including **higher penalties for violations**, to ensure compliance with local vacation rental regulations.
- ✓ Support legislation restoring local control over vacation rental regulations where necessary to **protect quality of life, public safety, traditional residential neighborhoods, and long-term workforce housing stock**.

MARINE PROTECTION

BACKGROUND/CHALLENGE:

BALANCING MARINE CONSERVATION WITH A THRIVING BOATING COMMUNITY

Preserving the health of Monroe County’s marine environment is critical not only to the region’s economy but also to its cultural heritage. As home to a vibrant boating community, including recreational boaters, commercial and charter fishing operations, and live-aboard residents, Monroe County faces the challenge of managing the impact that high levels of boat traffic have on its waters.

Unfortunately, the large number of boaters that visit and live on our waters has contributed to a rise in derelict vessels. Monroe County has the highest number of derelict vessels in the State. The Florida Legislature and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) have both recognized the threat these abandoned boats pose to navigation and the environment, as well as the unnecessary financial burden their removal places on taxpayers.

Monroe County has sought, secured, and continues to support regulations such as anchoring limits and the development of mooring fields to reduce vessel dereliction and abandonment. Additionally, ensuring

compliance with No Discharge Zone regulations is an ongoing priority, supported by the provision of a free vessel pump out service to maintain water quality.

LEGISLATIVE MILESTONES: Secured passage of SB 1086 (2021) designating Monroe as an anchoring limitation area, establishing a 90-day maximum for anchoring in same location (not in effect until 100 moorings are placed), and establishing specified anchoring areas in Monroe. Passage of Passage of SB 830 (2025) that defines derelict migrant vessels allowing for their expedient removal. Securing legislative appropriations for the development of mooring fields (2023 and 2025). Securing changes to the Derelict Vessel Grant program resulting in improved removal and funding processes (2024). Securing legislative appropriations for support of vessel pump out program (past 10 years).

FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT OF MONROE COUNTY VESSEL PUMP-OUT PROGRAM

The pristine waters of the Florida Keys, within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, attract high numbers of boaters from across the State and country. These waters are designated as a No Discharge Zone (NDZ) by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the U.S. Department of Environmental Agency (EPA), prohibiting the discharge of sewage from vessels. To help boaters comply with this regulation, Monroe County implemented a large-scale Mobile Vessel Pump-out Program in 2013. Monroe County is now expanding its efforts with a marina pump out initiative, aimed at increasing the number of available shoreside pump-out facilities throughout the Keys.

Monroe County requires all occupied vessels to provide a “proof of pump-out” and offers a free weekly mobile pump-out service. These measures have ensured nearly 100% compliance with NDZ regulations.

To date, the Mobile Vessel Pump-out Program has conducted over 214,000 pump outs, capturing over 2.8 million gallons of vessel sewage. Monroe County has traditionally funded this essential service through Boater Improvement Funds, Clean Vessel Act grants, and direct legislative appropriations. By offering this service at no charge, the county effectively incentivizes boaters to utilize the pump-outs, safeguarding water quality and protecting public health and the marine environment.

In 2021, the Legislature transferred management of the Pump-out Program to the DEP. However, contract and funding issues at FDEP in 2022 and 2025 prompted the temporary return of the program’s administration and funding to Monroe County to maintain consistent program operation. Despite these challenges, Monroe County and FDEP staff worked together to ensure seamless program operations during the transition.

At Monroe’s request, FDEP included funding and management of the pump-out program in its legislative budget request, and this support is expected to continue.

REQUESTED ACTION:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** continued FDEP funding and management of the pump-out program in Monroe County to ensure continued compliance with NDZ regulations.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** preemptions to local anchoring regulations, marine sanitation requirements, and at-risk and derelict vessel requirements.

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING PREEMPTION

CHALLENGE: In 2021, the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed into law HB 735, enacting Chapter 2021-214, Laws of Florida preempting local governments’ ability to issue new local contractors’ licenses. Current licenses expire on July 1, 2023, after which time only State-licensed general contractors and homeowners will be able to obtain work permits. Without a local license, small specialty contractors may not obtain work permits, preventing them from being able to perform work in their trade.

Monroe County has over 300 local contractors many of whom have spent years working only under their local specialty license, who may no longer pull permits as they have been doing their entire careers. The loss of this licensing threatens their livelihoods and businesses, and they are urging Monroe County to help them by asking state lawmakers to repeal this law.

Local licenses enable local contractors the ability to pull permits and perform work without having to obtain a state license that may require knowledge or skills that exceed the scope of specialty contractors. Some local contractors have been unable to qualify to test for a state specialty license because their experience is only local and not under a licensed state contractor, even if that experience is several decades.

Local licenses provide small contractors with a valuable marketing tool because they serve as an official, scrutinized demonstration of their backgrounds and qualifications, enabling them to differentiate themselves from contractors without that vetted experience.

Local licensing benefits small contractors' ability to be hired by licensed general contractors as sub-contractors. Because general contractors are required to carry insurance for themselves and subs, they prefer to hire sub-contractors that are already licensed and insured, to save them the cost of having to carry additional insurance.

Local licensing also exists to protect consumers by giving consumers a tool for differentiating between contractors with experience and qualifications from those without and ensuring qualified workmanship by contractors with sufficient insurance to protect homeowners and workers. Additionally, insured contractors protect homeowners who often are not properly informed that they are at risk of liability for any harm that befalls unlicensed, uninsured contractors working on their property.

Finally, the local licensing ensures compliance with federal regulations by requiring that contractors have knowledge of unique local environmental regulations, like federal floodplain or Endangered Species Act requirements. For example, fence installations in Key Deer habitat are a violation of federal law. An unlicensed contractor may not be aware of such regulations banning fences. Violations of federal laws leave the homeowner and the County liable.

LEGISLATIVE MILESTONE: In the 2023 session, the County secured a "carve out" from the preemption. However, this carve out did not exempt all local trades, therefore Monroe will continue to support a full exemption for Monroe County. The County will also work with the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) and other counties to pursue the repeal or significant amendment of this preemption.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** clarifying the language that fully exempts Monroe County as an Area of Critical State Concern.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation repealing Chapter 2021-214, Laws of Florida, including all the created or amended statutory provisions presently in effect, such as s. 163.211, F.S., to allow counties to retain the authority to operate programs requiring the licensure, certification, or registration of local contractors, and other occupations as determined by each county's governing body by ordinance or resolution.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** amending the law to remove the expiration date of local government occupational licensing requirements and programs existing on or before the effective date of Chapter 2021-214, Laws of Florida, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of county residents and businesses.

TRANSPORTATION

CHALLENGE: The Florida Keys is dependent upon safe, resilient, sustainable, and efficient access and travel along US 1. Traffic congestion and safety issues along this singular highway that connects the 112-

mile-long chain of islands affects the health, safety, welfare, economic sustainability, and quality of life of residents, businesses, and visitors.

- **Congestion-Reduction Projects on US 1:** In 2020, the Commission approved a set of projects along US 1, developed by a Keys-wide intergovernmental committee (Florida Keys Transportation Coordination Committee). The goal of this ranked list of projects (such as bus stops, intersection improvements, turn lanes, signage, and increased public transit) is to improve traffic flow and safety on US 1. A project of particular importance is the intersection of US 1, near MM 106, a significant and costly project. The project list was transmitted that list to FDOT for inclusion in the County's work plan. Continued coordination with FDOT District 6 to program these into the District 6 Work Program is a priority.

Additionally, the County has requested FDOT to expedite the programming of the proposed projects listed within the FDOT District 6 Monroe County Freight Mobility Improvement Study into the District 6 Work Program.

- **Army Corp Projects on US 1:** Continued coordination with FDOT and the Army Corp regarding the six revetments projects along US 1. Staff successfully negotiated with FDOT to program \$0.56 million for design to meet the match requirement for federal funding secured through the Army Corps of Engineers Keys Coastal Resilience Program.
- **Card Sound Bridge Replacement Project:** This is our most significant local bridge replacement project to date (size, evacuation route, new alignment expected). Staff continues to collaborate with District 6 staff regarding the imminent start of the PDE phase. We also need to continue coordinating with FDOT regarding the funding necessary for the next phases (design and construction.)
- **Bicycle Safety:** Monroe supports safer bike paths and fewer distracted drivers, to improve safety on our roads for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.
 - More shared use paths: Monroe supports continued efforts that extend, maintain, and improve shared use paths for bicycles and pedestrians on US 1, including the historic bridges and the Overseas Heritage Trail, and on local roads where feasible.
 - Reducing driver distraction: Drivers distracted by their phones account for 34% of crashes in Florida (representing 86,760 crashes, 732 deaths, and 55,247 injuries) and the problem is only growing. In Florida, screen interaction time increased by 5 seconds per hour from 2021 to 2022. This seemingly minor increase caused an estimated 3,500 additional crashes which cost an additional \$84 million and many lives. In Monroe County from 2020-2023, there were 3,631 crashes from distracted driving, including 17 fatal crashes, 571 injury crashes and 2,911 property damage crashes.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** continued coordination with FDOT regarding the inclusion of the Commission's prioritized projects in five-year work plan, and to expedite projects identified in FDOT's freight study.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** continued coordination with FDOT and FDEP for the Florida Keys' Coastal Resilience Project regarding the flood mitigation revetments on US 1.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** robust state funding for the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP). This funding is for maintaining and improving existing local bridges and local roads.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** continued efforts to advance County requests for funding from the local bridge set-aside program (federal funds) for local bridge replacements.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** efforts to improve bicycle safety, including more robust laws addressing phone use during driving and support for improved and expanded shared use paths along US 1 and local roads.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** robust funding for TAP program and advocate for an increase to the program's funding limit.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** funding for all modes of the state and local transportation infrastructure network.

FLORIDA SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM

BACKGROUND/CHALLENGE:

In Monroe County many working families face a paradox. The cost of living is among the highest in the state, driven by expensive housing, limited childcare options, and seasonal employment. Yet despite these financial pressures, many families earn just enough to be disqualified from the state's School Readiness Program, which provides subsidized early education and childcare for low-income households.

The eligibility criteria for School Readiness are based on federal poverty guidelines and do not account for regional cost-of-living differences. This means a family in Key Largo or Marathon earning slightly above the threshold may still struggle to afford childcare, while a family in a less expensive part of Florida with the same income might qualify for assistance. The result is a growing gap in access to early learning support for families who need it most.

Monroe County attempted to change the School Readiness Program eligibility criteria through legislative action in 2024. While the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe has advocated for more flexible support for families in high-cost areas like the Florida Keys, our attempts to change Monroe County's eligibility thresholds were not successful.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislative change to adjust the eligibility rules set in Florida law to enable more children of working families to enroll and benefit from the program.

HOME RULE

CHALLENGE: The State Legislature frequently and consistently pursues local government preemption legislation that violates local home rule powers. Home rule, conferred to Florida counties by Article VIII, section 1(f) and 1(g) of the Florida Constitution (1968), and by section 125.01, Florida Statutes, is the principle that the government closest to the people is the appropriate authority to serve the needs and requirements of the community. The preservation of this concept is essential to the operation of county governments in Florida, which allows counties to develop and implement county-based solutions to local problems.

- **Preemptions:** Commonly recognized preemptions include vacation rentals, local occupational licensing, single-use plastic bags, sunblock use, home-based businesses, seaports/cruise ships, tree-trimming. But they also include a wider range relating to overriding local land use regulations, agricultural, utilities, infrastructure, environmental, and fees/taxation. **Anticipated preemption legislation for 2025 includes property tax, term limits and sovereign immunity.**
- **Unfunded Mandates:** The State Legislature frequently passes legislation that compels local governments to provide a service, program, or benefit without providing the appropriate funding. Local governments face the burden of using local tax dollars to finance functions that they have little control over and compromise local governments' ability to provide services requested by our local communities.
- **Cost shifts:** The State Legislature frequently passes legislation that shifts the costs or increases local share requirements for services traditionally funded by the State, such as but not limited to County Health Departments, Courts, Clerks' offices, Juvenile Justice, and mental health services.
- **Restrictions of County Revenue Sources:** At the same time the State Legislation imposes more mandates and costs, it often pursues legislation reducing, restricting, or eliminating sources of revenue for county services, such as the Local Business Tax, Communication Services Tax, impact fees, transportation concurrency fees, State Park admission fees, and sales taxes.

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **OPPOSE** legislation that would revise current law in a manner that jeopardizes current local government-related revenues or preempts home rule authority.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** efforts to shift costs of services, implement unfunded mandates, reduce State funding for infrastructure, programs and services, or other legislation that is costly and limits Monroe County's ability to serve the needs of its citizens.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** legislation that preempts the legislative and policy-making powers of counties used to regulate land use and implement local zoning controls

GENERAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

ENVIRONMENT

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** robust funding for the Florida Forever Grant Program and Florida Communities Trust that provides for land acquisition, recreational opportunities for parks, open space, greenways trails and conservation to help meet growth challenges and protect natural resources.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** the continued designation of the Florida Keys as an Area of Critical State Concern.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation and funding to support continued implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation and funding that protects and preserves Florida’s coral reef tract.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** legislation that prevents counties from having local environmental protection programs that are stricter in nature than State or federal regulatory programs.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** any legislation that restricts State, county, and city government purchases of conservation land, and which would effectively eliminate land conservation efforts in the Florida Keys.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislative efforts that strengthen the existing roles and home rule powers of local governments to implement comprehensive planning programs that guide future development and encourage the most appropriate use of land and natural resources.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** legislation that preempts local communities from banning single use plastic bags, particularly coastal communities where plastic bags are not only an environmental pollutant but also pose a danger to ocean and coastal wildlife.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** county home rule authority, and current statutory provisions, which allow counties to retain their current transportation concurrency systems, and impact fees, as adopted by local ordinance.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** state legislation to prohibit new well stimulation activities, including hydraulic fracturing.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** efforts to increase offshore drilling activities.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** streamlining the permitting and regulatory processes for solar product manufacturers, installers, and consumers, and further supports reducing burdensome regulations that hinder solar market penetration.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** policies that provide appropriate resources and incentives to local governments to achieve statewide recycling goals and further supports comprehensive recycling initiatives that encourage increased participation of the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** measures that support the operations and functions of local emergency management.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** assistance for building/identifying an Out of County Shelter for residents of Monroe County in cases of mandatory evacuation during storm-related events and other emergencies.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** increased funding to county base grant funding.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** policies that bolster funding of the Emergency Management Preparation and Assistance Trust Fund (EMPA), which is to serve as a funding source for State and local emergency management, preparedness, communication, and training, and opposing legislative sweeps of these trust fund monies.

HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** robust funding for County Health Departments (CHDs).
- ✓ **SUPPORT** increased funding for core and crisis mental health and substance abuse services.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** efforts to increase supportive housing, employment, and education initiatives for people with behavioral health issues and/or disabilities.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** state funding for the provision of Baker Act *juvenile* services and facilities in the communities in which the juvenile and his/her family lives.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** funding for the Florida Healthy Start and Healthy Families program.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** increased state funding and policies that reduce food insecurity, to 1) increase the health and productivity of those currently without consistent access to healthy food, 2) consequently reduce the demand for public health and human services, 3) improve the financial security of those in need.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** the continuation of a coordinated Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) system, and appropriate and dedicated State funding for the TD program; protect the TD trust fund.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** policies that further shift state Medicaid costs to counties, and the continued evaluation of the county-state cost share arrangement.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation drawing down federal funds made available to Florida under the PPACA to expand health care coverage to certain individuals who earn up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level, if such a program does not further shift Medicaid costs to counties.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** policies that protect the ability of counties to provide coordinated, countywide systems of emergency medical services, and not limit the ability of county EMS transportation providers to be reimbursed for their services.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** maintaining a countywide regulatory system for EMS through the current Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN) process.

VETERANS

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** policies that allocate state funds to hire County Veterans Offices in counties to increase services and federal benefits for Florida veterans.

CLERKS FUNDING/JUDGESHIPS

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** continued attention to the adequate funding for the functions of the clerks of court, including an allocation process that results in a fair and sufficient distribution of court generated revenue.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** the decertification of any Monroe County Court judgeships and any reductions to the local judiciary.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** consolidation of judicial circuits.

FLORIDA RETIREMENT SYSTEM

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **OPPOSE** any benefit changes that result in an increase in the FRS county and county employee contribution rates.

- ✓ **SUPPORT** requiring all legislation that potentially results in an increase in the FRS contribution rate or the closing of the traditional pension plan to new employees to be analyzed and evaluated to determine the direct fiscal impact of proposed changes to all local and State government to be eligible for consideration.

LIBRARIES

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** recurring and non-recurring funding of State Aid to Public Libraries Grant Program, Library Cooperative Grant Program, Public Library Construction Grant, and Career Online High School program

COUNTY JAILS, INMATE MEDICAL COSTS, JUVENILE JUSTICE

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** policies that provide Medicaid eligibility for persons incarcerated in county jails while waiting for their cases and to ensure that existing Medicaid benefits are not terminated during incarceration.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** policies and initiatives which reduce juvenile detention through prevention, civil citation, treatment, and rehabilitation services.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** policies that ensure adequate safety supervision and facility maintenance at juvenile residential assessment centers and secure detention facilities.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** state investments in juvenile facilities to improve the conditions of secure confinement for detained youth without such costs being shifted to the counties.
- ✓ **OPPOSE** sentencing of State inmates to county jails, but support counties' ability to contract with the Department of Corrections for housing State inmates.

HOMELESSNESS

REQUESTED ACTIONS:

- ✓ **SUPPORT** legislation that creates a dedicated State funding source for homelessness programs and services.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** continued coordination with the State's homeless planning council, specifically as it recommends policies in support of the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness.
- ✓ **SUPPORT** the development of policies that would allow local governments to work with the State and federal government to serve target populations: the chronically homeless, Veterans and Families and children, with particular emphasis on children aging out of the foster care system.

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