



THE REPUBLICAN LIBERTY CAUCUS OF FLORIDA 2023 LEGISLATIVE POLICY POSITION PAPER

The Republican Liberty Caucus is a national grassroots organization working to advance the principles of individual rights, limited government, free markets, and personal freedom and responsibility.

For more than twenty years the Republican Liberty Caucus has been the strongest, most consistent voice for these principles within the Republican Party. Many Republicans talk about these principles, but the RLC has taken the lead in promoting Liberty candidates and advocating for Liberty legislation. We believe that less government means more liberty and we work through state and local chapters, and with our member activists all over the country to oppose government excess and demand accountability to the American people and the Constitution.

These principles have been the determining factor in the preparation of this legislative package. We call upon the members of the Florida Legislature to abide by these same principles as they decide the future of the great State of Florida and impact the lives of millions of Floridians.

Three Minute Summary:

The Republican Liberty Caucus is a national grassroots organization working to advance the principles of individual rights, limited government, free markets, and personal freedom and responsibility.

Regarding Campaign Finance Reform: It is time to put an end to the “legal laundering” of millions of dollars in special interest campaign contributions through political committees and electioneering communications organizations. We support legislation that would prohibit these transfers or contributions between PCs, ECOs, political parties and affiliated party committees.

Regarding the Second Amendment: Infringements on the rights of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms will not prevent criminals or sick and twisted individuals from manifesting criminal or evil intent. It will on the other hand make the lawful community less safe and less able to defend itself.

Regarding Term Limits: Eight years is enough! We support eight-year term limits for every office at every level of government. We will also support legislation being proposed by Recall Florida that would provide non-charter counties with the same election recall abilities as charter counties.

Regarding Criminal Justice Reform: The Florida legislature has made progress on this issue and should continue to seek further reforms recommended in the Crime and Justice Institute review. Our fourth amendment rights to privacy are being abused in many ways and with alarming frequency. We call on the legislature to amend the statute to require a warrant in order for law enforcement to surveil crowds of any size that gather on private property!

Regarding Education: We strongly support school choice programs that empower parents to have more control over the kind of education that works best for their child. We support legislation providing for partisan school board elections, as well as legislation giving voters the ability to recall school board members and elected Superintendents.

Regarding Spending and Taxation: The budget has grown by nearly twenty percent in two years and continues to grow faster than what would be required to keep up with population growth and inflation. We support an exhaustive budget review process to find and eliminate duplicative programs, unnecessary programs, and wasteful spending practices. Under no circumstances would we support increased taxation as a means to eliminate any future deficits should they arise.

Regarding Government Regulation: We support free market solutions to increase access and lower costs for consumers. This applies to health care, occupational licensing, government subsidy of the newspaper industry and Florida’s three tier system of regulation over the production, distribution, and sale of alcoholic beverages.

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CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM:

Election law in Florida provides for the establishment of “Political Committees” and “Election Communications Organizations” which can be operated by industry and trade groups, unions and other special interest organizations, and elected officials and candidates. In the case of elected officials and candidates these PCs and ECOs operate independently of candidate campaign accounts. They can accept unlimited contributions and spend unlimited amounts of money advocating for the election or reelection of said candidates thus making campaign contribution limits meaningless. PCs and ECOs can also make contributions to other PCs and ECOs which can then make unlimited contributions to PCs or ECOs operated by candidates, making it exceedingly difficult for voters to understand where the money really comes from that finance’s campaigns for public office.

It is time to put an end to the “legal laundering” of millions of dollars in special interest campaign contributions through political committees and electioneering communications organizations. We support legislation that would prohibit these transfers or contributions between PCs, ECOs, political parties and affiliated party committees.

SECOND AMENDMENT PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION:

The right to keep and bear arms is a natural God given right which is acknowledged by the US Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Florida. This right is the bulwark of Liberty which empowers the individual in the protection of his or her other natural rights. We oppose any legislation which would infringe on this right. We opposed SB 7026, the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas bill, for this very reason. We support legislation which would restore those rights of 18- to 20-year-olds that SB 7026 usurped.

The Republican Liberty Caucus of Florida supports Constitutional Carry. We support campus carry. We support concealed carry by properly trained and certified teachers and other school personnel on school grounds. We oppose risk protection order statutes, also known as “red flag laws,” that violate the due process rights of law-abiding citizens.

We oppose so called “assault weapons” bans. We oppose gun registration and buy back proposals. We oppose legislation requiring transfers of firearms, when neither party is a licensed dealer, to be conducted and processed by a licensed dealer.

Infringements on the rights of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms will not prevent criminals or sick and twisted individuals from manifesting criminal or evil intent. It will on the other hand make the lawful community less safe and less able to defend itself.

TERM LIMITS:

Eight years is enough! We support eight-year term limits for every office at every level of government.

We supported legislation during the 2022 session that would have established eight-year term limits for school board members. When the bill was amended in the Senate to 12 years, we retracted our support and opposed the bill as amended. We encourage the legislature to amend the statute and set term limits for school board members at eight years as originally passed by the house.

We will also support legislation proposed by Recall Florida that would provide non charter counties with the same election recall abilities as charter counties.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM:

Criminal justice reform is long overdue in Florida and desperately needed. In 2016 the legislature called for a comprehensive review of Florida’s criminal justice system and selected the Crime and Justice Institute to complete the review. The Florida legislature has made progress on this issue and should continue to seek further reforms recommended in the Crime and Justice Institute review.

PRIVACY RIGHTS:

Our fourth amendment rights to privacy are being abused in many ways

and with alarming frequency. Big Brother is everywhere and routinely poking his nose into areas where it does not belong violating the privacy rights of American Citizens. We support legislation which requires investigators or law enforcement officials to secure a warrant issued by a judge before accessing phones, phone records, or other electronic devices of Florida citizens.

During the 2021 session we opposed SB 44, the so-called drone bill, based on its authorization for law enforcement agencies to use drones to surveil crowds of fifty or more people without a warrant. We call on the legislature to amend the statute to require a warrant in order for law enforcement to surveil crowds of any size that gather on private property!

EDUCATION:

We strongly support school choice programs that empower parents to have more control over the kind of education that works best for their child. We support the expansion of charter schools, and we support the expansion of state-of-the-art career, technical and vocational education programs.

We support universal school choice but have reservations about vouchers issued to private schools as the means for accomplishing this. We encourage the legislature to investigate the possibility of issuing property tax rebates instead for those parents that want to choose a private school education for their child.

Passage last year of HB 1557 was a major step in the right direction. We would like to see the resulting statute expanded to include pre-k and grades four through eight.

We support legislation providing for partisan school board elections, as well as legislation giving voters the ability to recall school board members and elected Superintendents.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND TAXATION:

The annual budget adopted in 2022 is the largest in Florida history. The budget has grown by nearly twenty percent in two years and continues to grow faster than what would be required to keep up with population growth and inflation.

We support an exhaustive budget review process to find and eliminate duplicative programs, unnecessary programs, and wasteful spending practices. Under no circumstances would we support increased taxation as a means to eliminate any future deficits should they arise.

Florida is one of only two states that impose a sales tax on commercial leases (Arizona, which allows local governments to impose a similar tax, being the second) This sales tax was reduced from 6% in 2017 to 5.5%, effective in January 2020. We support completely eliminating this unnecessary tax.

Corporate welfare comes in many shapes and sizes, but always at the expense of hard-working Florida taxpayers. The granting of tax revenues given to billionaire owners of sports franchises for the purpose of renovating stadiums is a prime example. We support repeal of legislation passed in 2014 that rewarded some of the wealthiest Floridian, and even non-Floridian, sports franchise owners at the expense of everyday Florida taxpayers.

GOVERNMENT REGULATION:

We support free market solutions to increase health care access and lower health care costs for consumers.

We support reform of Florida's occupational licensing requirements.

We support ending the government subsidy of the newspaper industry with taxpayer dollars. Required public notices should be posted to websites and social media, instead of outdated print media, saving Florida taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

We support reform of Florida's three tier system of regulation over the production, distribution, and sale of alcoholic beverages. The present

system is protectionist in nature and not free market oriented. There should be more flexibility for smaller breweries to directly sell their products in house and through retailers without having to go through a distributor.

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