

ADVERTISEMENT

SOUTH FLORIDA 100 OPINION

South Florida 100: Happy Mother's Day!

SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL | MAY 07, 2021



Colorful drawing - Mother's Day card ** OUTS - ELSSENT, FPG - OUTS * NM, PH, VA if sourced by CT, LA or MoD **
(Carol Yepes/Getty)

Our panel of 100 influential leaders discusses the most important issues affecting

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)



Anthony J. Abbate, architect

Last week: March 9, 2020 – given 13 cases and two dead in Florida – our governor declared a state of emergency, stating: “I am responsible for meeting the danger presented

to this state and its people.” As of May 4, with 3075 cases and 41 deaths reported; 10,000 cases presenting variants of concern; and 36,009 Floridians dead, “we are no longer in a state of emergency.” Prohibitions were placed on prudent actions to ensure public health because “it’s the evidence-based thing to do.” Do we “trust the vaccine” or those who are unvaccinated? We’re clearly not out of the woods yet!

Looking ahead: The objective of the “Las Olas Mobility Project” – a grant-funded project in the works for four years – is to enhance safe mobility to all who use Las Olas Boulevard from Andrews Avenue to A1A. It presents an opportunity to apply state-of-the-art best practices to improve access for the benefit of all. Residents should familiarize themselves with the current plans, which will be going up for approval in the coming weeks. There are elements of the plan that are exclusionary and do not reflect contemporary best practices to improve access to various modes of travel.



Wael Barsoum, M.D., president and CTO, Healthcare Outcomes Performance Co.

Last week: COVID-19 deaths are declining in the United States. Health experts credit the recent decline to the

rollout of COVID-19 vaccines. The seven-day average is currently 670 deaths, the lowest seven-day average of new deaths reported since last July, and this is an 80% drop since January. On Friday, the U.S. surpassed the 100 million mark of people fully vaccinated. Approximately 43.6% of the population, nearly 145 million people, have received at least one dose of vaccine and 30.5% of the population are the fully vaccinated.

Looking ahead: Although we’re close to resuming life as usual in the United States, globally the pandemic is hitting harder in places. India is now the epicenter of the worst ongoing coronavirus outbreak. Despite hope in the United States, we can’t be blinded by the light at the end of the pandemic. India’s surge is a reflection

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

Sign up now

adapting to it. If we can work together to fight this, hopefully we can save more than a million lives in the coming year.



Robin Bartleman, member, Florida House of Representatives

Last week: Florida's election served as a model, so why is the Legislature fixing a problem that doesn't exist? SB 90 is characterized as a guardrail to safe elections. In reality, it creates barriers for the 1.5 million law-abiding Floridians who used drop boxes. It caps the number of ballots a person can drop off at two, requires drop boxes be staffed, and requires vote-by-mail requests be submitted each general election. These new requirements are unnecessary; you can take your ballot and anyone else's to a mailbox at any time. It's the signature verification process that protects the sanctity and security of elections.



Lori Berman, member, Florida Senate

Last week: A bill I filed this session to address significant learning losses in our elementary-aged students due to the "COVID slide" was amended onto another bill that passed this session. Once signed into law by the governor, parents will be empowered to retain their struggling K-5 student in their current grade level for the 2021-22 school year. The written retention request must be sent to the school principal by June 30, 2021. The bill also encourages parents and school leaders to create individualized education plans with the goal of bringing students up to grade-level readiness.

Looking ahead: On Monday, May 17, the Florida Legislature will convene a special session to debate bills related to a new gaming compact with the Seminole Tribe of Florida. This new 30-year, \$500 million compact was already negotiated with Gov. DeSantis, but it will be up to the Legislature to ratify it. Highlights include the creation of a state gaming commission, the decoupling of pari-mutuels from racing and a huge expansion toward online statewide sports betting. While

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

because Amendment 3 from 2018 requires all gaming expansions to be approved by the voters first.



Lauren Book, member, Florida Senate

Last week: As I return to Broward County, I am asked what we accomplished. I am proud that when it comes to child safety, we changed the laws to create a

comprehensive, bipartisan overhaul of Florida's child welfare system that will help ensure Florida's most vulnerable children are protected. We also closed a massive loophole that allowed sex offenders to avoid registration by failing to pay sentencing fines. Thanks to this new law, that loophole is officially closed! Yes, some bad laws (making voting harder and punishing peaceful protestors) were passed, but there were also some very bright spots for Florida's children.



Traci Callari, President, Broward League of Cities; Hollywood commissioner

Looking ahead: Of all the many roles I have in life, my most important is being a mother. As we celebrate

Mother's Day, I look back on the lives of my children and my heart is full. There were happy times, sad times and lots of times when I asked myself, "what now?" As we all know, there is no instruction book on being a Mom! The responsibility of motherhood is enormous, but the rewards are endless. I wish all the moms out there a very special Mother's Day: Enjoy it, this day is for you!



Kathleen Cannon, president, United Way of Broward County

Looking ahead: Did you know that one in five people will be affected by a mental health condition in their lifetime?

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and it's important to remember that it's OK to NOT be OK – especially during times like these. If you or someone you know is lonely, depressed or anxious, it's essential to come together to care.

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

communicate and connect. Call 211 for everyday behavioral health resources or for assistance during a crisis. Help is here for you in Broward County!



Angelo Castillo, commissioner, Pembroke Pines

Last week: COVID has taught us the casualties associated with pandemics and how to beat them. But it's also taught us what government can do when pressed to address a concern. That theme is important to underscore always. In each city, county and state there are citizen boards, some more powerful or influential than others, that advise, examine issues or help decide them on behalf of the people we elect. Get involved in these boards. Don't let appointments to them become acts of political campaign patronage, but instead insist that they be merit-based allotments of capable persons. Join these groups and take part. In my city, we've long needed a citizen's budget and finance committee to help keep an independent eye on spending. My city commission doesn't like the idea of forming one. I might just form one anyway because taxpayers are asking for it. And when they express an interest, we in government should accommodate, not obstruct, their wishes. Get involved. Stay involved. Make a difference.



Richard Clark, CEO, Clark Leadership Consulting

Last week: Videotaping law enforcement officers has been widely challenged. While it has proven to be significant in recent court cases, it deserves greater understanding. Law enforcement is under fire because of the practices of some officers. It should also be noted that recording an interaction can protect and document outrageous claims of unlawful conduct by an officer. A camera is not a weapon used to intimidate, nor should the act of recording interfere. Keeping a safe distance, acting responsibly and respecting the safety of all parties must govern behavior.

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

Sign up now



Joseph Cox, president and CEO, Museum of Discovery and Science

Last week: Since 1979, May has been a dedicated time to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI)

Heritage, with Asian Pacific American Heritage Month officially designated in 1992. May commemorates the first Japanese immigrants to the U.S. in May 1843 and recognizes the work of thousands of Chinese laborers who helped build the transcontinental railroad that was completed in May 1869. This week, the Museum of Discovery and Science hosts our 10th Annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration, an opportunity to celebrate AAPI voices, history, culture and accomplishments and reaffirm our commitment to advance diversity, equity, access and inclusion.



Michael De Lucca, president, Broward Regional Health Planning Council, Inc.

Last week: Najee Harris, the 24th selected player in the first-round of the 2021 NFL Draft, hosted a draft party at

the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program, a homeless shelter in Richmond, Calif. During his childhood, he lived there for several years with his parents and four siblings. For the draft party, he provided a large food donation to all of the current residents living there. Najee wanted to give back to the community and to show he is always around to provide a helping hand. Congratulations Najee, on being drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers and for being an admirable role model!

Looking ahead: Join me in celebrating all of the wonderful mothers by wishing them a happy and special Mother's Day. Whether you are dedicating this day to a mother, stepmother, friend, sister, grandmother or aunt, this holiday reminds us all of the inspirational women who dedicate their lives to the wellbeing of their families and friends. If you are unable to spend the day with your loved ones, pick up the phone and call, FaceTime or text someone special today and let them know how much they are loved and appreciated! Wishing everyone a wonderful day!



Last week: Florida's governor continues to earn the nickname Ron "DeSanitize" by issuing an executive order suspending COVID-19 emergency requirements such as mask mandates in local governments. Media articles

highlight variant spread and groups like religious and youthful populations avoiding vaccination, but he doesn't think the virus is still a major threat, emphasizing that vaccines are now in ample supply. Availability is one thing; utilization is quite another. Understandably, local government officials are very alarmed since they're losing control. Politics should not override public health issues. Promoting "individual freedom" is laudatory, but not when it endangers the vital health of the community.

Looking ahead: Following President Biden's recent address to the House and Senate, Congress is contemplating how to implement action that will make a \$4.1 trillion investment modernize America's infrastructure, reverse climate change, expand educational opportunities like free community college courses and beginning prekindergarten instruction, and shore up a safety plan for working families. It's ambitious. And that doesn't include other projects on guns, immigration, police actions and accessible voting rights. Covering the expenses will require extensive alterations in the tax codes involving income and capital gains. In a Senate with 50 Democrats and 50 Republicans, the process will be challenging.



Andrew Duffell, president, Research Park at Florida Atlantic University

Last week: South Florida has been a hub for tech since before IBM invented the personal computer in Boca Raton

in the 1980s, Motorola and Blackberry developed their smartphones in Sunrise and Boynton Beach and Citrix was created. Florida Atlantic University, Palm Beach State and Broward College and our school districts have been teaching kids about technology careers for years. We are now seeing the fruits of all those years of effort and need to strengthen our brand by reinforcing investments in education and marketing ourselves as a tech business destination, not just a vacation hotspot.

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)



Last week: This week, I was honored to join several municipalities for the National Day of Prayer events on May 6. The National Day of Prayer is an annual day of observance, inviting people of all faiths to pray for the

nation. It was created in 1952 by a joint resolution of the United States Congress and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman. This past year has truly been trying times for everyone in our community, and I am hopeful that this year's National Day of Prayer brings peace to many, no matter your faith or religion.

Looking ahead: I was excited to join the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau for the launch of the new destination brand, reflecting our community's vibrant and inclusivity. The new branding brings together the greatness of our 31 municipalities, regardless of gender, size, race, age, sexual orientation or religious beliefs – Visit Lauderdale welcomes everyone under the sun. I look forward to seeing this new branding everywhere as we show the world our incredible community!



Dan Flynn, vice president for research, Florida Atlantic University

Last week: In the movie "The Martian," there's a scene with a terrible windstorm. This is not possible, because the

density of the Martian atmosphere is 1/1000th of that on Earth. Maximum wind speeds on Mars are predicted to be 3 mph. That's why the new drone on Mars, Ingenuity, is such a marvel. It has two large propellers moving in opposite directions at incredibly fast speeds so they can displace enough air to fly. Its mission is to identify where life may have existed and direct the Rover to investigate and test for signs of ancient life.



Lois Frankel, member, U.S. House of Representatives

Last week: The Restaurant Revitalization Fund established by President Biden's American Rescue Plan

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

pandemic-related revenue. Recipients are not required to repay the funding as long as funds are used for eligible uses no later than March 11, 2023. This is welcome relief to an industry that has been a driving economic force in Florida hit hard by COVID-19. Apply at restaurants.sba.gov.



Beam Furr, member, Broward County Commission

Last week: The Broward County Climate Change Task Force has formally adopted the newest update to our Climate Change Action Plan. The Climate Change Action Plan is the blueprint that Broward will use to build a more sustainable and resilient future. The update includes major revisions to the policies on electric vehicles, clean water, adaptive infrastructure, beach renourishment, coral reefs and much more. All of these environmental issues are going to be the defining challenges of this generation. The update will guide us in protecting our home from climate change and preserving our ecosystems. This approval will resonate for decades to come.

Looking ahead: Rep. Liz Cheney has lost the support of her Republican colleagues for being willing to speak the truth about November's election. She made this decision knowing it would probably cost her a leadership position, because truth matters more than a quest for power. This has major implications for our democracy as we look ahead. We will need elected leaders to stand up and risk their political careers for the good of our country. The insistence on truth matters far more than blind allegiance to one person. Our democracy can only thrive if all of us stand up to defend it.



Anna Fusco, president, Broward Teachers Union

Last week: "All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." These simple words by Abraham Lincoln sum up why we honor our moms on Mother's Day. They brought us into this world, provided us with knowledge and tools to be successful, cheered us when things

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

lucky enough to have them still with us or not, it's important to tell them "I love you" on Mother's Day and every day.



Michael Gottlieb, member, Florida House of Representatives

Last week: The Air and Sea Show returns to South Florida, an expression of freedom and an example of our great military might. The show represents all that is good in America: innovation, freedom, skill precision and integrity. This comes at a time when our governor has signed a bill to diminish our ability to get to the polls. The bill is allegedly designed to boost integrity and transparency and was signed before an invite-only crowd that included only Fox News as the sole source of media to broadcast the event: A tell-tale sign, in my opinion, about the true motive behind the bill.

Looking ahead: This week we will be preparing for the new gaming compact in Florida. I truly do not understand the fact that as a state we do not favor corporate welfare yet allow gaming for only a few. If we are going to expand the compact, why not open gaming in Florida to all, so that all can profit and the state can add to general revenue? The compact also disenfranchises our current pari-mutuel operators and is opposed by anti-gambling groups. We should have full and open gaming, regulate it, tax it and fund programs for our most needy, our schools and provide employment and mental health assistance for those who can benefit from it.



Dan Gropper, dean, College of Business, Florida Atlantic University

Last week: Parts of the Biden Tax plan have been rolled out and familiar themes were struck. The rich need to pay their fair share of taxes – so what is the "fair share?" And who pays what shares now? The latest data from the IRS shows that the top 5% earned just over 36% of total income and paid more than 60% of the total income tax. The top 1% earned just over 20% of total income and paid just over 40% of the total federal income

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

Looking ahead: Should the intellectual property of those companies that developed the various vaccines be given away? If so, why not other intellectual property? Who will want to invest in the next new drug or idea? Property rights are at the core of a free enterprise economic system. Without them, the system will inevitably crumble. Those who are advocating socialism in America could not be more pleased.



Marlon A. Hill, of counsel, Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman, P.L.

Last week: The recent spontaneous spark of community connecting events around #MiamiTechWeek further positioned our region to claim global standing for being a “Capitol of Capital,” where our human, financial, innovation and cultural assets converge. One of our key challenges will be to ensure that this door of economic opportunity is able to reach all levels of our multicultural community. In building this tech ecosystem, our business, community and government leaders must collaborate to stretch the status quo outside our comfort zones and open doors that may still remained closed in other industry sectors. Leading with deliberate purpose, let’s wrap this gift for the next generation.

Looking ahead: As we approach our summer days, we are about to learn whether we can take personal responsibility for our public health knowing all the facts. Should there be another spike in COVID cases, we will either have to attribute it to our indiscipline and reticence or our haphazard dueling public policy

SECTIONS

[Jumble Daily & Crossword](#)
[Play Now](#)

of cases, we can either salute our efforts in herd immunity vaccinations or the trust placed in our fellow citizens who exercise their freedoms but take extra care. If we each play our part, I pray that we see a brighter sun either way as the summer unfolds into hurricane season.



Debbi Hixon, member, Broward County School Board

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

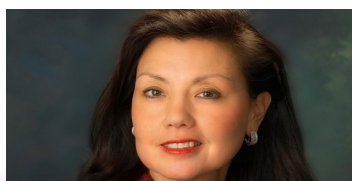
and determined to provide our students with the best education possible, regardless of the modality of learning. They pivoted more times than we realize this past year. Each time they pivoted, they stepped up to learn new skills in a short period of time to engage students and ensure students had access to lessons and learning. Teachers and staff, I am impressed by, and grateful for, your efforts and ingenuity. Thank you for achieving great things despite the hardships; you are my heroes!

Looking ahead: The month of May is National Mental Health Awareness month, a time to educate and advocate about mental health to end its stigma. It is important for people to get diagnosed early so that they can get treatment and recover, just as if they had a physical illness. It is OK to not be OK, and it is also OK to reach out to someone when you are feeling sad or depressed. If you are sick, you seek medical help, and if you are experiencing mental health issues, you should also seek help. You are worth it!



**Jason Hughes, executive director,
ArtServe**

Last week: Broadway was cleared to reopen last week, welcoming back theatergoers and music aficionados after a year of dark theaters. While most will ramp-up by the fall, this opens the possibility our local performing arts venues will be allowed to reopen at more favorable capacities. Florida Grand Opera has been successful at running micro-performances throughout South Florida during the pandemic. The same goes for other local theater troupes and symphonies. Performances at ArtServe have returned. Broward Center runs a parking lot experience for performances. As we begin to see rules change, it is time for the light on our community theater stages to shine, as normalcy will soon be the hottest ticket in town.



**Belinda Keiser, vice chancellor, Keiser
University**

Last week: Thanks to the bipartisan leadership of Senate

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

recognizing the importance of water safety for Florida's children. The bill encourages parents to register kids for swim lessons by having public schools distribute water safety information. The bill doesn't mandate swim lessons. However, it reminds us that learning to swim at a young age can instill positive health habits in children while helping save lives. Encouraging children to learn to swim and enjoy this critical skill will help ensure a brighter future for Florida families.



Marty Kiar, property appraiser, Broward County

Last week: Congratulations to Monica Cepero on being selected as the next Broward County administrator. Monica

serves as deputy county administrator under Bertha Henry and has been chosen to fill this important role upon Henry's retirement in March 2022. Monica will oversee a government with thousands of employees and a multibillion-dollar budget, and she will make decisions that impact the lives of every Broward County resident and visitor. Having previously worked with Monica while serving on the Broward County Commission, I am confident that she will do an excellent job carrying on the great work of our retiring Administrator Bertha Henry.



Tracey Labgold, chairperson, Anti-Defamation League Florida

Last week: Antisemitic incidents in Florida rose by a staggering 40% in 2020, with 127 harassment and

vandalism incidents, compared to 91 incidents in 2019. While in-person interactions were limited due to COVID-19, we quickly learned the term "Zoom bombing." Haters found their way into our religious and educational spaces in ways never seen before, like the funeral of a loved one in North Florida, Shabbat services for various synagogues, kindergarten classes and more. The continued rise in antisemitism that ADL tracks remains a threat not only for the Jewish community but should alarm us all.

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

Sign up now



Chip LaMarca, member, Florida House of Representatives

Last week: I am happy to announce the 2021 legislative session has come to a close! One of the priorities this year was running legislation for the Department of Economic Opportunity, focused on fixing our broken unemployment system. At the beginning of the pandemic, thousands of people were unable to get into the unemployment system. DEO will now be required to implement an integrated modular system hosted in a secure cloud, to make sure the system can support any massive influx of claims that might come in. I am proud to say the bill passed!

Looking ahead: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fort Lauderdale community lost a true leader in Pio Ieraci. He was the president of the Galt Mile Civic Association for decades, a community leader, and a friend. This week, there is a dedication in his honor that I had the privilege of attending and speaking at to remember our dear friend. We worked together to rebuild and make our condominiums safer. He was always engaged civically, so it was a shock to learn about his sudden passing. He will forever be in my memory.



Ina Lee, owner, Travelhost Elite of Greater Fort Lauderdale

Last week: Deputy County Administrator Monica Cepero was voted by the Broward County Commission to be the next county administrator, replacing Bertha Henry when she retires in March. Groomed by Henry, Cepero has been her top assistant since 2017 and has an impeccable background to take over, providing continuity and eliminating the need for a national search. She will oversee an annual budget of \$5.4 billion and 6,000 employees as well as our seaport, airport and convention and visitors' bureau.

Looking ahead: The Environmental Protection Agency took a major action this week to help fulfill President Biden's strategy to slow global warming. Over the next 15 years, the EPA will be cutting by 85% hydrofluorocarbons, major drivers of climate change. This is good news to help avoid the catastrophic impact of global warming.

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)



Tim Lonergan, former mayor, Oakland Park

Last week: The Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research reports that approximately

325,000 new residents relocated to Florida from other states from April 2020 to April 2021. According to Move.org, Florida ranks as the no. 1 destination for Americans relocating from other states. Florida also ranks no. 4 for residents relocating to other states. The COVID-19 pandemic, complicated by the difficult stay home recommendations and social distance restrictions, may have been a determining factor for people deciding to move to Florida. Learn more at www.Move.org.

Looking ahead: As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to subside and life slowly transitions back to the old normal, Brightline has officially authorized construction of new local commuter stations in Aventura and Boca Raton. We will all benefit in one way or another with the eventual increase in regional mass transit opportunities and local commuter stations. Brightline expects to announce up to five new stations in Miami-Dade in the near future and is reporting the new route to Orlando is scheduled to be complete in December 2022. Fort Lauderdale may currently have the only station in Broward, but others are sure to follow.



Charlotte Mather-Taylor, executive director, Area Agency on Aging of Broward County

Last week: Gov. DeSantis issued an executive order suspending all local coronavirus mandates. According to the CDC, in Broward, approximately 68.5% of people over 65 and 31.25% of the overall adult population have been fully vaccinated. It is as important now as ever for people to be vaccinated since mask restrictions are being lifted and more people are active in the community. If you have not yet received your vaccine and are seeking an appointment, please call the Area Agency on Aging at 954-745-9567, and we will be happy to assist you.

Looking ahead: Did you know that 46.1% of older Americans volunteer at least

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

www.nationalservice.gov. On May 20, the Area Agency on Aging is hosting a virtual luncheon to induct 14 honorees into the Nan Hutchinson Senior Hall of Fame. We will celebrate these exemplary Broward seniors who give back to our local community by volunteering their time and sharing their talents to help others. Whether helping children, animals, veterans or more, each one of our inductees is making a difference. Visit www.adrcbroward.org/broward-senior-hall-of-fame to purchase tickets and support those who are making an impact.



Clarence McKee, president, McKee Communications

Looking ahead: When Senator Tim Scott, R-S.C., said that America is not a racist country in his response to President Biden's address to Congress, the president and vice president were forced to agree. For that comment, he has been the recipient of vitriolic racist attacks. Since then, there has been no condemnation of such attacks by Black political and civil rights leaders or much of the mainstream media. Their silence is shameful and disgraceful! Scott is hated by the left because he is Black, Republican, conservative and supports President Donald Trump's economic and educational initiatives, which benefitted Black America!



Nancy Metayer, city commissioner, Coral Springs

Last week: We reflected on a legislative session which prioritized politically charged legislation and did not have the best interest of the people. We saw an unwillingness to address a broken unemployment system, a negligent response to COVID-19, a nonchalant approach to addressing environmental concerns, the use of preemption to weaken local government, limiting our right to vote through voter suppression, and confine our right to protest through censorship. If this legislative session didn't teach us anything, it taught us that the working class will be impacted by a legislature that views everyday Floridians as disposable.

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

Sign up now

regulating utilities, hindering local progress on clean energy. HB 839 preempts local governments from regulating energy infrastructure, including renewables. SB 1028 bans transgender children from participating in sports. SB 50 requires sales tax to be collected on all in-person and online sales, raising taxes by \$1 billion. Floridians deserve to live in a state that centers equity and a better quality of life for all.



Peter Moore, president, Chen Moore and Associates

Last week: This past week, the Federal Treasury said it expects to borrow \$463 billion in the current April-June quarter, which will be part of its plans to borrow \$2.28 trillion for the full budget year, which ends September 30. The \$463 billion represents a significant jump from the government's initial estimate three months ago that it would need to borrow just \$95 billion in the current quarter. The government ran up a record \$3.1 trillion budget deficit last year, reflecting the COVID relief spending and a drop in revenues caused by the recession. We need to stop reckless spending.

Looking ahead: Last year, the Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) created a task force on local government efficiency. The task force has effectively finalized its recommendations to streamline government processes. The Local Government Efficiency Task Force, established by the Legislature last year, is set to hand its final report to Gov. Ron DeSantis, Senate President Wilton Simpson and House Speaker Chris Sprowls by June 1. The report includes recommendations on elections, public meetings, reporting, pension plans, unfunded mandates and business taxes. The question comes down to whether or not these recommendations will make next year's legislative agenda.



Jennifer O'Flannery Anderson, president and CEO, Community Foundation of Broward

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

approved requiring schools provide information about the importance of learning to swim as well as where to get swimming lessons. Broward County already helps offset swimming lesson costs, thanks to a partnership with the Children's Services Council and others. Go online to www.watersmartbroward.org for a \$40 coupon toward lessons for children four and younger. Last year, 68 Florida children died from accidental drowning. We can avoid more heartbreaking tragedies by teaching our children how to stay safe in the water.

Looking ahead: Manatees are gentle creatures beloved by anyone lucky enough to see them drift along our coast. Sadly, 2021 has been a particularly deadly year for this threatened species. More than 647 manatees have died in 2021, which is nearly double the same point in recent years. Manmade threats and cold weather are the biggest dangers to manatees. Loss of sea grass beds that feed manatees is a growing problem. Just as boaters have learned to slow down and make way, we must all do more to prevent sewage spills, fertilizer runoff and other pollution damaging life-giving sea grass.



Frank Ortis, mayor, Pembroke Pines

Last week: The Florida Legislature completed its 2021 session with many hits and misses. Rather than dwell on what I consider the many misses, there were a number of

good things that came out of the session. There was an attempt to lower homeowners insurance premiums, provide more broadband coverage for rural areas, spend an additional \$95 million annually to provide more people with intellectual and developmental disability access to services needed to remain independent, and a law to help juveniles arrested and charged to expunge their record to improve chances to get a good job. I'm looking on the bright side.

Looking ahead: The vacation rental bills aimed at further restricting local governments from regulating vacation rental properties didn't make it through this legislative session. Originally, these bills would have preempted all regulations of vacation rentals to the state, including inspection and licensing. Amendments occurred, but I am relieved these bills died again and we were able to keep our home rule rights for vacation rentals for another year. I am not against state and

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

Sign up now

requirements. However, we need to preserve home rule rights in these types of circumstances for our residents.



Tina Polsky, member, Florida Senate

Last week: On Thursday, the governor held a secretive signing of the restrictive SB 90, the voter suppression bill.

Not only is this an unnecessary bill, it will lead to less access and more hurdles for Floridians to vote. To add insult to injury, he did not allow the local press into the event and only Fox News was present. As it turns out, Fox knew nothing about this arrangement. Was this bill to help Floridians or to give the governor a national stage? He is still our governor and should be making voting as accessible as possible, not signing legislation in secret that harms our citizens.



Tom Powers, chairman, Republican Party of Broward County

Last week: Career politician Charlie Crist is officially running for Florida governor. Conservatives should never

forget Crist's abrupt switches from Republican to Democrat. Now, Crist tries to sell himself as a moderate who works with both sides, but the truth is, Crist votes with Ilhan Omar 100% of the time. On the issues of immigration, taxes, gun rights, abortion, law enforcement, election security, free speech and government intrusion into our lives, Crist is indistinguishable from Omar and Nancy Pelosi. Charlie Crist has terrible ideas for Florida, and voters must reject his political ambitions for the sake of the state.



Harold Pryor, state attorney, 17th Judicial Circuit, Broward County

Last week: During Public Service Recognition Week, we recognize and honor the dedication of all the public

servants who work — often behind the scenes and with little acknowledgement — to

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

mention for the staff of the Broward State Attorney's Office and everyone in the criminal justice system who works for justice, equity and to promote public safety for everyone in our community.



Philip Purcell, CEO/President, Marine Industries Association of South Florida

Last week: Recent commentary focusing attention on the need for infrastructure investment in the four remaining naval shipyards brings attention to the parallel to private shipyards. In 1996, the Navy had eight shipyards and the U.S. could also boast 21 boatyards building recreational vessels over 80 feet. Today, less than 20% remain. South Florida has maintained a niche as the yacht refit and repair capital, with a \$12.1 billion impact. An increased investment in the annual \$20 million small shipyard grant program is important to prepare resilient infrastructure for the remaining yards to maintain their envied position and economic value into the future.

Looking ahead: The Marine Research Hub is once again partnering with Ocean Exchange to award over \$250,000 to innovators with solutions possessing the ability to generate economic growth while reducing the use of nature's resources. The competition will attract the brightest minds from around the world to Fort Lauderdale this October, highlighting South Florida as a center of the Blue Economy. Previous winners had their battery included in Mars exploration and another turned CO2 into fuel. With the great research being produced by Marine Research Hub affiliate schools, we are optimistic Florida will be well represented. Entries are now being accepted. Visit oceanexchange.org.



Larry Rein, CEO and President, ChildNet

Last week: The story of a Hendry County school principal hitting a six-year-old child with a paddle received national attention this week. In and of itself the story is stunning. Horrifying. Just as frightening, if not more, is that, according to The New York Times' report, in 1977 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled school corporal punishment

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

though Hendry County does expressly forbid it. This is baffling. Can anyone today possibly think that such behavior somehow helps rather than seriously harms children?



Gary Resnick, commissioner, Wilton Manors

Last week: Governor once again preempts local governments from adopting appropriate COVID safety policies, such as requiring that people wear masks in city and county buildings or at public events. Publix, correctly so, announced that notwithstanding the governor's order, it would still require masks in all stores. The governor's order will likely have the effect of residents and business owners not attending public meetings. Maybe that's his intent.



Nan Rich, member, Broward County Commission

Last week: This week, Broward County launched an exciting new online resilience dashboard for municipalities, the private sector and the public to see how investments across the county are increasing resilience to local climate impacts and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to slow climate change. The purpose of this resilience dashboard is to provide a single portal for countywide resilience information, resources and projects, with extensive backup that details our regional adaptation strategies. We hope that residents will use this comprehensive dashboard to examine the up-to-date resilience efforts in their community. To view the Broward County Resilience Dashboard, please visit [Broward.org/climate](https://www.broward.org/climate) and follow the links.



Kerry Ann Royes, CEO, YWCA South Florida

Last week: For many mothers, Mother's Day is a bittersweet reminder of their struggles to provide and care

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

childcare are still very present issues in our South Florida community. No mother should have to choose between taking their children to the doctor when they are sick or paying the rent. I encourage South Florida to get involved in policy and organizations that work to make this world a place where there is fairness and equality for all.



Joe Russo, president and CEO, Tech Hub South Florida

Last week: Dust is settling from Florida's legislative session. The huge tech industry win was in the defeat of a data privacy bill, the language of which could have been debilitating for Florida's tech industry, especially startups. We should equally revel in appropriations wins like \$10 million for computer science education – playing the long game for the #SouthFloridaTech Industry.

Looking ahead: Fortune 500 companies will soon be returning to their normal capacity offices, while others stay hybrid and remote. Work has changed, and Florida can capitalize. But how will our housing prices and cost of living change?



Mike Ryan, mayor, Sunrise

Last week: As we look forward to leaving a COVID winter behind, the mission of our health departments is as important as ever. Surveillance with genetic sequencing to track and trace variants caused by COVID mutation is critical, expensive and requires persistence. Florida and our nation, in combination with transparent efforts around the world, must invest more heavily in and ramp up this comprehensive surveillance to protect us and our economy. Staying ahead of mutation spread is critical, especially as travel begins again and we have much to learn about the effectiveness of vaccines. Vaccination does not mean COVID is over.

Looking ahead: Florida's new ballot box law will make vote-by-mail harder and inconvenient. In the late 1800s and for a century, state legislatures intentionally

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

legislative and business establishments; denials rang hollow then and now. Reprehensible voting laws and procedures negatively impacted generations through further legislative actions and inactions that institutionalized educational, economic and human injustices. Ballot box laws beyond what is absolutely necessary to protect voting integrity must be held suspect in purpose and intent.



John "Jack" P. Seiler, former mayor, Fort Lauderdale

Last week: To celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week, the Orange Bowl Committee, in partnership with the College Football Playoff Foundation and ESPN, provided \$25,000 to teachers in our South Florida community. Five elementary schools were surprised this week with \$5,000 in Donors Choose gift certificates to fund classroom projects. Our teachers deserve all the credit in the world for everything they do for the youth of our community and, amid a very tough and challenging year, teachers really had to overcome an immense number of obstacles to keep educating our children. The Orange Bowl Committee is proud to honor and thank these great individuals.

Looking ahead: With the 2021 NFL Draft concluded, the Orange Bowl Committee proudly noted that eight players from our Capital One Orange Bowl were selected in the first round, including four in the top 10 and seven in the top 20. The Orange Bowl has now hosted 321 players who went on to be selected in the first round of the NFL Draft. The 2021 College Football Playoff Semifinal at the Capital One Orange Bowl will be played on Dec. 31 at Hard Rock Stadium and will feature either No. 1 vs. No. 4 or No. 2 vs. No. 3 as ranked by the Selection Committee.



Barbara Sharief, member, Broward County Commission

Looking ahead: Pursuant to the Broward County Charter, the county is required to hire a university to develop and provide County Commission redistricting maps that the county must

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

Florida Atlantic University. As a three-time FIU panther alumna, I'm proud to announce that the Broward County Board of County Commissioners unanimously selected FIU. FIU was chosen for their significant knowledge of Broward County's demographics, vital location and strong history of working together with Broward County. Paws Up, Panthers!



Tom Shea, chairman & founder, Right Management

Looking ahead: Florida is the second fastest growing state in the U.S., gaining almost 1,000 new residents daily.

As our affordable housing demands surge, the actual availability decreased significantly. Since 2012, income has increased approximately 20%, while the median housing price has nearly doubled to 99.3%. Legislation has dedicated funds for affordable housing programs; however, these funds have repeatedly been used for unrelated projects. As Jaimie Ross, CEO of the Florida Housing Coalition said, "housing is infrastructure. It's just as important as roads. We can't have a healthy economy, can't have a healthy population, without an adequate supply of affordable housing."



Howard Simon, retired executive director, ACLU of Florida

Last week: The recent legislative session was awful. The Legislature enacted bills to make criminals of innocent protesters and require that they be jailed for days until arraignment, threatened social media companies with fines if they refused to carry messages that spew lies and foment violence, and erected obstacles to voting by mail. But there was also an element of meanness, including a callous attack on transgender youth and a decision to send \$1 billion in revenue generated from online sales taxes to the unemployment compensation fund rather than increase stingy weekly benefits or expand the number of weeks of unemployment compensation.

Looking ahead: You can safely expect that all the controversial laws enacted in

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

flood of lawsuits that are surely coming, the courts themselves also will be on trial. We will have a front row seat to learn whether the judiciary will fulfill its function as guardian of our rights or whether it has become just another partisan branch of government serving the interests of legislative majorities or gubernatorial administrations.



Kelly Skidmore, member, Florida House of Representatives

Last week: The legislative session ended May 1 after meeting its constitutional obligation to pass a balanced budget. The 2021-22 budget totals \$101.5 billion, the largest in Florida's history. Despite anticipated cuts to hospitals, nursing homes, Medicaid, education and the environment due to the pandemic's impact on the state's sales tax collection, \$10 billion in federal funding buoyed the budget to allow for increased allocations across the board, including \$6 billion in reserves. On May 17, the Legislature will take up the Seminole Gaming Compact in a special session that will likely result in an additional \$2.5 billion over the next five years.



Quinn Smith, managing partner, GST LLP

Last week: The passage of Senate Bill 90 is a game changer for Florida elections, but the effects are uncertain. The thing that really caught my eye was the lack of response locally. Similar measures in Georgia and Texas triggered public pressure, boycotts and backlash from corporations. Florida employers and consumers are just not in the same place.

Looking ahead: The numbers of people getting vaccinated in Miami-Dade County have been falling, and only around 30% of residents have been fully vaccinated. Will numbers continue to fall, and will municipalities be able to increase vaccination rates?

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)



Last week: In 1926, Floridians added the “Alien Land Law” to the state Constitution to discourage Asian immigrants from migrating to Florida by prohibiting them from owning property in the state. The law reflected a long history of discrimination against Asian Americans, and in 2018, Florida became the last state in the U.S. to remove this hateful law from its Constitution. May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, and it is imperative that Floridians learn about the history of anti-Asian laws, the designation of Asian immigrants as “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” and the resilience of the Asian American community.

Looking ahead: In a national survey of over 2,500 18-to-29-year-olds, a Harvard Youth Poll discovered that young Americans are almost two times as positive about America’s future in 2021 as they were in 2017. Young Americans are more politically active than they were a decade ago, and Black Americans are the most politically active. However, around 70% of youth view politics as partisan and politicians as selfish. The results reflect the resilience and enthusiasm of younger generations, who increasingly favor government intervention to curb climate change and reduce poverty and who believe that health insurance is a basic human right. There’s hope!



Nick Sortal, member, Plantation City Council

Last week: About 30 city elected officials (like me) from across Florida studied finance, land use and other topics at the Institute for Elected Municipal Officials II in Daytona Beach last week. The Florida League of Cities has all kinds of trainings because, hey, no one knows everything. Kudos to Sabrina Javellana of Hallandale Beach and Samson Borgelin and Mario Bustamante of North Lauderdale for also taking the time. We electeds should be more about policy than getting into the weeds, but the courses give us a better working knowledge and vocabulary for communicating with staff.

Looking ahead: State legislators hopefully are boning up on such words as “designated player game” and other terms as they prepare for the special session

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

“Gambling 101” information sessions. Gambling proponents and some state leaders really do believe there’s a loophole in the Amendment 3 language that can clear the way for a grand bargain.



Richard Stark, former member, Florida House of Representatives

Last week: May is Jewish American Heritage month, established in 2006 by President George W. Bush. This is a time where contributions to American society by Jews are recognized. Although just 2% of the population, Jews have contributed greatly to almost all walks of life. This year, the White House in its announcement noted two political firsts. The husband of the first female Vice President is Jewish, and the Senate has its first Jewish American Majority Leader. Please visit JewishHeritageMonth.gov to learn more about the heritage and contributions of Jewish Americans.



Gregory Stuart, executive director, Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization

Looking ahead: Federal earmarks have returned to Washington, D.C., allowing legislators to target funds for needed transportation projects in their community. Working with Broward’s congressional delegation, the Broward MPO submitted over \$30 million in earmark requests for roadway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements throughout Broward, leveraging a total project cost of \$80 million. Notable projects include new railcars for Tri-Rail commuter service and resiliency improvements along A1A in Hollywood to mitigate the impacts of sea-level rise. Our projects, when funded, will be distributed throughout our region. The Broward MPO will continue working with Broward’s congressional delegation and local partners to creatively fund transportation projects aimed at increasing the mobility of Broward’s residents. Together we can accomplish great things!

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)



Looking ahead: This week, we celebrate nurses and hospitals across America. Our nation is slowly recovering from the most challenging year of our lives. COVID has disrupted our businesses, schools and economy. Our abnormal new normal is a nightmare that we are just waking from. However, through the most turbulent of times, society has relied on hospitals and nurses to lift us up during our most dire moment, and did they ever come through for us! Nurses and health care workers worked tirelessly, being forced to work extra shifts and heroically caring for the onslaught of COVID patients that threatened to overrun our hospital system. They did so with bravery and regard for the lives of others, before their own. They saved tens of thousands of Americans and comforted the families of those who couldn't be saved. Nurses and hospitals honor us every day through their bravery and selflessness. This week we stand together and honor our heroes for their dedication and sacrifice. Wishing a very happy Hospital and Nurses Week to our heroes!



Gregory Tony, Broward Sheriff

Last week: When people think about the Broward Sheriff's Office, they often think about the deputies safeguarding our streets. Equally important, however, are

the dedicated professionals in our Department of Detention who work behind the scenes to ensure the care and safety of thousands of inmates. Each day, these men and women work to provide inmates in our care with the support they need to help turn their lives around. In honor of National Correctional Officers Week, I want to thank every one of our DOD deputies for their dedicated commitment and service to BSO and the people we serve.



Dean Trantalis, mayor, Fort Lauderdale

Last week: On Tuesday, the Fort Lauderdale City Commission voted to move forward with improvements in 39 parks that will be paid for through the parks bond

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

park needs, and that resulted in improvements approved last week. Stay up to date on the progress of the parks bond at ftlparksprojects.com.

Looking ahead: With Gov. DeSantis lifting all remaining COVID-19 health regulations that local governments could enforce, it is even more imperative that we all take the time to get vaccinated. The virus is still spreading throughout South Florida and different mutations of the disease are beginning to take hold. If you have doubts or questions about the vaccines, please talk to your doctor. Visit vaccines.gov to find the nearest vaccination facility near you. Please also remember that while the governor has lifted government-imposed COVID restrictions, private businesses can still ask their patrons to wear masks and social distance.



Michael Udine, vice mayor, Broward County

Looking ahead: The Florida Legislature will have a special session to approve a new gaming compact that would expand table games at Seminole casinos. This means additional revenue could flow to Broward County and municipalities. It also means potential indirect impacts for residents such as infrastructure usage and casino expansions. Deliberations should consider the potential needs of our communities. Furthermore, the pari-mutuel industry must be preserved and strengthened to continue world renowned events like the Pegasus Cup. Gaming expansion must be done right so that our communities and industries are strong for years to come.



Chad Van Horn, founding partner attorney, Van Horn Law Group, P.A.

Last week: Today's sizzling housing market has generated fears of a housing nose-dive similar to the 2008 crash, as evidenced by a 2,450% spike in the Google search "When is the housing market going to crash?" as reported by Google. While the 2008 plummet was terrifying – with nearly 9.3 million borrowers losing their homes to foreclosure and short sale – today's market is void of many of the factors that led to the 2008 collapse. 2021

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

market, equity-rich homeowners, and increased demand from out-of-state buyers. Today's housing market will cool but won't crash.

Looking ahead: Restaurant staffers need to get back to work before it's too late. While it's tempting to sit back and live on unemployment, the longer a person is out of work, the less employable they will be. Employees who jump back into the workforce sooner rather than later will land the best positions. Plus, those who show commitment and dedication will earn the respect of their employers, thereby securing their jobs for the long haul. Please get back to work, not only so our restaurant industry rebounds, but also to advance your career in the industry.



Robert Weinroth, member, Palm Beach County Commission

Last week: Voters in House District 20, vacant due to the passing of Congressman Alcee Hastings last month, learned this week they will have an opportunity to select their next member of Congress on Jan. 11, 2022. While this will leave residents without congressional representation for nine months, the real impact of this special election will be the vacancies created by Florida's "resign to run" law. In addition to the five announced current office holders vying for that open seat, the upcoming gubernatorial election promises to create additional down ticket opportunities, as Democratic hopefuls must, likewise, relinquish their current offices to qualify.

Looking ahead: For over a century, Americans have set aside the second Sunday in May to honor the mothers in our lives. Mother's Day offers an opportunity to celebrate the contributions mothers make to empower and inspire those in our schools, businesses and community. Whether a biological mom, adoptive mom, foster mom, single mom or grand mom, their contributions are immeasurable. Balancing work and family is no easy task, but mothers meet this challenge each day, often without recognition for their hard work. Let's honor our mothers who continue to inspire us and remember those whose loving spirits continue to comfort us.

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)



Last week: Can we create a better “post-COVID” era, in which no one is left behind? Pope Francis suggests we can respond to challenges of the excluded with four active verbs – to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate.

Those whose sufferings are greatest, those who are confined to the outskirts of human flourishing, and those usually ignored, must play an active, vigorous role in shaping the world to come. The toll of COVID-19 in poor countries reminds us the time has come to eliminate inequalities, to heal the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family.

Looking ahead: It seems incongruous that while state legislatures are increasingly passing pro-life legislation, powerful members of Congress want to repeal the Hyde Amendment that has protected American taxpayers from being forced to pay for other people’s abortions. The Hyde Amendment has enjoyed bipartisan support for almost a half century and has saved taxpayers billions of dollars – and perhaps millions of babies’ lives.



Matt Willhite, member, Florida House of Representatives

Last week: Last week, the governor was in Palm Beach County for a bill signing. SB 90 amends the rules for vote-

by-mail ballots, prohibits groups from activities such as passing out water to voters waiting in line, and limits access to ballot drop boxes. In more ways than one, this legislation creates unnecessary barriers to voting. We vigorously debated this bill in Tallahassee. During my debate, I made it clear that we should make voting more accessible while providing supervisors of elections with the resources they need to run an election successfully.

Looking ahead: Next Saturday, May 15, we will recognize Armed Forces Day. Unlike Veterans Day (for those that have served) and Memorial Day (for those who have fallen), Armed Forces Day is a chance to recognize the men and women currently serving in the five branches of the military. In 1961, John F. Kennedy declared Armed Forces Day a national holiday. You can observe Armed Forces Day by volunteering for a veteran organization supporting those who are deployed or

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)



Ghenete "G" Wright Muir, attorney, LGBTQ advocate

Last week: Our very own Nik Harris became the director of strategic outreach and engagement for the Human

Rights Campaign (HRC), where she has volunteered for many years. She posted on Facebook that this was “bittersweet” since she’s leaving her position as Florida's LGBTQ consumer advocate to Commissioner Nikki Fried and FDACS. Nik made history as the first LGBTQ advocate for our state and did an outstanding job representing our community. She’s a charismatic speaker who works relentlessly to achieve equality for LGBTQ people and has mastered the art of inspiring others to get involved. Congrats to a remarkable leader, my pal Nik.

Take 1 Cup Before Bed, Watch Your Body Fat Melt Away

DR. KELLYANN | SPONSORED

Florida Launches New Guidelines For Cars Used Less Than 50 Miles/Day

SMART LIFESTYLE TRENDS | SPONSORED

These Cars Are So Loaded It's Hard to Believe They're So Cheap

LUXURY SUVs | SEARCH ADS | SPONSORED

New Senior Apartments in Ft Lauderdale (May Leave You Speechless)

20 Questions to Tell If You're Ready to Retire

SENIOR APARTMENTS | SEARCH ADS | SPONSORED

SUN SENTINEL

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)



Rudy Giuliani will flip on Trump 'in a heartbeat': Michael Cohen

By ~~DAVE~~ GRIMMER



Models don eye-popping looks in tape-only swimsuit show

Get the World's Smallest CPAP Without A Trip to the Doctor

EASY BREATHE | SPONSORED

Top Surgeon: This Simple Trick Empties Your Bowels Every Morning (Almost Immediately)

GUNDRY MD BIO COMPLETE 3 SUPPLEMENT | SPONSORED



Secretive DeSantis signs flawed voting law that courts should reject | Editorial



Tagovailoa asked for more speed, and Dolphins delivered. How Jaylen Waddle leaves Miami with no regrets after missing out on Kyle Pitts, Ja'Marr Chase

By ~~SUN SENTINEL~~ EDITORIAL BOARD

ADVERTISEMENT

CONNECT



TRIBUNE PUBLISHING

Chicago Tribune

New York Daily News

The Baltimore Sun

Orlando Sentinel

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)

[Daily Press of Va.](#)

[The Virginian-Pilot](#)

[The Daily Meal](#)

[Studio 1847](#)

COMPANY INFO

[Contact the Newsroom](#)

[Careers](#)

[Place an ad](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Feedback](#)

[Manage Web Notifications](#)

[Newspaper Online](#)

Copyright © 2021, South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Get our most popular newsletter delivered to your inbox

[Sign up now](#)