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SOUTH FLORIDA 100 OPINION

# South Florida 100: Getting your COVID booster has never been easier

FEEDBACK

SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL | OCT 22, 2021



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you.



## Last week: Scientists have told us we have run out of time

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## SECTIONS

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**Last week:** The Florida Department of Veteran Affairs (FDVA) reports a 98% increase in the Veteran Crisis Line since the start of 2020. Our vets have always had our backs, we should have theirs. The most effective way to prevent veteran suicide is to educate as many Floridians on what we can do to foster a safe community for our vets. We can start by joining the Florida Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide at [Floridavets.org](http://Floridavets.org). For service members and their families who need support, call 211, 1-844-MYFLVET for the Veteran Support line, or download the PTSD Coach app designed by the FDVA.

# FEEDBACK



## Lori Berman, member, Florida Senate

**Last week:** To Florida Republicans, only the most sensational, politically charged issues rise to the level of a special session. On Thursday, Gov. DeSantis vowed to

convene the Legislature in order to “fix” the Parental Bill of Rights to strengthen his legal case against school mask requirements and ban vaccine mandates. But banning small businesses from mandating vaccines is a mandate in and of itself. One prevents serious illness and death while the other welcomes it. Government should work to protect lives or get out of the way and let the private sector do it.

**Looking ahead:** Although the governor and other politicians may want you to think that getting a COVID-19 vaccine is not safe if you're pregnant, it is untrue according to the CDC. The recommendations have stood and remain that women who are pregnant, trying to get pregnant or breastfeeding should get vaccinated as it is likely to result in more successful outcomes. Unvaccinated pregnant women face increased risks, including preterm birth and other potential complications. In August, at least 20 expectant mothers died from COVID, a record since the pandemic began. Talk to your doctor about what's best for you and your baby.



## Kathleen Cannon, president, United Way of Broward County

**Last week:** This week, the Hollywood Police Department

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followed by the unexpected and devastating passing of Lt. John Graham early Monday morning. While the circumstances of these deaths are vastly different, together they underscore the daily threats, both physical and emotional, to the lives of our law enforcement officers. We stand with HPD and the families of officers Chirino and Graham, as well as all who serve our community every day. They will remain in our prayers.

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## Angelo Castillo, commissioner, Pembroke Pines

**Last week:** Colin Powell, 84, passed away this week.

Doctors opined that his blood-related cancer and age combined to keep his system from fighting off COVID infection. Powell was the first African American to be named Secretary of State, the fourth highest office in the nation, apart from his long military career. He lived a life mixed with success and challenges, but he will always be remembered as a gentleman, soldier and statesman who despised wars but was very good at fighting them. At a time when so much of our experience is polarized along partisan lines, Powell was respected and well regarded by leaders of all parties and Americans from all walks of life. One of his chief successes had to do with America's Promise, an outstanding program he created for young people. He loved his country, served it with dignity and will be missed.

**Looking ahead:** The arrival of La Niña tells us hurricane season may be around longer than normal. Though current conditions across most of the Atlantic are not conducive for hurricane formation, that can change. As my dad used to say, the job isn't finished until the last task is complete, so stay prepared. Stay alert. This is a good time to replenish your supplies for this year or next. Please know that Broward County, in partnership with every Broward city, remains ready come what may. All we ask is that you do your part at your home. Help others if you can, but make sure your home is well supplied and protected. We've seen storms come late in the season before, but with any luck, it won't happen again this year. Let's not let La Niña catch any of us by surprise. Stay prepared and we'll get through anything.

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**Last week:** Last week, I filed House Bill 6049 Preemption of Firearms and Ammunition to repeal the NRA-backed restrictions on local governments to enact gun regulations. This bill repeals Section 790.33, Florida Statutes, which currently preempts local gun regulations. Today, if local elected officials choose to enact gun regulations within their communities, it could result in fines, removal from office and lawsuits. Since 2011, local elected officials, those who know their community best, have been prevented from doing what their residents demand. Gun violence is an epidemic that the entire nation is being subjected to, and all levels of government should have a seat at the solution table.

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**FEEDBACK**

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

**Last week:** The FDA recently released new guidance for the food industry to voluntarily reduce sodium in

processed, packaged and prepared foods in an attempt to improve Americans' overall health. According to the FDA, "more than 70% of total sodium intake is from sodium added during food manufacturing and commercial food preparation." The current average American's salt intake is 3,400 milligrams per day, and the FDA wants this down to 3,000 per day, still above its recommendation of 2,300 milligrams a day. Still, this is a critical step in the right direction to improve diseases such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes.

**Looking ahead:** The CDC updated their COVID-19 guidelines for the 2021 holiday season. The updated guidelines mention the best way to safely observe the holiday season is by getting vaccinated against COVID-19. The CDC highly encourages getting vaccinated to protect those not yet eligible for the vaccination and to continue wearing masks in public indoor settings and crowded outdoor areas. By continuing to work together, we will be able to enjoy the holidays with our friends and families and stop the spread of COVID-19. To learn more about COVID-19 Holiday Season Guidelines, visit: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/celebrations.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/celebrations.html).

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## Conor Delaney, president and CEO, Cleveland Clinic Florida

**Last week:** The FDA's authorization for COVID-19 vaccine booster shots for both Moderna and Johnson &

Johnson was important news. While not surprising given the FDA's recent authorization of Pfizer's vaccine, it is a step toward providing eligible individuals with additional protection. That's especially true for those who are immunocompromised or at higher risk of complications related to COVID-19. However, we also need to continue to increase vaccination rates for those not yet vaccinated. Currently, 72% of eligible Floridians have received at least one dose. Continuing to get more people vaccinated will help us get through this pandemic faster.

### FEEDBACK



## Dr. Michael Dennis, chair, FAU Schmidt College of Medicine

**Last week:** The many challenging questions Americans are asking about the advisability, availability and advantage

of a COVID-19 booster shot are closer to being answered this week. The Pfizer vaccine received approval last month and now the Moderna and J&J vaccines have been given the green light by the Food and Drug Administration. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are establishing guidelines for who is eligible – certainly including seniors and others at high risk. Mixing products is allowable, so individuals can try another company's vaccine if they had an uncomfortable reaction to the first shots. Consult your health care provider.

**Looking ahead:** There aren't sufficient adjectives to adequately describe the tremendous contributions Colin Powell made to America, not just as the first Black chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of State, but as an influential factor in coordinating different ideas and maintaining the respect of everyone involved. His succumbing to the COVID-19 virus is tragic, but his passing should not embolden those opposing vaccination, which he received. Powell had blood cell cancer compromising his immune system, making him more susceptible to any infection. Although not perfect. COVID vaccination provides better protection for

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## Howard Dvorkin, CPA, chairman, Debt.com

**Last week:** Of all the coverage of Parkland murderer Nikolas Cruz pleading guilty, none matched the

significance of the Sun Sentinel's front-page article by Rafael Olmeda. The headline says it all: "Spared by bullets but not by PTSD." While we honor the slain, we cannot ignore the survivors. In the hours after that awful day in 2018, I launched Parkland Cares, a charity that funds mental-health counseling for the victims, and we recently broaden our mission. Even after Cruz is sentenced and his evil is a distant memory, we should never forget those who will keep struggling for many years to come.

**Looking ahead:** If you can go to a restaurant, you can come to work. That's been my mantra as the pandemic thankfully fades and booster shots start arriving. Remote work has its place and has shortcomings. How do businesses capture creativity over zoom? How can you build a corporate culture? How is it possible to mentor younger staff just entering the workforce? If you still believe business can be run remotely, ask yourself: What shortcomings will exist in future leadership. Will interpersonal skills be lacking because of isolation? Some basic and necessary skills will not be developed due to remote working.

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## Lamar Fisher, member, Broward County Commission

**Last week:** Florida stone-crab season officially began as of Oct. 15, and it is important that fishermen and divers

interested in participating understand the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's new rules that were implemented in 2020. The recreational and commercial stone crab harvest seasons start Oct. 15 and remains open through May 1, 2022. Stone crabs have become a delicacy in the state of Florida. Although the season has been cut short by two weeks in recent years, I'm sure the industry will do well due to high demand. MyFWC.com provides more information on recreational trap registration and regulations and tips.

**Looking ahead:** The 62nd annual Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show is set

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this year should not disappoint. The show's organizers have included all CDC guidelines at events throughout the city. The outdoor show spans nearly 90 acres over three million square feet of exhibition space featuring more than 1,000 boats and yachts, including multiple cafes and food and beverage garden options. Go to VisitLauderdale.com to learn about transportation options, parking and more for all the special events next weekend!



### **Dan Flynn, vice president for research, Florida Atlantic University**

**Last week:** COVID booster shots are being formally approved by the FDA and will affect an increased immune

response for those age 65 and over, or those under 65 who have medical conditions that depress their immune system. Studies have shown that the Pfizer, Moderna and J&J booster shots all increase an immune response, with side effects being no worse and usually less than that experienced with the first shots. Thus, anyone with immune problems, whether due to natural aging or a medical condition, would be great candidates for the COVID booster shot.

FEEDBACK



### **Beam Furr, member, Broward County Commission**

**Last week:** What is an entitlement? In the heated debate over the infrastructure and reconciliation bills, Sen. Joe

Manchin has expressed concern over "moving our society towards an entitlement mentality." But there are certain things we all are entitled to. This includes the right to a clean environment and a safe climate. Everyone who shares this Earth deserves to have clean water and air, as well as safety from rising seas and extreme weather. These bills would make significant investments to fight climate change and create a cleaner, safer world. We need to rethink entitlements to consider many basic necessities.

**Looking ahead:** Read for the Record is this Thursday! Read for the Record is a national event that brings together two million students and adults to read the

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annually for this event. Research shows that third grade reading scores are a primary indicator of future outcomes. After five years of improvement, much of our progress has been reversed due to the pandemic. This year's event is more important than ever, so sign up at [handsonbroward.org](https://handsonbroward.org).



### **Anna Fusco, president, Broward Teachers Union**

**Last week:** Most of us have been confronted in our job with unknown challenges that need to be handled. Most of us give our loved ones a kiss as we leave for work saying, “see you later.” Most of us are not police officers. A routine call can turn deadly and end badly, as happened this past week in Hollywood when Officer Yandy Chirino was gunned down by a suspect. For Officer Chirino’s loved ones, “later” will never get here. Take a moment when you see an officer to say thanks and let them know how much you appreciate their protecting us.

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### **Michael Gottlieb, member, Florida House of Representatives**

**Last week:** They say crime is down, the “great crime decline.” Yet a Hollywood police officer senselessly lost his life while attempting to stop the desperate crimes of an 18-year-old. We have a housing and education crisis and drug epidemic. According to the CDC, since 2000, overdoses have increased 137%, including a 200% increase in deaths involving opioids. Similarly, data from the CDC suggests that the homicide rate for the United States rose 30% between 2019 and 2020. Reported crime is down, crime is not. It’s time to start paying attention to our societal issues and stop politicizing them.



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

**Last week:** Budget negotiations continued and the \$2.5

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massive numbers are difficult to comprehend. As an economics professor, I gave my students this example. Count (by ones) as fast as you can in one minute – most students count to about 200. If you counted that fast continuously, you could get to a billion in about 9.5 years. How long to get to a trillion? You would die without even getting close. You could have started when Jesus Christ walked the earth, and you would be well short of halfway there. That is our federal budget.

**Looking ahead:** Inflation is high, production and supply chains are disrupted, store shelves are half-full. This is what supply shocks and government planning can do to an economy – with an abundance of new regulations, plans, orders, mandates and "emergency" rules that favor some and hurt others. Government economic planning never works well, no matter how well-intentioned. This path can also lead to enhanced police powers like monitoring bank accounts and using artificial intelligence and big data surveillance techniques, where dissent is suppressed and protesters prosecuted, not for violent crimes, but for complaining about those in political power. America must avoid this path.

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

**Last week:** Last week, the Marciano family buried their beloved Miya Marciano after the tragic circumstances of her

kidnapping and murder in Orlando at the hands of a maintenance worker at her place of her residence. The Marciano family firmly believes that Miya should still be here today based on our society's reasonable expectation of safety and security in residential tenancies. In addition, the family also believes that we must treat missing person reports with more urgency. The family has established the Miya Marciano Foundation ([miyamarcanofdn.com](http://miyamarcanofdn.com)) to provide more support to families of missing persons while advocating for the protection of vulnerable populations.



### **Debbi Hixon, member, Broward County School Board**

**Last week:** This week the shooter from the Marjory

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process for the families affected by this tragedy. We ask that you help us to amplify the message of NO NOTORIETY. Please do not share the shooter's name or photo on social media and we also ask the media to stop showing his picture. We are still hurting deeply and continually seeing the shooter's face is like pouring salt into our wounds. The message should be about honoring the amazing individuals that were taken on that day and helping those affected move forward. Please continue to shine the light of the victims by telling their stories and sharing their photos. They are who is important, they are the ones who deserve our energy. Not one more ounce of energy should go towards this convicted murderer!

# FEEDBACK



## **Jason Hughes, executive director, ArtServe**

**Last week:** U.S. News and World Report announced their top 50 places in the United States to retire last week. No

Broward County city made the cut, although eight of the top 10 were in the Sunshine State. Job market, value index, quality of life, desirability and net migration were all the metrics used to determine the coveted list. Sarasota was ranked No. 1 followed by Naples, Daytona Beach and Melbourne. Seems the Broward County seat, the city of Fort Lauderdale, with new modern developments and a vast influx of a culturally creative population, isn't a top place to retire. Miami retirees rejoice, however: They made spot No. 50 on the list.



## **Christine Hunschofsky, member, Florida House of Representatives**

**Looking ahead:** Last session, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 419, which was the most

transformational bill in early learning in the past two decades. The bill strengthened accountability, programs to identify emergent literacy and mathematics skill deficiencies, and established a Division of Early Learning. Quality and affordable early child-care programs are crucial for the development of our children and for working families. However, the workforce and financial crisis

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relying on quality child care to be able to work, we need to invest in this sector to prevent further decline.



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

**Last week:** A new report from the Florida Hospital

Association projects Florida will face a shortfall of 60,000 nurses by 2035. As Florida's top producer of nurses, Keiser University is striving to meet the critical employment gap in nursing. Keiser University and other members of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida account for 25% of all nurses in Florida and more than half of the graduate and Ph.D. level nurses in the state. As the need increases, Keiser University and Florida's other private universities will continue to lead by providing the workforce talent in health care, education, aerospace, cybersecurity and other critical areas.

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## **Marty Kiar, property appraiser, Broward County**

**Last week:** The Hollywood Police Department tragically lost a member of their family. Officer Yandy Chirino was

killed in the line of duty last Sunday. Officer Chirino was just 28 years old and served our community as a Hollywood police officer for four years. Having been named Officer of the Month in June 2020, Officer Chirino was recognized multiple times for his service as a police officer. A graduate of Miami Coral Park Senior High, Officer Chirino attended Police Academy Class 308. My heartfelt condolences to Officer Chirino's family, friends and colleagues during this difficult time.



## **Chip LaMarca, member, Florida House of Representatives**

**Last week:** I am pleased to announce that digital driver's licenses will be ready for Floridians to download next

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legislative session, and it passed unanimously. The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is expecting the digital ID app to be available to download in November. Digital IDs will be used like a traditional ID, to help prove your age, and cannot be easily forged. The DHSMV is working with Apple to ensure the digital ID is available on Apple Wallet.

**Looking ahead:** October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and we are sharing resources and actions that can be taken to help victims. Attorney General Ashley Moody has helped recover \$5 million in misappropriated funds to domestic violence centers throughout the state. If you are, or have been, a victim of domestic violence and need help, please contact your local law enforcement immediately by dialing 911 or Women In Distress of Broward County by visiting [Womenindistress.org](http://Womenindistress.org) or calling their hotline at 954-761-1133. Thank you to those who have taken the courageous first step; you are not alone.

FEEDBACK



## **Tim Lonergan, former mayor, Oakland Park**

**Last week:** Good news! New customer satisfaction changes have been implemented by the Florida

Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. As of Oct. 18, services in the driver license service centers in Broward and Miami are provided by appointment only, no walk-ins accepted. If implemented properly, no more long lines or waiting! Appointment slots are opened daily. If none are available, check back the next day for potential cancellations that became available. Schedule an appointment at [nqa4.nemoqappointment.com/Booking/Booking/Index/fl34hs86](http://nqa4.nemoqappointment.com/Booking/Booking/Index/fl34hs86). You may be eligible to renew or replace your driver license or identification card online via FLHSMV's self-service portal, learn more at [services.flhsmv.gov/virtualoffice](http://services.flhsmv.gov/virtualoffice).

**Looking ahead:** As the holidays quickly approach and excitement grows, Brightline is preparing to resume service between Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach. Brightline is promising a customer experience that's better than ever. Before hitting the road in the car to go shopping, out to dinner or to visit family in the neighboring county, consider avoiding the traffic and see if Brightline

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and create an account before Dec. 31, 2021 and the first ride is free. There is also a \$10.00 fare limited-time offer. Learn more at [gobrightline.com](http://gobrightline.com).



## **Burnadette Norris-Weeks, attorney, Austin Pamies Norris Weeks, LLC**

**Looking ahead:** October is Breast Cancer Awareness

Month. Some may be surprised to learn that men are also impacted by breast cancer. The CDC has reported that cases are on the rise for men. It appears that one of the culprits is obesity, which causes increased levels of estrogen within the body. Fortunately, genetic testing for mutations is also making both women and men more aware of the possibility of developing breast cancer. Many experts support screening for women beginning at age 40. There is no recommended screening age for men. Know that breast cancer impacts all.

FEEDBACK



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

**Last week:** Guilty pleas finally uttered by the murderer responsible for the 2018 massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School are an important step toward justice. Yet no matter what punishment gets handed down, there's sadly no way to achieve true "justice" for the horrors of that day. Seventeen innocent lives were taken. Seventeen others suffered physical injuries. All the students and school employees who survived will never be the same. Our community was forever changed. Our support for those who lost loved ones and our commitment to helping our community heal must never end.

**Looking ahead:** Brightline trains returning to regular service on Nov. 8 is another good sign that we are emerging from the pandemic. Before stopping service in 2020, Brightline provided a welcome transportation alternative for South Floridians and tourists alike. Brightline was also becoming a valuable economic engine (so to speak) linking West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami. Restoring Brightline service means bringing back hundreds of jobs

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rolling again will generate many more employment opportunities that spring from trains delivering more customers to South Florida's downtowns.



### **Frank Ortis, mayor, Pembroke Pines**

**Last week:** The Food and Drug Administration needs to step up on signing off on a prescription-drug plan that could save Florida \$150 million in its first year and help

thousands of people. It's already been two years since state lawmakers approved pursuing Florida's plan to import lower-cost drugs from Canada for government health care programs. Florida would import drugs to treat asthma, diabetes, HIV, AIDS, mental health conditions, etc. through programs involving various agencies in the first phase, and the Medicaid program in the second. It's now illegal to import prescription drugs from Canada. It's time to get the green light to proceed.

**Looking ahead:** As more and more bills are being filed for the 2022 legislative session, it looks like vacation rental regulations will once again be a topic for debate. Two bills were recently filed, both in the Florida House and Senate, regarding this issue. The bottom line is that we live in a state that people come to for vacations. Local governments need the ability to regulate these vacation rentals in the best way possible for residents. We are fortunate to live here but should not be subjected to those who do not ruining our neighborhoods. Let's get it right this time.

FEEDBACK



### **Tina Polsky, member, Florida Senate**

**Last week:** I am going through breast cancer now, and I thought it was important to share and use my public position to help bring awareness to the importance of self-

exam and mammogram. Early detection, as in my case, has made my prognosis very favorable. Had I waited, and the cancer had spread, I would be in a much different position. Please get your annual mammogram and do self-exams. And if something seems different, get it checked out. If you are under 40 and don't get mammograms, please be extra diligent about self-exams. This is a very curable

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

**Last week:** OceanExchange is now calling Fort

Lauderdale home. Their goal is to seek solutions with

working prototypes that reduce waste and the use of nature's resources while increasing productivity. The event, held annually, was hosted last week at Nova Southeastern University. The best and brightest from around the world converge to compete for recognition and prize money, this year totaling \$250,000. The previous winners in 2019 took CO2 emissions and converted it to fuel and built a low-cost large capacity battery that became part of the mission to Mars. OceanExchange is a giant step in highlighting and attracting innovation to South Florida.

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**Looking ahead:** For the 62nd consecutive time, the cornerstone of Florida's marine industry, the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show (FLIBS) begins Wednesday. The show supports 8,000 fulltime jobs, generates \$1.3 billion in economic impact in five days and attracts 100,000 visitors to our airports, Uber drivers, hotels and restaurants. The world's largest in-water show's business model is not necessarily unique, but it is the world's best for business-to-business and business-to-consumer, with kayaks to superyachts on display. International travel restrictions challenged a few visitors this year. Fortunately, they will be able to enjoy the one-hour FLIBS special 10 p.m. Sunday on NBC Sports.



## Roni Raab, host, Shalom South Florida on WWNN

**Looking ahead:** These days, we mark the assassination of two leaders in Israel's modern history. Each had his unique

vision for how Jews and Arabs should live in the land, each sought peace, albeit using different methodology, and both were mired in conflict. Yitzchak Rabin served as an army general and prime minister. Rabbi Meir Kahana was an activist and member of Israel's parliament. Ultimately, assassins disagreed with both of their approaches and took their lives. All efforts should continue to be expended in the pursuit of peace. The Abraham Accords are a great beginning. Dialogue, not

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**Larry Rein, CEO and President, ChildNet**

**Last week:** The Sun Sentinel reported Wednesday that Amazon is hiring 10,500 Florida seasonal workers at

hourly rates of \$18 to \$22 and potentially offering sign-on

bonuses of \$3,000, likely evoking a very mixed response from local human service organizations administrators. Wonderful news for those families for whom it will facilitate timely delivery of holiday gifts and for families who will obtain needed employment and timely income. It also, however, bodes even more imposing challenges for those of us already struggling to hire sufficient staff to serve local families in need. Things were tough before; increased competition from an Amazon is nearly unimaginable.

**FEEDBACK****Nan Rich, member, Broward County Commission**

**Looking ahead:** On Wednesday, Oct. 27, Broward County will break ground on the new site of our Nancy J.

Cotterman Center (NJCC). NJCC is Broward's only certified Rape Crisis and Children's Advocacy Center, providing services 24/7 in a safe, non-threatening environment to victims of sexual assault, child abuse, human trafficking and supportive family members. Nancy J. Cotterman was a tireless advocate, devoting her life's work to supporting survivors. The center, named in her honor, served over 4,000 victims last year. When it comes to sexual assault and child abuse, silence is not an option. Contact NJCC at 954-357-5775, or the 24-hour Helpline at 954-761-RAPE.

**Mike Ryan, mayor, Sunrise**

**Last week:** A pro-basketball athlete went online to voice his support for human rights. He also planned to wear basketball shoes with a message of support. Outraged,

some in the media and authorities said, "Resolutely resist any behavior that undermines national harmony and the dignity of the motherland!" No, he was not

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Boston Celtics game. Why do government leaders feel so threatened by athletes taking a knee or standing up for human rights?

**Looking ahead:** During the pandemic, telemedicine expanded timely access for primary care, follow up specialists and mental health counseling. But states and health insurance carriers are slowly restricting telemedicine again. The United States, it is reported, is one of the few countries that requires health care professionals to register in every state. States do not aggressively regulate health care professionals to protect patients; principles of medical care don't differ state-to-state. Instead, these restrictions are intended to protect a monopoly, reduce your options, and cost us all more. But, hey, at least we get to sit and read magazines in waiting rooms again.

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**FEEDBACK**

### **Tim Ryan, member, Broward County Commission**

**Last week:** Starting Monday, Tri-Rail will resume full service for the first time since the pandemic struck last

spring. The schedule will now consist of 50 trains on weekdays and 30 trains on weekends. Tri-Rail never completely stopped service during the pandemic, but less trains meant longer waits at the station. The start of full service is yet another sign that our local economy is returning to pre-pandemic vibrancy. For more information on Tri-Rail's updated full schedule, call 1-800-TRI-RAIL (874-7245) or visit [www.tri-rail.com](http://www.tri-rail.com).

**Looking ahead:** The long wait will soon be over for parents who choose to have their young children vaccinated. COVID shots for kids ages 5 to 11 will be available as soon as the vaccines are approved by the FDA and recommended by the CDC. Approval is expected within days. The federal government has purchased enough doses to vaccinate every child in the country. This is especially welcome news for parents sending their children to schools without mask mandates and another critical milestone in our fight against the disease.

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### **Maria Sachs, member, Palm Beach County Commission**

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Champlain Towers to fall is still unknown. What is known is that there are thousands of condominiums that date back 30 and 40 years that could have structural deficiencies today. We live in a time of great climatic changes, many of which affect the coastlines of South Florida. The Palm Beach County Commission received a report by county officials and the local League of Cities and decided to let the state come up with a plan first before implementing its own.

**Looking ahead:** The future development of the Agricultural Reserve is an important topic to the many residents who live there as well as to the future development of Palm Beach County. This will be the subject of a Workshop scheduled for a full day next week. Comprising some of the last remaining land for housing as well as boasting a unique soil rich in nutrients for farming, makes every parcel an important part of this discussion. The public is invited to attend and participate as county commissioners weigh the various options available for this special and protected area of our county.

FEEDBACK



## Wendy Sartory Link, supervisor of elections, Palm Beach County

**Last week:** Early voting kicks off this week in the Special Primary Election for U.S. House of Representatives,

District 20. There are five convenient early voting locations open Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 through Sunday, Oct. 31, 2021, from 10 a.m. to 7p.m. A secure vote-by-mail ballot drop box will be available at each early voting location during early voting hours. Early voting locations are safe, secure and sanitized. Don't forget your photo ID! Visit [VotePalmBeach.gov](http://VotePalmBeach.gov) or call us at (561) 656-6200 to find an early voting location or mail ballot drop box near you.

**Looking ahead:** There is an important deadline for Palm Beach County voters wanting to cast their ballot by mail in the special primary election for U.S. House of Representatives, District 20! Although voters may request a mail ballot in person until Nov. 1, 2021, the deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot be mailed to you is 5 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021. If you haven't already, you may request a mail ballot on our website [VotePalmBeach.gov](http://VotePalmBeach.gov), by calling 561-656-6208, or by email to

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

**Last week:** This week, the Orange Bowl Committee announced the game times for the annual AutoNation

Orange Bowl Basketball Classic featuring four Florida teams for the first time. The South Florida Bulls will face the Florida Gators at 1 p.m., followed by the Central Florida Knights versus the Florida State Seminoles at 3:30 p.m. The doubleheader is the only Division I college basketball event played in Broward County every year and takes place Saturday, Dec. 18 at the FLA Live Arena. Fans can get more details at [orangebowl.org](http://orangebowl.org).

**Looking ahead:** Every year, the Orange Bowl Committee hosts its Creative Art Contest for all students K-12 throughout South Florida. The free-to-enter initiative challenges students' creativity with the grand prize winner receiving two tickets to the 2021 Playoff Semifinal at the Capital One Orange Bowl. The winner will also be recognized in the official game program and on the field during the game. Students looking to get involved can visit the Orange Bowl's website ([orangebowl.org](http://orangebowl.org)) for contest information.

FEEDBACK



## Howard Simon, retired executive director, ACLU of Florida

**Last week:** Does Gov. Ron DeSantis think of himself as governor for all Floridians or just his voters? The National

School Boards Association, citing violent threats toward school board members, including brandishing weapons and stalking, asked the federal government for help. Attorney General Merrick Garland directed the FBI to work with local law enforcement. But the governor directed law enforcement not to cooperate, characterizing the concern as an attempt to silence critics of school board policies. He has a completely different attitude when, following peaceful Black Lives Matter demonstrations in Florida, he announced that his top priority was passage of anti-riot legislation.

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**Last week:** Same-day voter registration permits individuals to register to vote the same day in which they cast their ballots. The main benefits of same-day voter registration include an increase in voter turnout. However, the majority of states require individuals to register between eight and 30 days prior to an election. In fact, currently only 20 states and Washington, D.C. have legalized same-day registration. Many oppose same-day voter registration on the basis that it threatens election security. However, states can ensure the security of same-day registration by requiring people to provide ID and by implementing cross-agency and interstate verification.

FEEDBACK

**Looking ahead:** President Biden recently formed a council to examine and lessen the discrimination women face. The council will soon issue a directive ordering federal agencies to promote gender equality and place gender at the heart of policy decision-making. President Biden specifically tasked the Gender Policy Council to address and combat systemic bias, sexual harassment, gender-based violence, the wage and wealth gaps, reproductive rights and health disparities. However, many argue that the council lacks the funds necessary to enact substantial changes. Currently, the council is crafting the administration's response to Texas' discriminatory abortion law and working to make child care more affordable.



## Nick Sortal, member, Plantation City Council

**Last week:** Media everywhere, especially LinkedIn, are sharing leadership tips gleaned from watching the title character on Apple+ multiple-E Emmy winner "Ted Lasso." They include the idea of being a goldfish, based on this quote: "You know what the happiest animal in the world is? It's a goldfish. It's got a 10-second memory. Be a goldfish!" Also, the idea of "fixing the water pressure." In an early episode, Lasso gains trust by handling the smallest of complaints by players. He cares, and it shows. There are few more impactful gestures to employees than eliminating obstacles and annoyances.

And Thomas, member, Boca Raton City Council

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**Last week:** This week, the city of Boca Raton began accepting applications for rental and mortgage assistance for residents affected by COVID-19. Last year, Boca Raton distributed nearly \$550,000 in rental and mortgage relief

to eligible residents, and we recently received an additional \$350,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to distribute to those in need. Eligible residents can qualify for up to \$15,000 for six months of past-due housing payments. Eligibility requirements and the online application can be found at the city's website, [myboca.us](http://myboca.us).

**Looking ahead:** The Florida Department of Transportation and planning agencies across Florida are highlighting smart, efficient and safe transportation choices during Mobility Week, Oct. 29–Nov. 5. To kick off Mobility Week, FDOT is hosting the statewide Love to Ride Challenge to get more people bicycling.

Participants can register as workplace teams, social groups or as individuals. For more information and to register, visit [LovetoRide.net/Florida](http://LovetoRide.net/Florida). The Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency is also hosting an Educational Bike Ride along the El Rio Trail in Boca Raton on Nov. 4 at 8 a.m. Participants can register at [surveymonkey.com/r/EducationalBikeRide](http://surveymonkey.com/r/EducationalBikeRide).

FEEDBACK



## Gregory Tony, Broward Sheriff

**Last week:** The Broward Sheriff's Office is heartbroken over the loss of Hollywood Police Officer Yandy Chirino.

This tragic shooting is a vivid reminder of the dangers our law enforcement professionals face working to safeguard our communities. Yet, despite the inherent risks, hundreds of thousands of brave men and women who serve this noble profession leave their homes each day and put their lives on the line for the safety of others. Our thoughts and prayers are with Officer Chirino's family and the Hollywood Police Department. BSO will carry on his legacy of service in everything we do.

## Dean Trantalis, mayor, Fort Lauderdale

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drops anchor, Oct. 27-31! The famed five-day event showcases more global and U.S. debuts of vessels than any other boat show with over 1,000 exhibitors and 1,300 boats set to be on display. Public health and safety remain the top priority for this year's event, and we have worked with the show's organizers to ensure that it will be held again with the utmost safety. Get your tickets today at [FLIBS.com](https://FLIBS.com).



## Michael Udine, vice mayor, Broward County

**Last week:** Port Everglades has welcomed Viking Cruises to its cruising lineup. Before embarking on its inaugural

FEEDBACK

voyage from its new home port, Broward County and the Viking Orion crew participated in a "Plaque and Key" ceremony. Expanding cruise options out of our port brings jobs and investment to our businesses and communities. Port Everglades has a diverse portfolio that is continually growing as a leader in the industry. We wish them "fair winds and following seas" and look forward to welcoming more guests to our powerhouse port!



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

**Last week:** Netflix announced that "Squid Game" was its biggest series launch ever, reaching more than 11 million

viewers and topping the rankings in more than 90 countries. The plotline of the dystopian survival drama hinges on drawing in cash-strapped players to compete in children's games. A huge cash prize goes to the winners, death awaits the losers. The violent Korean drama illustrates the desperation of those facing overwhelming debt. I see this daily as I offer counsel on how to get out of debt, from reaching out to creditors for better terms to filing bankruptcy. The truth of "Squid Game" is that many people would rather face death than live with crushing debt.

**Looking ahead:** Universal Orlando's Halloween Horror Nights celebrates 30

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“Puppet Theater: Captive Audience,” Horror Nights’ creators have outdone themselves in chilling, gory ways this year. My suggestion is to purchase an express pass to zip through the long lines, and if you can’t take the fright, calm down with a Bog Slime or Ghoulish Juice adult beverage.



## **Robert Weinroth, member, Palm Beach County Commission**

**Last week:** With the structural failure of Champlain

Towers South in mind, Palm Beach County commissioners

received assurances from county staff that over 100 county building inspectors have, and will continue to, remain focused on responding to unsafe buildings, no matter the age. With the next legislative session in Tallahassee set to convene in January, commissioners agreed to defer implementing a reinspection program for high-rises to see whether a statewide system of oversight will be approved.

Residents are encouraged to continue to report any perceived unsafe condition they observe to facilitate quick remedial action, where necessary. If you see something, say something!

**Looking ahead:** Electric passenger airplanes are coming to Palm Beach International Airport. The vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) jets will feature ultra-low noise engines designed for short hops. Jets could reach Miami in 20 minutes and Orlando in 50. The Palm Beach County Commission approved a lease with Ferrovial Vertiports, a global infrastructure operator collaborating with Lilium, the aviation company, developing and, ultimately, servicing the jets. Infrastructure development should take about 36 months to complete, potentially generating over \$54 million in economic benefits for the county and creating 150 jobs with annual salaries averaging \$67,000 while reducing CO2 emissions by 6,000 tons per year.



## **Thomas Wenski, archbishop, Archdiocese of Miami**

**Last week:** Fractures in Haitian society have led to the

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own dire condition. Impunity and the illegal circulation of arms and ammunition must cease, while the commitment to tackle corruption at all levels of society must be scaled up. The international community must fulfil its duty to protect and provide humanitarian assistance. True solidarity demands a long-term vision that engages all levels of Haitian society, with the support of the region and the wider international community.

**Looking ahead:** Will trying Nikolas Cruz bring closure? Wounds still unhealed could be ripped open in what bodes to be a spectacle more than a trial. Yet, the families of the victims as well as the greater community could be spared this grief if the prosecutors would accept a guilty plea for life without parole but with no death penalty. Why insist on the death penalty? Standing with the families of murder victims does not compel us as a society to seek another death in return. After all, an “eye for an eye” mentality will just end up making us all blind.

FEEDBACK



## **Matt Willhite, member, Florida House of Representatives**

**Last week:** This past week, I had an interesting meeting regarding HR 3339. This bill in Congress would create a \$5 trillion National Infrastructure Bank (NIB), which could finance all infrastructure in the nation. The group Coalition for a National Infrastructure Bank has been working to build support for this project by having states across the country pass resolutions supporting the congressional legislation. They argue that spending on infrastructure has fallen to its lowest level in 70 years, to 2.5% of our nation's GDP, falling behind our global counterparts. Currently, nine states have introduced resolutions in support of a NIB.

**Looking ahead:** Last year Florida had the largest budget in its history at \$101.7 billion. It's difficult to predict if our projected budget revenue will break \$100 billion again this year, but it does appear that we are in a better place than where we started the last session. On Tuesday, the House Appropriations Committee met for our first meeting before the 2022 legislative session. During the meeting, we learned that general revenue exceeded expectations by \$2.3 billion, reaching \$36.3 billion. We also heard from the Director of the Division of Bond Finance that

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## Beverly Williams, vice mayor, Lauderdale Lakes; president, Broward League of Cities

**Last week:** Last week the Hollywood Police Department lost two officers in less than 24 hours. Officer Yandy Chirino, 28, was killed in the line of duty and Lt. John Graham took his own life. On behalf of the League, I offer my condolences to the officers' families, friends and colleagues who are mourning their untimely deaths. Law enforcement personnel risk their lives each day to protect our communities and residents. They never know the danger or challenge a call for help may result in, but they are always there to protect and serve. We must never take their sacrifices for granted.

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