



Lady Lake Chamber is now North Lake Chamber and they are busy. They held their monthly business luncheon sponsored by Texas Roadhouse Grill.



Grand reopening of Sumter Killingsworth Way in The Villages Senior Living located at 1490

Homestead Exemption Act

Senate Passes Historic \$250,000 Property Tax Cut for Florida Homeowners Proposed Constitutional Amendment Creates \$250,000 Homestead Exemption

Tallahassee—Taking a historic step towards eliminating property taxes for Florida homeowners, the Florida Senate today passed House Joint Resolution (HJR) 1-F, sponsored by Senator Bryan Avila (R-Miami Springs), creating a \$250,000 homestead exemption on non-school levies for Florida homeowners. The Joint Resolution, a priority of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, proposes a constitutional amendment to increase the current exemption for owner-occupied homestead property to \$250,000 over two years and creates a framework for full exemption over time. The amendment will appear on the November 2026 General Election Ballot for approval by Florida voters.

"Owning your own home has been the American dream since our nation was founded 250 years ago. What better way to celebrate America's 250th anniversary than a massive property tax cut through a \$250,000 homestead exemption for Floridians," said Senate President Ben Albritton (R-Wauchula). "I'm grateful to Governor DeSantis for leading the conversation on cutting property taxes and putting forward this robust proposal for the consideration of Florida voters this fall. For our part, the

Senate has consistently advocated for an amendment that is significant and straightforward – a \$250,000 homestead exemption in honor of America's 250th birthday achieves that goal and then some."

"Our nation was forged by pioneer patriots who left everything behind and risked their lives for the dream of living in freedom on their own piece of property. We agree with Governor DeSantis that having to continually pay the government for the right to live on your own property flies in the face of that dream," said Senator Avila. "This amendment takes a historic step, providing meaningful relief for Florida families, while protecting businesses from extreme tax increases and safeguarding local funding for education, law enforcement, infrastructure, and other essential government functions."

Reduces the Cost of Homeownership for Floridians To ensure property tax relief is directed towards reducing the cost of living for longtime Florida residents, HJR 1-F grants the \$250,000 super homestead exemption for non-school levies to homeowners who are Florida residents on or before December 31, 2026. New Florida residents will receive a homestead exemption of \$50,000 for four years, after which they will be eligible for the \$250,000 super homestead exemption.

If passed by Florida voters, beginning on January 1, 2027, homeowners will have access to a \$150,000 homestead exemption.

The super exemption increases to \$250,000 on January 1, 2028, and increases by inflation every year thereafter.

Ensures Funding for Education, Public Safety, and Infrastructure The amendment does not apply to ad valorem taxes collected by school boards. To ensure funding for critical functions of local government, the amendment requires cities and counties to use remaining property tax revenue for the following:

Public safety, including law enforcement, fire service, and emergency medical service

Education and public schools (additional funds beyond operational expenses covered by school board taxes)

Road and bridge construction and maintenance, stormwater control, and other infrastructure projects

Natural resource projects, including flood control measures

Retirement benefits of local government employees

Bond obligations

Operations and administration of county officers and commissioners and municipalities, and approved expenditures

thereof

Protects Small Businesses To ensure local governments do not pass along the cost of homestead property relief on to small businesses, the amendment provides additional tax savings for non-residential property.

Currently, the assessment increase for a non-residential property is limited to 10% annually. The amendment limits the annual assessment increase to 5% beginning January 1, 2027.

Framework for Total Elimination Additionally, counties, municipalities, and school districts are required to provide additional ad valorem relief, up to full elimination, through a uniform procedure that will be established by the Legislature. Special districts are authorized to provide up to full elimination of ad valorem taxes by voter approval.

For more information, please visit www.FLSenate.gov

Contact: Katie Betta June 2, 2026 (850) 487-5229

Florida Ranked 14th In World Economy

Florida is ranked the 14th largest economy in the world, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1.8 trillion. Bigger than Mexico or Australia

Economic Growth and Rankings

- Recent Growth: Grew by 6.3% over the past year.
- Countries Passed: Surpassed Mexico and Australia.
- Next Milestones: Trails South Korea

(No. 13) by about 2% growth and aims for the top 10 by overtaking Canada (No. 10) by 2030.

Details are tracked by the [Florida Chamber Foundation](http://FloridaChamberFoundation.org).

If you'd like, I can share details on:

- Key industries driving this growth
- Population migration trends into the state

Town News Lake County Events

Lady Lake PD Receives donation



Lady Lake PD receives donation of child comfort kits

When children experience traumatic events, even the smallest act of comfort can make a big difference.

The Walmart Supercenter on Wedgewood Lane recently donated Bexley Boxes to the Lady Lake Police Department. These special comfort kits are filled with essentials such as blankets, stuffed animals, snacks, diapers, wipes, toys and other items to help care for children during some of the most difficult

moments of their lives.

The Bexley Box program was inspired by the experience of a young child who witnessed the tragic loss of her father, leading to a statewide effort to ensure first responders have the resources needed to comfort children in crisis.

Thanks to Walmart's partnership with the Bridegan Foundation, law enforcement agencies across Florida—including the Lady Lake Police Department—now have these valuable tools available when they are needed most.

Browser Security Awareness Training



Lady Lake offers free internet browser security awareness training

LADY LAKE — The community is invited to strengthen their online safety skills during a free cybersecurity presentation, "Think Before You Click: Internet Browser Security Awareness," on Wednesday, July 29, at 1 p.m. at the Lady Lake Library, 225 W. Guava St. in Room 219.

The presentation will be led by Howard Davis, the Town of Lady Lake's IT cybersecurity expert, as part of the Town's ongoing cybersecurity education series.

As more daily activities move online, internet users face an increasing number of scams and security threats. During this

informative session, Davis will provide practical strategies to help attendees browse the web more safely and confidently. Topics will include password management, how to identify trusted and secure websites before entering personal information, and safe browsing practices that can help reduce the risk of phishing scams, malware, identity theft, and other online threats. Whether participants use the internet for banking, shopping, social media, or everyday communication, the presentation will offer easy-to-understand tips that can help protect personal information and improve online security.

The event is free and open to the public. No registration is required.

Texas Roadhouse Rib Eating Contest



The Lady Lake Police Department and [Lake County Fire Rescue - Official](#) put their appetites to the test at [Texas Roadhouse](#) Rib Eating Contest.

LLPD's win came with an even sweeter reward: the opportunity to choose where 10% of the evening's sales would be donated. Lady Lake Police selected St.

Jude Children's Research Hospital, helping support the hospital's mission of providing world-class care to children battling life-threatening illnesses, regardless of a family's ability to pay.

Thank you to Texas Roadhouse for creating a unique event that brought first responders together for some friendly rivalry while making a meaningful difference in the community.

Sexual Assault Arrest

Lady Lake Police arrested a 33-year-old man living in the Cove Apartments for possession of child sexual assault and bestiality material on Tuesday, July 28.

A cyber tip connected to Caleb Londoff was submitted on March 20. Through various investigative techniques, law enforcement linked the suspect to a Dropbox account containing the material.

Lady Lake Police were granted a search warrant for Londoff's apartment on June 23 and recovered his cell phone. The Lake

County's Sheriff's Office Forensics Lab processed the phone and found additional files.

Londoff was arrested and charged with 27 counts of possession of child sexual assault material and five counts of sexual activities involving animals. He is currently being held in the Lake County Jail on a \$147,500 bond.

At this time, there are no suspected local victims. However, the investigation remains ongoing.

To submit a tip, contact Crimeline at 1-800-423-TIPS.

Freedom Is Our Most Precious Heritage

By TomL

Freedom our most Precious Heritage. 250 years of freedom! Will it last? If the young people in our country were as smart as everyone says they are they could look around and see the results of Socialism and Communism all around our world. Look at the history of all the countries around our world. Do you think Bernie Sanders is a good example of a human Being. He made his fortune here promoting socialism, do you think he is going to share it with you? What do you think he is going to give you? You are going to give him power over you and others. Would you like to live in those other countries run by Communist? Why do you think all these people are trying to get into our country and out of the communist countries they are in.

I remember an Englishmen that was here on a work visa, working at the Hollywood SunTattler newspaper and he started bad mouthing America, I said you came here for opportunity and now because of some event happened now you don't like it any more. If you don't like it go back home. He did and it did not take him long to remember why he left. He said he had not seen the sun in days because of the fog and rain. He worked two jobs for a year to earn enough money to get him and his wife passage back. He swore he would never leave again.

You want to change this countries laws and ways of living. I love our country and yes there are some changes that need to be made but not by revolution, not by deceit, because that is where you are taking us! Vote for the people that fit into our government and you can change the laws. The Socialist that are running are lying to you, They are obstructionist, if you vote for the socialist you will not be building any thing you will be obstructing. Look at New York they have gone back on everything

they said during the election. The money people they are relying on are moving out. They are not stupid. They are not going to pay the taxes for you to live free. Nothing in this wonderful world is free. You need to get off your butt and get a job. Do something constructive, don't be an obstructionist! Something good will happen. I remember after I worked for the same newspaper for eighteen years, I changed jobs every eighteen months until I found my lifes work. That is what I am doing now!

I got curious about why and how this came about. Everyone is talking about how great AI is on furnishing information. So I ask Ai and it turns out that AI says people can be brainwashed through social media. Interesting the words Social Media and Socialism? AI says they get you to be active on a social media site. When you do thousands of bots swarm your information and your site and make you believe that they are your friend and help you believe untruths. YOU HAVE BEEN BRAINWASHED!

Teachers Union Conference

Staff

ON NATIONAL TV: The Teachers Union Conference main speaker was spouting cruse words and ranting about politics instead of talking about how to do their job better. The grade averages of all our country are down! Where do the youth find reasons to protest violently? From the school system, the same teachers that are acting like little children ranting about Trump and our politics. America is the Greatest, Best, Fairest country in the world. If they don 't like it GET OUT! A lot of foreign people in

other country's don't have AC, Cable TV, national sports and etc. Why do you think the people from other country's are always trying to sneak into our country. They want to be free and they are not where they came from!

I believe the teachers scores have drop since COVID . I believe they have been brain washedthe teachers into teaching our country is bad and they want to convince the youth to believe what they have been brain washed to believe. They have lost their way just like the Democrats. I believe a lot of the Democrats have been brain washed. They are getting prompted by social media and being brain washed on the sites they are spending time on. I ask AI can a person be brain washed into doing violent thing on Social media it said yes. They make suggestions and when you start agreeing or asking questions a million bots swarm your site and probe your intelligence until they brake through.

Even Trump, says some his best aids in the election was Tic Toc. China is deep into

social media studies and how to manipulate a person into to giving them information! Does that sound reasonable to you? IT'S TRUE!

25 Years of Horse Fever

This week on The Buzz, we're celebrating **25 years of Horse Fever** here in Marion County with the unveiling of a brand new painted horse. The horse is named "Freedom" and it was commissioned by Pyranha Animal Health to celebrate the lasting legacy of the values that make the horse capital of the world such a special place.

Plus, elementary students across Marion County will be learning all about what it's like to work in the equestrian industry with the release of the **Horse Capital Jobs Coloring Book** this upcoming school year.

Continued page 4

Lake County Detention Center Public Booking Log

See the frequently updated public booking log of those recently charged in Lake County. Go to:

<http://tomlpublishing.com/category/villages-news/lady-lake-police-dept/>

Or go to

Tomlpublishing.com and click on **Lake County Sheriff** on right side under **"Contributing Editors"**.



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Tom Loury Long time member of CEP/Ocala Chamber of Commerce, Past President of the Ocala Business Leaders and current member, Co-Founder and past President of Select Business Associates, Past President of the Lady Lake Chamber and current member.

PUBLISHER'S NOTES



My question this month is who gave the bank permission to charge me

more money on my mortgage note to raise the insurance rates? Who gave the Insurance companies permission to charge more money on my

mortgage? Suppose I just want to insure the amount of my note only!

As I see it my mortgage insurance started out with me having to insure to cover the Home loan when I borrowed to build my house? I gave no permission for the county to keep raising the value on my house, I did not give permission when the insurance company raised the price on the insurance base on replacement value INCASE SOMETHING HAPPENS? What if it don't? Suppose I don't want to replace the house? What if my house was destroyed by a tornado? It would be up to me if I wanted to

live in a camper as long as the bank note was paid? They just did it! I don't blame the local mortgage companies they don't want to buck the big corporate banker and large insurance company's. They just went along with what was going on. What the county is doing is raising the value of our houses based on the revenue they want to run the county, instead of cutting taxes they are raising taxes! They raise it to the amount of the revenue they think they need! The insurance companies have us over the barrel, they raise it minimum \$100 per month every year! The last three years it went up \$3600. The change of the homestead will help but the insurance will keep going up. Veterans and the elderly can't afford that.

What if someone wants to insure just the amount of the mortgage only? That is what it was based on in the beginning the amount of the note. There was no agreement about inflation! What if someone sues the County and the Insurance company's for racketeering! It is a racket you know!

What happens if I have a mortgage when

the tornado hits my house and I die? Who are they going to rebuild the house for? Who do these people have to answer to. Next subject.

Also let's talk about the city's / towns who are they to decide what business can build a plant outside the city limits. Some town / citys can't even support a police department because they spend money foolishly or they won't just leave the police alloan to fight crime and quiet asking for special favors! Drive by my house all night? Or let my son go free he did not mean to do it? Many request all in the name of the people running the city / town! Did you ever look up the difference between a city and a town? There are state regulation a town does not have to follow that a city does! hmmm

Bottom, line is if you don't insure your house for replacement value and it gets destroyed but you have covered the mortgage you just get a note to rebuild. Does that make sense, instead of paying all those years for what might happen? Pay for insurance to cover the note and start fresh with a new house and a new mortgage! You have saved all that insurance money and increases for how many years? It may never happen but if it does you are homeless for as long as it take to build a new house, buy a camper and live on the land while they build your new house!

Horse Fever

Continued from page 3

This week on The Buzz, we're celebrating **25 years of Horse Fever** here in Marion County with the unveiling of a brand new painted horse. The horse is named "Freedom" and it was commissioned by Pyranha Animal Health to celebrate the lasting legacy of the values that make the horse capital of the world such a special place.

Plus, elementary students across Marion County will be learning all about what it's like to work in the equestrian industry with the release of the **Horse Capital Jobs Coloring Book** this upcoming school year.



Newspaper Deadlines

Editorial & Ad Copy for September

Seniors Voice & Ocala DownTown

Noon, August 25th

Lady Lake Magazine & Village Spectator

12am, August 30th

Village Spectator / Lady Lake Magazine

Products of TomL Publishing, LLC

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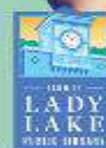


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CHAIR CHAT
BY BRIGGITTE SMITH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

To Everyone Concerned about Education

Dear Board Members
Subject: School YE Student Test Results – Disappointing

This letter is a follow-up to our January 5th letter and subsequent meeting where we noted mid-year poor test results in several critical areas. In discussions we were assured that supplemental actions to improve student outcomes and competency were in progress and the year-end results would reflect improvement.

At recent meeting school board meetings, board members indicated the results would

show a significant improvement, yet the year end test data drastically refutes this assertion.

We continue to have a problem in this county of achieving NOT competitive student outcomes, our students, parents and community deserves better. Harkens to a famous quote from Albert Einstein.

“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

Attached you will find a table comparing 2025 year-end results to 2026 year-end results as published by Florida Department of Education (DOE) for Marion County School District. The data scores were evaluated via paired student t-test statistical methods to determine if there was actually a statistical improvement.

Other data in the summary table are DOE

reported percentages of students below grade level (levels 1* and 2**), as well as the percentage of students dramatically lacking subject competency at level 1. This letter will focus on overall County performance and specifically 3rd grade, as educators have indicated this grade is critical to achieve strong reading and math fundamentals to “grow” and achieve academically in subsequent grades.

Key highlights:

Marion County dropped overall from the 2025 “B” ranking to a 2026 “C” ranking

Marion County School District ranks 58th out of 67 Florida school districts – an abysmal ranking

In math; across grades 3 to 8 – 48% of students scored below their respective grade level; therefore out of 18,347 students tested – 8,883 scored at level 1 or 2 (below grade level).

o Marion County 45% on or above grade level vs state average of 53%. – again lagging

In reading / language arts: across grades 3 to 10 – 49% of students scored below the respective grade level, therefore, out of 26,683 students tested almost 13,000 scored below grade level.

o Marion County 43% on or above grade vs state average of 52%. – again lagging

Third Grade Metrics of Schools Performance 2025 vs 2026

3rd Grade Reading / Language Arts
o no statistical improvement across all Marion schools for 2025 vs 2026

o 55% below grade level / 30% at level 1 (failing)

o Ranked of 61 out of 67 Fl school districts
3rd Grade Math Marion County School reading ranking against all other counties

o statistical improvement across all Marion schools for 2025 vs 2026

o 45% below grade level / 23% at level 1 (failing)

o Ranked of 60 out of 67 Fl school districts

Overall: Language Arts - no improvement / 50% below grade and almost one-third failing.

Math: statistical improvement (weak) / yet 45% below grade level with almost one-quarter failing

The attached table provides additional data for your review and evaluation.

The overall assessment of the test schools indicates the student population is not achieving adequate results. This continued poor performance indicates another generation of students will exit Marion County schools without the required skills for advanced education and / or work in trades requiring basic math and reading competency. Yes, there are exceptional students in our school system and we celebrate their achievements; however, on aggregate an overall state ranking of 58 out of 67 is not acceptable.

Our Ask:

We urge the school board to implement drastic action versus incremental changes and seek guidance and counsel from other states that have shown dramatic improvement (e.g. MS). Level 1 students need immediate support to be able to academically progress versus administrative promotions. This overall continued lagging performance could deter perspective residents from settling in the County given the School District's continued poor academic scores and ranking. Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Marion County Republican Executive Committee, please feel free to contact us if there are any questions.

Len M Racioppi Brigitte Smith
V. Chair MCREC Chair MCREC

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LAKE COUNTY EVENTS

SEE MORE ABOUT PARKS & TRAILS IN LAKE COUNTY
<https://lakecountyfl.gov/parks-and-trails>

Aug 01
Weekends at the Winery
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM Lakeridge Winery and Vineyards in **Clermont**

Aug 01
Wetland Excursion - Pine Meadows
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Pine Meadows Conservation Area in **Eustis**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 01
Florida Blue Back to School Event
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM Clermont Florida Blue Center in **Clermont**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 06
Paddling Adventure - Lake Norris
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Lake Norris Black Water Creek in **Eustis**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 07
First Friday
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Downtown Eustis in **Eustis**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 07
Stuart Little the stage play
7:00 PM - 4:00 PM Hideaway Performing Arts Center in **Eustis**

[Event Website](#)
Aug 7
First Friday - Dog Days of Summer!
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Downtown Eustis - Eustis Street and Magnolia Avenue in **Eustis**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 08
Quarterly Bird & Butterfly Survey
7:30 AM - 11:00 AM Neighborhood Lakes Scenic Trail & Trailhead in **Sorrento**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 08
Arthropods
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Neighborhood Lakes Scenic Trail & Trailhead in **Sorrento**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 08
Second Saturday Sounds in Ferran
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Ferran Park in **Eustis**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 12
Watershed Wednesdays
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Hickory Point Preserve Pavilion in **Tavares**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 13
Cooking with Chef Danny
6:00 PM - 1:00 PM Grove House

Restaurant in **Howey-in-the-Hills**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 14
Summer Yard Sale
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Renninger's Antique Center in **Mount Dora**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 14
Featured Event
Mount Dora's Art in the Alley
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Royellou Lane in **Mount Dora**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 15
The World of Seeds
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Ellis Acres Reserve in **Paisley**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 16
Beat the Heat with Cool Beats
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM W.T. Bland Public Library in **Mount Dora**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 21
Lakeridge Winery & Vineyards Annual Harvest Festival
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Lakeridge Winery and Vineyards in **Clermont**8/218/228/23

Aug 22
Quarterly Bird & Butterfly Survey
7:30 AM - 11:00 AM Ellis Acres Reserve in **Paisley**

[Event Website](#)
Aug 22
Afternoon Tea
1:00 PM - 1:00 PM Grove House Restaurant in **Howey-in-the-Hills**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 28
Shameless Namedroppers LIVE at Oasis Saloon
9:30 PM - 11:55 PM Oasis Saloon in **Sorrento**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 28
Stories of Water - Crooked River Preserve
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Crooked River Preserve in **Clermont**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 29
Quarterly Bird & Butterfly Survey
7:30 AM - 11:00 AM Pine Meadows Conservation Area in **Eustis**
[Event Website](#)

Aug 30
Blackwater Creek Bluegrass Band
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM W.T. Bland Public Library in **Mount Dora**



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North Lake Area Chamber of Commerce Lunch

The North Lake Chamber Business Luncheon was a great success. The restaurant was the Texas Roadhouse Grill, a great eating place. Over two dozens businesses were attending. You get a number for the table that you sit at so you don't get the same people sitting together all the time. They discuss their businesses while they enjoy the luncheon. The more you know about their business and the more they know about your business the more they can help each other. It's all about people. Call the chamber to ask about attending and where it will be he'd next month - 352-753-6029



North Lake Area Chamber Networking Breakfast

Our Networking Breakfast was a great success, held on the first Tuesday of the month. July 7 was held at First Watch of Lady Lake. With approx 40 Businesses represented.





North Lake
AREA CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Join the chamber

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
VETERANS HELPING VETERANS USA



The month of August is steeped in American military history, with several

Mr. Gwynn passed away on April 5, 2026, at the age of 106. A life well lived! See you next month..



AUGUST

Check out our website for more information at
mylakelibrary.org

Members of Congress Cannot Purchase Stock

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The House of Representatives today passed H.R. 7008, the Stop Insider Trading Act, by a vote of 232-198, prohibiting Members of Congress, their spouses, and dependent children from purchasing individual stocks issued by publicly traded companies. Congresswoman Kat Cammack (FL-03), who presided over the House as Speaker Pro Tempore during final passage, voted in favor of the legislation and called the reform long overdue.

“Members of Congress should never be able to profit from the public's trust. Period,” said Congresswoman Cammack. “For too long, Americans have been left wondering whether lawmakers are serving the country or their portfolios. That question should never have to be asked. Today's vote was long overdue.” The Stop Insider Trading Act prohibits Members of Congress, their spouses, and dependent children from purchasing individual securities issued by publicly traded companies while the Member serves in office.

As Speaker Pro Tempore, Rep. Cammack presided over the House chamber during final passage, holding the gavel as lawmakers approved the congressional ethics measure.

“I do not own a single share of individual corporate stock,” Rep. Cammack continued. “I was proud to vote for this reform, and especially proud to hold the gavel when the House finally passed it. The American people deserve to know their

elected officials are serving them, not their investment accounts.”

The legislation also includes election integrity provisions requiring voters to present photo identification when casting a ballot in a federal election. Absentee and mail-in voters would be required to include a copy of qualifying identification with their ballot. The language mirrors provisions of the SAVE America Act, which previously passed the House by a vote of 218-213.

Today's vote builds on Rep. Cammack's broader efforts to strengthen accountability and restore public trust in Congress. Earlier this week, she renewed her call for immediate consideration of H.Res. 500, her resolution requiring criminal background checks for House employees and public disclosure of foreign government payments, contracts, and citizenship.

“Restoring trust in Congress will take more than one vote,” Rep. Cammack concluded. “We must continue raising ethical standards, strengthening congressional security, and proving to the American people that public service is exactly that: service.”

The measure now advances to the Senate.

Networking is Awkward at Best

Some think it's about making a deal. IT's NOT! It's about making friends to do business with. I try to do business with people not businesses. The people you

choose to represent you need to be real. Genuinely care about you and be a good listener, remember what they say and make note after you get back to your car. Remember their birthday, mention their wife / husband / children. Try to have a welcome package for new comers.

Prompt them to call if they need anything. They will become a real friend. They will also prefer to do business with a friend so really be their friend.

People prefer to do business with friends. They might ask for a discount be ready and say “I can ask?” OR “Do you want my boss to call you to discuss it?”

REFERRALS is where it is at. It opens a conversation with a stranger and makes them and you feel more comfortable. Be friendly, make friends, always be happy. Through away the negative attitude, you will feel better and do more business!

Note: the CEP Ocala Chamber with CEO Matt McCormick is very good at the art of networking. They make friend right away! I never hear a negative conversation, it is all positive and where they are doing next!

We do not know how many tomorrows we will have so make it happen TODAY!

TomL said that!



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FROM THE DESK OF

CONGRESSWOMAN KAT CAMMACK



Pasteurized Orange Juice

Congresswoman Kat Cammack (FL-03) today welcomed the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's final rule modernizing the federal Standard of

Identity for pasteurized orange juice during an announcement with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Acting FDA Commissioner Kyle Diamantas, Senator Ashley Moody, and Congresswoman Laurel Lee (FL-15).

The updated standard lowers the minimum Brix level from 10.5 to 10 degrees, allowing processors to produce 100 percent orange juice using more of the fruit Florida actually grows, in response to a 2022 petition from Florida Citrus Mutual and the Florida Citrus Processors Association. Citrus greening and repeated hurricanes have lowered the natural sugar content of Florida oranges, and the previous standard forced processors to blend in imported juice to meet a threshold today's Florida crop could not reliably reach. FDA estimates the rule will save manufacturers more than \$50 million annually.

Press conference at Ocala fire station spotlights legislation to strengthen mental health support for first responders

OCALA, Fla. — Congresswoman Kat Cammack (FL-03) joined area fire and law enforcement leaders at Marion County Fire Rescue Station 28 today to champion the Answering the Call Act of 2026 (H.R. 8637), her legislation to strengthen mental health

support for first responders through the national 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

“First responders see the worst of the worst, day in and day out, and it takes a toll. This bill creates a resource dedicated solely to them, with counselors trained to understand exactly what they are going through,” said Rep. Cammack. “They answer the call every single time, and it is high time we answer the call in return.”

The Answering the Call Act directs dedicated outreach and support to first responders through the 988 Lifeline. It funds specialized training for the counselors who answer those calls so they understand what first responders face, provides grants for states and departments to raise awareness of the resource, and keeps access completely anonymous so no one fears retaliation or judgment for reaching out. The bill covers firefighters, law enforcement, corrections officers, dispatchers, and EMS personnel.

Research has found that police officers and firefighters are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty, and the crisis has hit Marion County directly.

The choice of Station 28 was deliberate. It was the home station of firefighter and paramedic Allen Singleton, a six-year veteran and member of the Marion County Fire Rescue and Sheriff's Office SWAT Medic team, who died by suicide in January 2023. Marion County Fire Chief James Banta said the department has lost four firefighters to suicide, a toll that underscores the urgency of the legislation.

“First responders answer the call every day. We respond to tragedy, trauma, and human suffering, often carrying the weight of those experiences long after the incident is over,” said Marion Chief James Banta. “Yet for far too long, seeking help has carried a stigma in our profession. If even

one first responder reaches out before a crisis becomes a tragedy, it will have made a difference.”

Ocala Police Chief Mike Balken echoed the need for greater awareness of and access to mental health resources for first responders: “This legislation sends a clear message: seeking help is a sign of strength. At the end of the day, this is about taking care of the men and women who take care of our communities.”

Rep. Cammack, whose husband Matt is a 19-year veteran of Gainesville Fire Rescue, said the measure of success is simple. “Success would be if one life was saved,” she said. “That, to me, is the measure of success.”

The Answering the Call Act has earned support from the Florida Fire Chiefs' Association, the Florida Sheriff's Association, and the National Police Association.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24 hours a day by call or text.

Congresswoman Kat Cammack Calls for Immediate House Vote on Resolution Requiring Background Checks for All Congressional Staff

H.Res. 500 would require criminal background checks for House employees and public disclosure of foreign government payments, contracts, and citizenship.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congresswoman Kat Cammack (FL-03) today called on the House to immediately bring H.Res. 500 to the floor for a vote. The resolution would strengthen security standards for congressional staff by requiring criminal background checks and public disclosure of foreign government payments, contracts, and citizenship.

The renewed push comes as congressional staff security has drawn renewed public attention, underscoring the need for stronger vetting and transparency

standards in the House of Representatives.

“Congressional staff handle Americans' most sensitive personal information every day, from Social Security numbers on casework files to veterans' records,” said Congresswoman Cammack. “Americans are shocked when they learn that those staffers face no required background check. Federal employees across the executive branch are vetted before they ever get a badge. Not here. That should concern every member of Congress, regardless of party.”

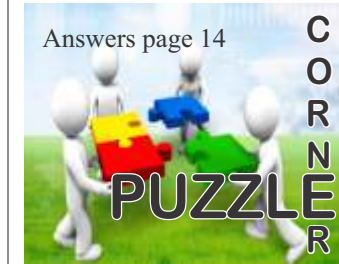
Introduced by Rep. Cammack earlier this Congress, H.Res. 500 would amend the Rules of the House of Representatives to:

- Require background checks for House employees;
- Require disclosure if a House employee has received payments from, or entered into contracts or agreements with, a foreign government during the three years before beginning House employment;
- Require disclosure if a House employee is a citizen or national of a foreign country;
- Require those disclosures to be filed with the Clerk of the House and made publicly available; and
- Apply these disclosure requirements to both current House employees and new hires.

Rep. Cammack noted that despite introducing the resolution, efforts to move it forward have repeatedly stalled.

“I introduced H.Res. 500 more than a year ago to fix this,” Rep. Cammack continued. “First, I was told it needed 100 cosponsors before it could be considered. Then I was told background checks couldn't be done. Then I was told that disclosures couldn't be published. The excuses keep changing, while the security risk stays the same.”

Rep. Cammack also called on Americans to urge their Representatives to support the resolution.



Across

1. Surrealist Joan
 5. National League East team
 9. Fountain of Rome
 14. Warning sign
 15. Abrasive stuff
 16. Safe place
 17. It has tiers
 20. Word in a letter closing
 21. Title for McCartney
 22. ___-dieu (kneeling bench)
 23. August forecast
 24. Shade provider
 27. ___'easter
 29. AOL alternative
 30. Part of YSL
 32. Chow down
 34. Big lug
 36. Mickey's girlfriend
 39. Owl's home
 40. It has tiers

42. "___ Ha'i"
 43. Add fizz to
 44. ___ hard times
 46. LBJ or JFK
 47. Auctioneer's cry
 51. Like some vbs.
 52. Work on a lawn
 54. 4:00 social
 56. Born, in bios
 57. Chuck-wagon offering
 59. Barbecue morsel
 61. Nautical nonsense
 63. It has tiers
 67. '60s NASA rocket
 68. Type of shark
 69. "She Believes ___" (Kenny Rogers tune)
 70. Alley button
 71. Minimally
 72. Monopoly card

Down

1. Too talkative
 2. Ad-lib comedy
 3. Good name
 4. Like Nash's lama
 5. "Singin' in the Rain" studio
 6. Epoch
 7. Cookie holders
 8. Washday worry
 9. One of three articles

10. Highway access
 11. Always
 12. Deer meat
 13. Resolute
 18. Sandwich bread
 19. Swashbuckler's quaff
 25. Give for a time
 26. Craze
 28. Morocco's capital
 31. Detect, in a way
 33. Like a fork
 35. HOMES quintet
 37. "Talk turkey," e.g.
 38. Everglades wader
 40. Tusked beasts
 41. Made the scene
 42. Artillery onslaught
 44. Fruity cookie
 45. "The Thin Man" character
 48. Surfing the Net
 49. Pea or peanut
 50. Considered
 53. Mrs. Flintstone
 55. Lawyers' grp.
 58. "Nota ___"
 60. Spill the beans
 62. "___ it my way"
 64. Flutter, as eyelashes
 65. Glide on snow
 66. Young one

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FROM THE DESK OF ATTORNEY GENERAL OFFICE



Attorney General James Uthmeier Returns Record \$710,000 to Crypto-Fraud Victim

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Attorney General James Uthmeier announced that the Cyber Fraud Enforcement Unit

delivered its largest single reimbursement to date—a check for \$710,000—to a Florida victim of a highly sophisticated cryptocurrency fraud scheme.

“Instead of setting records, we prefer to prevent fraud, but are proud to deliver justice and make this victim whole,” said **Attorney General James Uthmeier**. “Through our collaboration with the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office and the dedication of Chief Assistant Statewide Prosecutor John Paul, we have recovered these funds from transnational criminals and returned them to their rightful owner.”

“Recovering more than \$700,000 and returning it to the victim is an outstanding result and reflects the dedication of our detectives and the strong partnerships that make cases like this possible,” said **Jacksonville Sheriff T.K. Waters**. “I want to thank Attorney General James Uthmeier and his team for their collaboration and commitment to holding fraudsters accountable.”

The victim fell prey to a remote work-from-home scam involving “product reviews.” Scammers convinced him he needed to match the value of review items by depositing cryptocurrency to earn commissions, with promises that all funds would be returned plus profits. As the supposed “products” grew larger, so did the required investments.

Once the transnational criminal organization extracted every possible dollar, they ghosted the victim with the claim that the money was “stuck in the blockchain” unless he paid one final fee.

Working with the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, investigators traced the funds to a large consolidation wallet containing commingled assets from multiple frauds. Through civil forfeiture proceedings, a default judgment was obtained after the scammers failed to contest the action.

This recovery was led by Chief Assistant Statewide Prosecutor John Paul and Det. R.H. Holmes of the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office.

Floridians should beware of work-from-home scams that prey on job seekers with fake remote opportunities. Red flags include asking for upfront fees for background checks or equipment costs, buying gift cards or crypto as part of the job, unsolicited job offers via text message, and text-only interviews. Always independently contact the company to verify an online job opportunity before proceeding.

Attorney General James Uthmeier Launches Investigation into Potassium Bromate in Florida’s Food Supply Chain

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Attorney General James Uthmeier issued a civil subpoena to General Mills, Inc. and General Mills Operations, LLC, as part of

an investigation under the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act into the supply chain of products containing potassium bromate sold in Florida.

“This investigation is about protecting Florida families and providing transparency to our consumers,” said **Attorney General James Uthmeier**. “Floridians have a right to know what is in the food they buy and feed their children. We are investigating the supply chain for the presence of potassium bromate in products sold across our state, including any disclosures made to purchasers and research on its potential health effects.”

Potassium bromate, used as a flour improver and dough conditioner in certain bakery flours, is classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as “possibly carcinogenic to humans.” The chemical compound has been banned as a food additive in the European Union since 1990, Canada since 1994, China since 2005, India since 2016, and in Brazil, Argentina, South Korea, Peru, and numerous other countries due to health concerns, including evidence of tumors in animal studies.

The subpoena seeks comprehensive information on the company’s bromated products reaching Florida consumers and schools.

The subpoena commands production of documents related to:

- All General Mills products containing potassium bromate sold to purchasers in Florida, including specific items such as Pillsbury Potentate High Gluten Flour, Pillsbury Best Bakers Patent Flour, Gold Medal All Aces Bakery Flour, and Gold Medal Superlative Bakers Flour (50 lb

bulk sacks).

- Top purchasers in Florida of these products for the years 2023 through 2026.
- Disclosures provided to purchasers of bromated products or downstream goods made from them.
- Research on the use of potassium bromate in General Mills products and its potential effects on human safety.
- Sales of these products to Florida schools (pre-kindergarten through 12th grade).

This action reinforces Attorney General Uthmeier’s commitment to enforcing Florida’s consumer protection laws, ensuring transparency in the food supply chain, and safeguarding public health from potential risks.

Attorney General James Uthmeier Charges Canadian Citizen for Illegally Voting in Multiple Florida Elections

Attorney General James Uthmeier announced charges against Giorgio Dominique Mucelli, 66, of Melbourne, for Voting by a Non-Citizen Elector and False Affirmation. An arrest warrant was issued after an investigation revealed that Mucelli, a lawful permanent resident and Canadian citizen, illegally voted in seven General Elections over two decades, including the 2024 General Election.

“Florida will not allow non-citizens to steal the vote of Americans at the ballot box,” said Attorney General James Uthmeier. “This individual knowingly registered and voted while ineligible, lied about it when confronted, and undermined the integrity of our elections. Thanks to the outstanding investigative work of FDLE’s Election Crime Unit and our Statewide Prosecutors, he is being held accountable.”

An investigation revealed that Mucelli registered to vote in Brevard County on April 9, 2004, falsely affirming under oath

that he was a United States citizen. U.S. Department of Homeland Security records confirm he has maintained lawful permanent resident status, last renewing it in April 2023, and is not a U.S. citizen.

Despite his ineligibility, Mucelli voted in the General Elections of 2004, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2020, 2022, and 2024. He voted early in the 2020, 2022, and 2024 elections and presented photo identification; none of the ballots were provisional. At the time of voting, he acknowledged the required oath affirming he was a qualified elector.

In January 2026, the Brevard County Supervisor of Elections determined Mucelli was ineligible based on his LPR status and the SAVE database. After notification, Mucelli contacted the office and falsely claimed he had not voted. In a subsequent post-Miranda interview, Mucelli admitted to voting in those elections, admitted lying to election officials, acknowledged his ineligibility and possession of an LPR card and Canadian passport, and stated he knew he was not supposed to vote but felt it was the “right thing to do.”

Mucelli is charged with:

One count of Voting by Non-Citizen Elector—a third-degree felony

One count of False Affirmation—a third-degree felony

If convicted as charged, he faces up to ten years in the Florida Department of Corrections.

This case will be prosecuted in the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida by Chief Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Jonathan Bridges and Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Karen Black.

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FROM THE DESK OF

GOVERNOR DESANTIS



Governor Ron DeSantis and Insurance Commissioner Mike Yaworsky Host Meetings in London with Insurance and Reinsurance Leaders During Florida's Business Development Mission to the United

Kingdom

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM—As part of Florida's ongoing Business Development Mission to the United Kingdom, Governor DeSantis and Insurance Commissioner Mike Yaworsky participated in a series of meetings with leaders in Britain's insurance and reinsurance industry—capped off by joining Lady Mayor Dame Susan Langley for a fireside chat to discuss insurance and reinsurance. These discussions build on the successful and productive partnership established between the U.K. and Florida during the Governor's April 2023 visit—further bolstered by the [signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in November 2023](#) to increase bilateral investment, strengthen business ties, and grow academic partnerships while ensuring economic opportunities that promote resilience and increase opportunity for innovative industries.

“Florida represents the 7th largest insurance market in the world,” **said Governor Ron DeSantis**. “We had great discussions furthering the UK-Florida partnership established in 2023. This partnership has informed Florida's game-changing industry reforms—supporting Florida's insurance market and highlighting the importance of continued collaboration between Florida and the United Kingdom.”

“The UK and Florida already enjoy a strong and growing economic relationship and nowhere is that partnership more important than in insurance and reinsurance,” **said the Lady Mayor of the City of London, Dame Susan Langley**. “Today's discussions demonstrate the value of closer collaboration between Florida and the UK as we work together to strengthen resilience, foster innovation and ensure businesses and communities are equipped to navigate an increasingly complex global risk landscape. I was delighted to welcome Governor DeSantis, Commissioner Yaworsky and the Florida delegation to the City of London as we continue to deepen a partnership that supports investment, drives growth and advances solutions to the challenges of the future.”

“The symbiotic relationship between Florida and the City of London has evolved over history and has shown great friendship and loyal economic partnership. That collaboration also greatly extends its hand to the insurance landscape. It was an honor to moderate discussions between the Governor and Lady Mayor today to further expound on Florida and the City of London's strong insurance and reinsurance partnership,” **said Commissioner Mike Yaworsky**.

“Thanks to the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida's insurance and reinsurance market has seen important reforms that are improving stability and providing relief for Floridians,” **said FIU President Jeanette M. Nuñez**. “Throughout the mission, I have been proud to share that at Florida International University, through assets like our Wall of Wind and the Florida Public Hurricane Loss

Model, we are conducting research that simulate hurricane-force winds on buildings and estimate potential losses and generating critical data. This research helps inform the state of Florida as it evaluates policies and informs the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation as it evaluates risk and reviews insurance rates to ensure they are actuarially sound for homeowners.”

“The Governor's discussions today with Lady Mayor Langley and leading industry stakeholders are a part of an ongoing partnership established in 2023 that has bolstered Florida's insurance, reinsurance, and financial services industries, attracting leading financial and insurance industry leaders to locate and expand in Florida,” **said Secretary of Commerce J. Alex Kelly**. “Florida offers incredible partners—like Florida International University and the University of Central Florida—for mitigation, insurance, environmental resiliency, water quality and quantity, and testing innovation.”

To start the day, Governor DeSantis and Commissioner Yaworsky met with Lloyd's of London leadership to discuss insurance and reinsurance market collaboration between Florida and the U.K., including forging a path toward a research partnership through the Lloyd's lab incubator and the State of Florida.

The Governor and Commissioner were then joined by Florida International University (FIU) President Jeanette Nuñez to discuss Florida's leadership in mitigation and resiliency, including through the Wall of Wind (WOW). FIU is a testbed of innovation and home to the nation's only university-based facility capable of simulating a Category 5 hurricane and testing structures at full scale.

To cap off the day, the Governor and Commissioner joined the Lady Mayor of London and UK insurance leadership to discuss shared economic priorities, strengthen bilateral relationships, and advance collaboration between Florida and the U.K. capital markets.

Additionally, Florida and U.K. delegates met today for the fifth U.K.- Florida MOU Working Group Meeting to discussing aerospace and aviation, emerging technologies, life sciences, and photonics.

On First Day of Business Development Leadership Mission to the United Kingdom, Governor Ron DeSantis Opens the Florida Pavilion at the 2026 Farnborough International Airshow

FARNBOROUGH, UNITED KINGDOM—Today, on the first day of Florida's Business Development Leadership Mission to the United Kingdom, Governor DeSantis officially opened the Florida Pavilion at the 2026 Farnborough International Airshow. The Governor also announced that Relativity Space—an aerospace manufacturing company—has committed to expanding its operations on the Space Coast, bringing substantial capital investments and creating thousands of high-skill, high-wage jobs for Floridians. The Governor also presided over the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Space Florida and the UK Space Agency (UKSA) to advance international space collaboration. This new partnership builds on an already strong relationship between the United Kingdom and Florida.

“The Free State of Florida anchors the international space economy,” **said Governor Ron DeSantis**. “Today's announcements at the Farnborough International Airshow reinforce our position as a leader in the

international space race by creating pathways for innovation, investment, and opportunity.”

“Relativity Space's decision to expand their pioneering manufacturing and launch operations to the Space Coast supports Florida's position as the premier destination for innovative companies,” **said Secretary of Commerce J. Alex Kelly**. “Florida has fostered a competitive, business-first climate and we are proud to support Florida's small and emerging aviation and aerospace companies as they showcase the strength and ferocity of Florida's economy at the 2026 Farnborough International Airshow.”

“It's strategic and intentional initiatives like today's Space Florida MOU that keep Florida at the forefront of the aviation and aerospace industry,” **said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Jared W. Perdue**. “These partnerships will continue to drive future innovation and economic growth.”

“From the days of early aviation to today's space missions, Florida has played an important part in the history of manned flight,” **said Secretary of State Cord Byrd**. “Expanding our partnership with the United Kingdom through this MOU brings together our shared expertise, technology, and pioneering spirit.”

“Relativity is exactly the partner that helps advance our mission to solidify Florida as the world's hub for aerospace commerce,” **said Rob Long, President and CEO, Space Florida**. “This project is a win for Florida's commercial space economy and is the direct result of how our infrastructure, strategy, and talent ecosystem makes Florida the inevitable choice. We look forward to actively helping them grow in our state.”

“Every partnership Space Florida forges strengthens our state's position as the world's leading aerospace commerce hub. Our newly signed agreement with the UK is our first partnership under the International Aerospace Innovation Fund and gives Florida companies a direct path to international collaboration. Thank you to Governor Ron DeSantis for continuing to drive our aerospace economy forward,” **said Jeanette Nuñez, Chair of the**

Space Florida Board of Directors.

This new partnership between Space Florida and UKSA builds on the framework outlined in the 2023 Memorandum of Understanding signed by Governor DeSantis and U.K. Secretary of State for Business and Trade Kemi Badenoch. Since then, through strategic efforts, Florida and the U.K. have seen steady momentum through multiple inbound and outbound trade delegations, ongoing implementation meetings, and strong educational and commercial ties that continue to make the U.K. one of Florida's most important economic partners.

Since 2019, bilateral merchandise trade between Florida and the UK has grown by more than 20%. In 2025, total bilateral merchandise trade between Florida and the United Kingdom was more than \$4.1 billion. Florida exported \$1.3 billion in Florida-origin goods to the UK, and the UK exported \$2.8 billion in goods to Florida. The U.K. is one of Florida's most important international economic partners. The U.K. is the state's largest international investment employer—accounting for roughly 1 in 5 international investment jobs in Florida. Florida serves as the UK's commercial gateway to Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Southeastern United States.

With a GDP of nearly \$1.9 trillion in Q1 of 2026, Florida would be the 14th largest economy in the world if it was a country. Florida's economy has been ranked #1 in the nation for two consecutive years by U.S. News & World Report. Florida has also been recognized as the #1 state in the nation for developing and attracting a skilled workforce by Lightcast and Florida has also ranked #1 in Higher Education for 10 consecutive years—becoming #1 in the nation for workforce education this year.

Florida's strategic infrastructure supports this economic strength, with three spaceports, 16 deepwater seaports, 21 commercial airports, 130 public-use airports, and more than 20 major military installations, including three combatant commands.

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