

MSD Commission / Broward County School Board

In June, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Commission met in Sunrise. The meeting was led off with the resignation of Andrew Pollack, father of one of the victims. In his resignation he said he wanted to focus his time and efforts into his own personal investigation and getting school board members elected.

A main focus of the commission during this set of meetings was the Broward County School Board Promise program and School Resource / School Safety Officers.

In response to the event at MSD, the Florida legislature required that each public school have at least one armed guard. But Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, the commission's chairman, and Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said it is unrealistic to expect to have them at all state schools this fall.

During a Broward School Board workshop, the Broward County Chiefs Association led by Plantation Police Chief Harrison along with city managers explained that Broward is facing a 300 sworn officer shortfall countywide. They also explained that it takes a minimum 18 months to go from application to becoming a sworn law enforcement officer.

Broward County Schools have chosen to go with a hybrid Guardian Program model of School Resource Officers (sworn law enforcement) and School Safety Officers (trained armed security guards) in order to meet the timeline set by the legislature due to the significant law enforcement staffing shortfall.

Originally the Broward County School Board voted to deny the Guardian Program, which would have allowed for the arming of trained school staff members, not teachers. This revisited hybrid model would allow for the School Board to hire specific School Safety Officer positions meeting certain minimum requirements and to be trained by the Broward Sheriff's Office.

The Commission is tasked with giving their first report to Governor Rick Scott by January 1, 2019.

Campaign Qualifying Deadline Passes

During the month of June the candidate qualifying deadline passed. During this time candidates running for all political offices in 2018 had to qualify to be added to the August Primary Election and November General Election ballots.

Broward County saw one incumbent, State Representative Russel Barrington (D-Lauderhill), not qualify meaning his one Democratic opponent, Anika Omphroy of Lauderdale, wins the election unopposed by default and is the State Representative elect for House District 95 of central Broward.

Broward also saw State Senator Lauren Book (D-Plantation), Chair of the Senate Environmental Appropriations Committee, go unopposed. Whereas State Senator Gary Farmer (D-Fort Lauderdale) who looked to not be drawing an opponent, ended up being primaryed moments before the qualifying deadline by former Coconut Creek City Commissioner and State Representative Jim Waldman, who lost to Farmer in 2016 for the same seat, setting up a closed primary rematch in August of 2018.

FAC Annual Conference

Candice and Corey both attended the Florida Association of Counties annual conference in Orlando this month. Major topics of discussion was how counties can combat the continued erosion of home rule by the Florida legislature, school safety funding, and the opioid crisis impacting Florida.

First GOP Gubernatorial Debate

Florida Republican voters saw their two candidates for Governor in 2018 square off for the first time in Orlando last week. Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Adam Putnam and Congressman DeSantis debated one another for an hour.

The two candidates took shots at each other throughout the hour-long debate. But on the issues, they both called on Trump to appoint a conservative to the Supreme Court, criticized California Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters for her controversial recent comments and expressed concern over school shootings while defending Second Amendment rights.

Congressman DeSantis is endorsed by President Trump and made sure the audience was well aware of that fact, whereas Commissioner Putnam made it clear that he supported the President's agenda, but also that he is not a Washington D.C. insider and a Florida grown candidate.

Both called for the removal of Scott Israel, the sheriff of Broward County who came under criticism after the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland in February.

Though Trump endorsed DeSantis, a recent Fox News poll of Florida likely GOP primary voters finds Putnam ahead of DeSantis by a 32-17 percent margin. However, 39 percent of voters said they're unsure who they will back in the primary. Meanwhile, 46 percent of those supporting a candidate say they could still change their mind.

Meanwhile, there's a crowded Democratic primary for governor, including Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum, Palm Beach billionaire Jeff Greene, former U.S. Rep. Gwen Graham, Orlando businessman Chris King and former Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine.

The current governor of Florida, Republican Rick Scott, is challenging incumbent Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson for the Senate.

Florida's Water War Win

Florida got a "huge win" in the U. S. Supreme Court on Wednesday in its water dispute with Georgia — but only in the sense that Florida did not lose. Florida filed the lawsuit after Apalachicola Bay's oyster population crashed in 2012 amid drought and reduced water flows in the Apalachicola River. The lawsuit blamed Georgia for unchecked growth in water use, particularly by farmers along the Flint River in Georgia upstream from Florida.

Alabama, Florida and Georgia have been battling in court over water use from the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint rivers since 1990. Federal judges have directed the states to mediation three times since 2000. And Lancaster repeatedly told Florida and Georgia's lawyers to work out their differences, warning that neither side may like the outcome of litigation.

Florida Governor Rick Scott was quoted saying, "I am glad that the court ruled in Florida's favor today and we look forward to further securing a healthy Apalachicola Bay while protecting the thousands of jobs that depend on this natural resource".