



# TAMPA TRIBUNE

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**ERNEST HOOPER**  
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## Culinary contest has many winners

Chefs will literally climb into a boxing ring at Armature Works on Tuesday (Oct. 16).

They will fight for bragging rights, for pride and for fun. They also will fight to fuel the dreams of others.

At Metropolitan Ministries' Tampa Bay Food Fight, guests will vote for the Best Restaurant Tampa, Best Restaurant St. Pete, Best Cocktail and Best Beer while sampling food from more than 50 restaurants.

The highlight, however, will be the chef showdown between culinary artists from some of the cities' top restaurants. Defending champion Tampa, which won by two points out of a possible 200 in last year's inaugural event, will bring its team of six chefs into the showdown: Rooster & Till's Ferrell Alvarez, Steelbach's Nathan Hardin, Hemmingways' Felicia Lacalle, Sacred Pepper's James Maita, Haven's Courtney Orwig and Forbici's Jason Saldutti. Cena's Michael Buttacavoli and Haven's Chad Johnson will serve as Team Tampa's captains.

St. Petersburg will look to exact revenge with its culinary crew: The Birchwood's Lee Aquino, Locale's Adam Beckett, The Peabody's Rachell Bennett, Il Ritorno's David Benstock, Red Mesa's Chris Fernandez and Dr. BBQ's Lee Jasper. The Mill's Ted Dorsey and Parkshore Grill's Tyson Grant will coach up the the St. Pete team.

Both squads will have to prepare two entrees from an unknown protein. The teams will compete in pairs, with two chefs from each group assigned to prep, cooking and finishing. A panel of judges, including *Tampa Bay Times* food critic Laura Reiley, will score the dishes.

The competition proved so enjoyable in 2017 that organizers had to turn away chefs eager to join the fray in 2018.

But it's also a chance for the chefs — and the guests — to cook up dollars for students in Metropolitan Ministries' Inside the Box Culinary Arts Program. The event aims to fund scholarships for 100 students in the program. That's an appetizing appeal for chefs.

"It's very unique for them because restaurants get asked all the time to donate time and food to different events," said Cliff Barsi, MetMin's vice president of social enterprise and food services. "But this is the rare cause that allows them to give back to their industry."

"They're helping to create prep cooks, who can move up to become line cooks, to become chefs. They actually take their skill level and go to a two-year culinary school."

Those aren't empty words  
» See HOOPER, 5

## Know Your Candidates

# Before you vote, take note



RON BORRESEN | Times

Tampa Bay has nearly 2 million registered voters who have much to consider this election. Voting has already begun by mail. Starting in 10 days, early voting begins for some. By the time "Election Day" arrives Nov. 6, probably more than half of the electorate will have already voted.

To help make sense of the upcoming general election, today's *Tampa Tribune* includes information about the races and issues on the ballot. **Pages 8-19**

If you want to read more, visit the *Tampa Bay Times*' online searchable database at <http://bit.ly/TBTvote18>.

### Vote by mail

Vote-by-mail ballots have already been sent out for those who have requested them. To request a mail ballot, contact your Elections Supervisor at the top of this webpage: [bit.ly/hillsmailvote](http://bit.ly/hillsmailvote). Phone (813) 612-4180.

### Early Voting

Monday, Oct. 22 to Sunday Nov. 4, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

## Constitutional amendments

# Voters to consider 12 revisions

BY ELIZABETH KOH  
*Miami Herald*

TALLAHASSEE — The 12 constitutional amendments on this year's ballot are the most since 1998, when the state's Constitution Revision Commission — which meets once every 20 years — put nine of 13 amendments on the ballot. The Constitution Revision Commission convened this year and placed eight amendments on the ballot.

In some cases, measures have been grouped together, meaning voters will

have to choose to approve or reject disparate proposals that have been linked in one amendment. To be approved, any constitutional amendment requires 60 percent of the vote. Here's what this year's amendments do:

### Amendment 1

Increased Homestead Property Tax Exemption would raise the portion of a home's value that can be exempted from non-school property taxes. The Legislature voted to refer the exemption to the

ballot in 2017, and the proposed changes would apply to the assessed value of a homestead property between \$100,000 and \$125,000, raising the maximum exemption to \$75,000.

The shift could save homeowners a couple hundred dollars, but a legislative staff analysis estimated local governments — which rely on property taxes for revenue — would lose about \$645 million in the first year if the exemption, effective Jan. 1, is approved.  
» See AMENDMENTS, 6

## Arthritis sufferer applies CBD oils

When the product worked for her, she set out to adapt the anti-inflammatory for pets.

BY LIBBY BALDWIN  
*Times Correspondent*

TAMPA — Concerned about the side effects of prescription medication, entrepreneur Angela Ardolino took a holistic approach to treating her nasty case of rheumatoid arthritis.

She tried using CBD oil. When it worked for her, she reasoned that it would have similar benefits for her senior schnauzer, Odie, who also suffered from arthritis — but couldn't find any natural products for pets in the United States.

So she set out to make her own.

After lending her support to legalizing medical marijuana, Ardolino earned a degree in CBD oil's therapeutic uses from the University of Vermont and partnered with Dr. Ashok Patel, a biochemist and essential oils expert, to found CBD Dog Health.

"Anything with a spine has an endocannabinoid system, which means any ailment that's caused by any sort of inflammation can be treated with CBD oil. It's essentially a natural anti-inflammatory," said Ardolino, who also founded *Tampa Bay Parenting Magazine*, Fire Flake Farm for rescue animals and Beautify the Beast, a pet grooming and boarding business.

Ardolino held an informational session Oct. 6 at the Chillum Glass Gallery and CBD Dispensary in Ybor City, answering questions from the public and giving away bags of freeze-dried salmon oil pet treats, each formulated with 3 to 4 milligrams of CBD.

...

CBD, or cannabidiol, is an essential component of medical marijuana and derived directly from the hemp plant, according to an article on Harvard University's health blog, which said that CBD alone does not cause any sort of "high." It is separate from THC, the marijuana component recreational smokers traditionally inhale.

Ardolino is not alone in offering some form of CBD for pets. A number of companies around the country now offer pet products that contain cannabidiol.

Tampa-based UUNetWorldBrands includes CBD treats and oils among its pet nutritional offerings. K9 Cannapaws, based in Boca Raton, manufactures organic products in Boca Raton that promise to calm animals' stress and anxiety. Much like Ardolino, K9 Cannapaws' products aim to boost immune systems, decrease inflammation and relieve pain that may result from age-related issues, breeding or other problems.

...

The science behind the prod-  
» See CBD, 2

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# RELIGION

## Faith

### 'Night of Hope' brings the Gospel

Tim Tebow will speak at a free event Dec. 2 at Tropicana Field.

The athlete will share his testimony during "Night of Hope," a Christian revival also featuring recording artist Kari Jobe.

The event, organized by Tampa Bay nonprofit Movement 2819, is expected to draw about 20,000 spectators.

Volunteers are needed to work the parking lot, usher and greet people, man stations and keep the night running smooth. Sponsors also are needed.

"Night of Hope" is about sharing the Gospel with the community," said event director Shannon Estee, worship leader at Mission City Church in Largo.

Mission City pastor Dustin LeChance founded Movement 2819 to partner with other ministries and bring big, faith-filled events to the Bay area. The organization's name comes from Matthew 28:19, which urges believers to go out and make

disciples of men.

"Night of Hope" is Movement 2819's first event. Free tickets will be handed out at the door.

"As a pastor, I have to say, what our community needs more of is Jesus," LeChance said. "We want to bring hope and encouragement, to let people know there is a God who has a bigger plan for their lives."

In addition to Kari Jobe, Mack Brock of Elevation Worship, Mission City Worship and Esteé will perform at Tropicana Field. Tebow will speak mid-evening about how faith shapes his life.

Movement 2819 lined up Tebow through his mother, who spoke at a Mission City's Women's Conference in May 2018, Estee said.

Volunteer registration closes at the end of October. Opportunities include helping with product and sponsorship tables, social media efforts and joining the prayer team.

"This is a chance to watch God move in and change people's lives," he said.

For more information on "Night of Hope" and to register to volunteer, visit [nightofhope2018.com](http://nightofhope2018.com).



**SARAH WHITMAN**

## » AMENDMENTS continued from 1

**AMENDMENT 2:** Limitations on Property Tax Assessments, another property tax proposal referred by the Legislature, would cement an existing cap on non-homestead property assessments. Such property tax assessment increases have been limited to 10 percent of the previous year's assessed value since 2008, when another constitutional amendment that capped the increases passed.

**AMENDMENT 3:** Voter Control of Gambling in Florida, a citizen-initiated amendment, would give voters the exclusive right to decide to authorize expansions of casino gambling in Florida. That authority currently rests with both the Legislature and voters, through constitutional amendment.

Card games, casino games and slot machines are limited to tribal facilities in most of Florida, though some slot machines are allowed at certain pari-mutuel facilities in Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

**AMENDMENT 4:** Voting Res-

toration Amendment, another petition-drive amendment, would restore voting rights to former felons if they have served their time, with the exception of those who have committed crimes like murder or sex offenses. For the past seven years, the state has required that felons wait at least five years after their sentences are complete to apply to regain voting rights. The current process can take a decade or more under the Scott administration's requirement that a state clemency board consider each request during its four meetings a year. If passed, about 1.5 million people in Florida could be affected.

**AMENDMENT 5:** Super-majority Vote Required to Impose, Authorize, or Raise State Taxes or Fees, another proposal from lawmakers this year, would require a two-thirds super-majority vote in the Legislature to impose, approve or raise state taxes and fees. The higher threshold means it would take only a third of members in either

the state House or Senate to block any future tax increases or repeal existing exemptions. The idea, floated by Gov. Rick Scott last year, would also stop any provisions to raise taxes or fees from being tacked onto other state bills, and does not apply to any fees or taxes that would be levied by local governments or agencies, such as school districts.

**AMENDMENT 6:** Rights of Crime Victims; Judges, links three proposals that would create a bill of rights for crime victims and set new requirements for judges. The bill of rights, modeled after Marsy's Law in California, has the support of major Republican and Democratic lawmakers but has drawn criticism that the way victims' rights are drawn might flood the justice system with additional responsibilities.

The latter two proposals increase the mandatory retirement age for judges to 75 from 70, effective July 1, 2019, and would bar judges from deferring to administrative agencies' interpretations of a rule or statute when ruling in cases involving those laws.

**AMENDMENT 7:** First Responder and Military Member Survivor Benefits; Public Colleges and Universities, would pull together three proposals, providing college tuition for the survivors of first responders and military members killed on duty, requiring university trustees to agree by a two-thirds super-majority to raise college fees (not including tuition) and establishing the state college system in the Florida Constitution. Universities are in the state Constitution, but state colleges (also known as community colleges) are not. (A Leon County circuit court judge ruled in early September that this amendment and 9 and 11 be struck from the ballot because of its bundled status — that decision is currently being appealed by the state.)

**AMENDMENT 8:** School Board Term Limits and Duties; Public Schools, was struck from the ballot by the state Supreme Court Sept. 7.

**AMENDMENT 9:** Prohibits Off-shore Oil and Gas Drilling; Prohibits Vaping in Enclosed Indoor Workplaces, would tether a ban on oil and gas drilling in state-owned waters with a proposal to add vaping to the ban on smoking indoors.

**AMENDMENT 10:** State and Local Government Structure and Operation, would link four proposals: one to have the state's legislative session start in January rather than March in even-numbered years (the Legislature currently changes its dates by statute), two that would create a counter-terrorism office and make the state veterans affairs department constitutionally required, and a proposal that would require five county-level offices to be elected.

All of the county positions — including tax collectors, property appraisers, supervisors of elections and clerks of circuit court — are already elected in many counties. (A case seeking to remove this amendment — including affected counties like Miami-Dade, Broward and Volusia — was taken up by the state Supreme Court, which ruled Sept. 7 that the amendment remain on the ballot.)

**AMENDMENT 11:** Property Rights; Removal of Obsolete Provision; Criminal Statutes, would revise the Constitution to remove some language, including a provision that stops "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning property and wording approving a high-speed rail system. It would also remove the state's Savings Clause, which prohibits retroactively applying the amendment of a criminal statute to sentencing for a crime committed before the change, and clarify that repealing a criminal statute would not necessarily affect the prosecution of that crime committed previously.

**AMENDMENT 12:** Lobbying and Abuse of Office by Public Officers, a stand-alone proposal, would bar public officials from lobbying both during their terms and for six years following, and restrict current public officers from using their office for personal gain.

**AMENDMENT 13:** Ends Dog Racing, is also a single proposal. It would end commercial dog racing involving wagering by 2020. There are about a dozen tracks in Florida, and the practice has drawn criticism from animal rights advocates who assert that the practice is inhumane. The Florida Greyhound Association has sued seeking to remove the amendment from the ballot.

For more information, visit the state Division of Elections website at <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/>

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# Know Your Candidates 2018

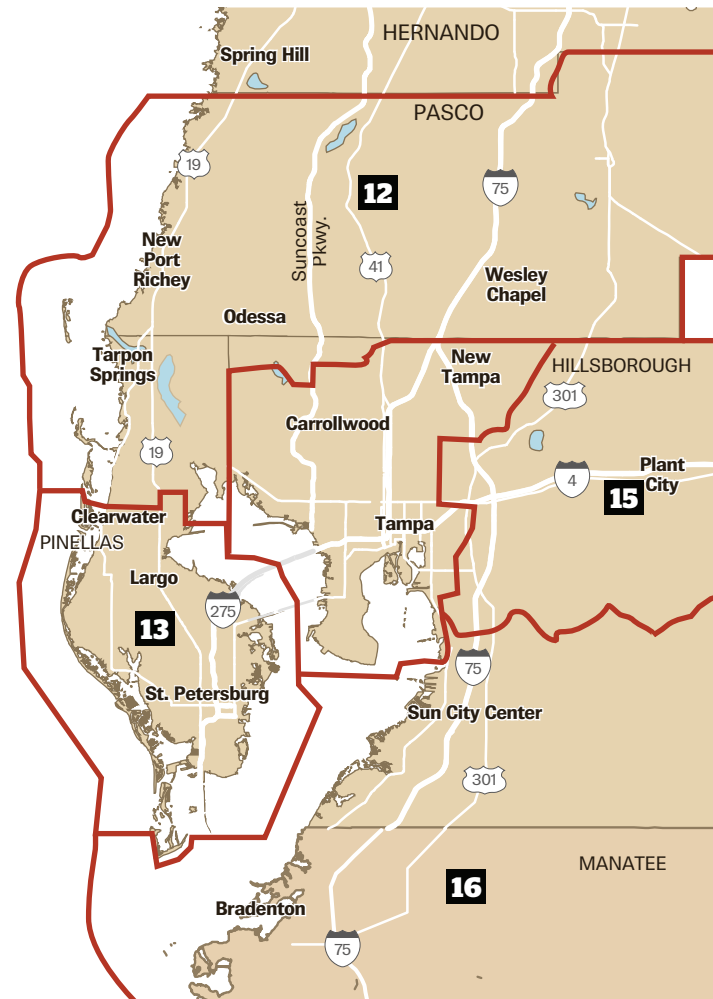
## U.S. Senate

It is one of the most expensive races in the country and the outcome could determine which party controls the U.S. Senate. Sen. Bill Nelson, a moderate Democrat, faces the toughest political challenge of his career against two-term Republican Gov. Rick Scott.

By Steve Contorno, National Political Correspondent

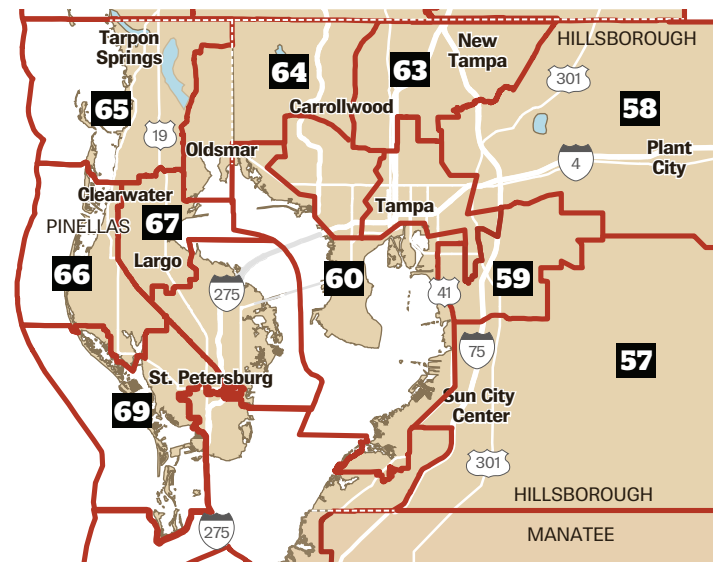
	Bill Nelson	Rick Scott
<b>Party</b>	Democrat	Republican
<b>Profession</b>	U.S. Senator	Florida Governor
<b>About the candidate</b>	 Bill Nelson has served three terms in the U.S. Senate. A centrist Democrat, he was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1972 and later served in Congress for 12 years before an unsuccessful run for governor.	 Rick Scott has served two terms as Florida's governor, a job he first won in 2010 on the backs of a tea party wave. Scott previously served as CEO of Hospital Corporation of America and is independently wealthy.
<b>Education</b>	J.D., University of Virginia; Yale University	J.D., Southern Methodist University; University of Missouri, Kansas City
<b>Do you support any measures that address gun violence?</b>	I have cosponsored legislation to ban assault weapons and expand universal background checks to include the transfer of any firearm.	Three weeks after the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, (I) signed significant reforms to make Florida schools safer while keeping firearms out of the hands of mentally ill and dangerous individuals.
<b>Explain your position on the tariffs President Trump has imposed on Canada, Europe and Mexico.</b>	These tariffs imposed by the Trump administration have sparked a trade war with some of our closest allies. It's causing the price of goods to go up and, if it's not resolved soon, some American companies are going to be forced to start laying people off. I have called on the Trump administration to take the steps necessary to end this trade war immediately.	I have heard directly from Florida companies who are worried that the administration's proposal regarding tariffs is not fair and consistent between countries and this is an issue I will continue discussing with the Administration to ensure Florida companies are treated fairly. I support free and open trade with the world because it is good for Florida and our economy.
<b>Should oil drilling off the Florida coast be banned or allowed?</b>	(Former) U.S. Sen. Mel Martinez and I wrote the 2006 law that currently bans oil drilling as far out as 235 miles off of Florida's Gulf Coast until 2022. I have filed new legislation to make that ban permanent.	I have opposed offshore drilling. As soon as (Interior) Secretary (Ryan) Zinke was confirmed, I met with him, I talked to him about that we didn't want it off our coast, and then when they came out with their plan right around Christmas, I immediately called and asked if we could meet, and he was gracious enough to come down, and the right thing happened. There's not going to be offshore drilling.
<b>Do you support Trump's approach to immigration? Do you support a wall along Mexico's border?</b>	We need a comprehensive immigration reform plan and we need to end this administration's policy of ripping families apart at the border with no plan to reunify.	The chaos at our border will continue until we secure the border. Washington's failure to secure our border has been a bipartisan failure for many decades. ... I've long been an outspoken opponent of illegal immigration and I remain so. But I refuse to watch these children be punished for the actions of their parents.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$1,459,041 - \$6,498,000 Liabilities: \$850,000 - \$1,750,000 Income: \$57,074	Assets: Reported net worth of \$232.6 million; \$215 million, is in a qualified blind trust. Liabilities: None listed
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Orlando Marital status: Married to Grace Nelson Children: Two adult children	Home: Naples Marital status: Married to Ann Scott Children: Two adult children
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$18.7 million Expenditures: \$6.3 million	Contributions: \$31 million Expenditures: \$28 million
<b>On the web</b>	Website: <a href="http://www.nelsonforsenate.com">www.nelsonforsenate.com</a> Twitter: @NelsonforSenate	Website: <a href="http://rickscottforflorida.com">rickscottforflorida.com</a> Twitter: @ScottforFlorida

## Tampa Bay U.S. House districts



Source: U.S. House Times

## Hillsborough/Pinellas Florida House districts



Source: Florida Senate Times

**ABOUT THE JOB:** A U.S. senator holds a statewide office and serves a six-year term. The salary is \$174,000 a year.

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# Know Your Candidates 2018

## U.S. House | District 16

After a lengthy and contentious redistricting battle, a swath of Hillsborough County south of the Alafia River is now in District 16, a heavily Republican district that also includes all of Manatee County and part of Sarasota County. Incumbent Vern Buchanan of Longboat Key is seeking his seventh term, this time against Democrat David Shapiro.

By Howard Altman, Times Staff Writer

	Vern Buchanan	David Shapiro
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	U.S. Congressman	Lawyer
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Vern Buchanan, 67, is a six-term incumbent and veteran of the Air National Guard. He is a senior member of the powerful House Ways &amp; Means Committee, chairman of the Tax Policy Subcommittee and also serves on the subcommittees that oversee Social Security and Medicare.</p>	 <p>David Shapiro, 58, has decades of trial law experience and community involvement and ran for the Florida House in 2006, barely losing to Republican Doug Holder in a heavily Republican district. Shapiro well-known locally from his legal practice, so his name identification is already wide for a challenger.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Cleary University, BBA, Business Administration; University of Detroit, MBA; Cleary University, Doctorate of Science in Administration (Hon.)	Florida State, J.D., 1985; University of Florida 1981 B.S. Journalism
<b>Do you support or oppose changing the ban on offshore drilling near Florida? Please explain.</b>	As the state with the most coastline in the continental United States, Florida is especially vulnerable to oil spills. That's why I have consistently voted to protect our shorelines from oil drilling.	We should protect our beaches and coasts because it's our way of life, important to the local economy and tourism, and part of what makes the greater bay and Suncoast area so special.
<b>Do you support or oppose closing the gun-show loophole on background checks, banning assault weapons or restricting the capacity of magazines? Please explain.</b>	I support the Pollack plan for school safety offered by the father of one of the students killed at Parkland. Andrew Pollack has created a national movement around his eight-point plan that includes, among other things, more mental health resources, school security officers and single points of entry.	We must have common sense, stricter gun safety reform. That includes banning assault weapons, closing the gun-show loophole and closing all other gun sales loopholes that may render any common-sense gun safety regulation ineffective.
<b>Would you support or oppose changes to Social Security? Please explain.</b>	I have no higher priority than making sure Social Security and Medicare remain strong for today's seniors and future generations.	Social Security is one of the most sacred promises the United States government has made to our seniors their whole life. I will always protect Social Security from being cut and would oppose any attempt to privatize.
<b>Would you support changes to immigration policy that would include a path to permanent legal status for undocumented immigrants? Please explain how you would change U.S. immigration policy, including any proposals for strengthening the border and whether you would support legislation to protect Dreamers as they are protected now by executive order.</b>	We need to secure our borders, enforce the law and protect our national security. That means strong policies to prevent terrorists from infiltrating our legal immigration system. We can start by eliminating the so-called diversity visa lottery, which has allowed individuals linked to terrorism to enter our country. I was pleased by the recent Supreme Court decision to uphold travel restrictions on people trying to enter the country from terror hot spots around the world. We need tough screening and vetting procedures to protect our nation.	We need immigration reform, and we've needed it for some time. I support legislation to protect Dreamers and would vote for a bill that includes stronger border security if it meant protecting the Dreamers. If someone is brought to America as a young child I believe there should be a pathway to permanent legal status. We must enforce the law, but we must also have compassion for children.
<b>Assets/liabilities/ income</b>	Assets: Stocks, bank accounts, investments. Liabilities: \$1,032,611 Income: \$175,932	Assets: House, bank accounts, investments, vehicles Liabilities: credit cards Income: \$280,490
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Longboat Key Marital status: Married Children: 2	Home: Sarasota Marital status: Married Children: 3
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$ 1,928,838.78 Expenditures: \$ 1,546,317.64	Contributions: \$ \$1,169,443.23 Expenditures: \$ 86,184.00
<b>On the web</b>	Website: <a href="https://vembuchanan.com/">https://vembuchanan.com/</a> Twitter: @Vern2014	Website: <a href="https://votes Shapiro2018.com/">https://votes Shapiro2018.com/</a> Twitter: @Shapiro4FL16

**ABOUT THE JOB:** Represents Manatee and Sarasota counties and a portion of Hillsborough County south of the Alafia River. Terms are two years and annual salary is \$174,000.

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Tiffany Spyridakos 727.641.9869



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Westchase  
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3 Bed | 2 Bath | 2,097 SF  
The Wood Team 813.957.3941



**9926 BRIDGETON DRIVE**  
Westchase  
\$350,000  
3 Bed | 2 Bath | 1,577 SF  
Amanda Siftar 813.857.9093



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# Know Your Candidates 2018

## U.S. House | District 12

U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Palm Harbor, is running for a seventh term in the seat his father held for 24 years before him. Democratic challenger Chris Hunter, a former FBI agent and federal prosecutor, was cited as a reason the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee thinks District 12 can flip blue in 2018. Angelika Purkis, a nurse practitioner, is running a no party affiliation campaign

By Tracey McManus, Times Staff Writer

	Gus Bilirakis	Christopher Hunter	Angelika Purkis
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat	NPA
<b>Profession</b>	United States Representative; St. Petersburg College adjunct professor	Former FBI agent and state and federal prosecutor; current University of Tampa adjunct professor	Nurse practitioner; owner Angie's Art Glass and Signature Building Products
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Bilirakis, 55, is running for a seventh term in Congress and serves on committees for energy and commerce, veterans affairs, health and other issues. Bilirakis has made bipartisanship a central message. But he has also voted in line with President Donald Trump's positions 97.8 percent of the time, according to an analysis by FiveThirtyEight. Bilirakis said he prioritizes protecting Medicare and Social Security, ensuring benefits for veterans, and protecting schools with school resource officers. Bilirakis was scrutinized this term for being one of six House co-sponsors of a 2016 law that made it harder for the Drug Enforcement Administration to halt suspicious quantities of drugs amid the opioid crisis</p>	 <p>Hunter, 45, left his career as a prosecutor with the U.S. Department of Justice in Tampa in December to run for Congress. He said he saw American values under attack by the Trump administration and Congress failing to uphold its Constitutional duty as a check and balance. His priorities are to restore good governance, promote an innovation economy, and strengthen national security. Hunter applied to the FBI two weeks after 9/11 while working as a state prosecutor in Boston. He later worked as assistant U.S. attorney in Miami in 2007 prosecuting economic crimes before joining the DOJ in Tampa in 2013, prosecuting health care fraud</p>	 <p>In her first bid for public office, Purkis, 58, is the no party affiliation candidate running a campaign based on anti-corruption, addressing disparities in communities and largely word of mouth campaigning. A career nurse practitioner, Purkis has also made health care reform a center of her platform. Purkis said she has been a Democrat and a Republican at different points in her life but believes neither party is serving the public. She said she has self-financed her campaign because she fears retaliation for those who support her speaking out against corruption. Owner of an art glass and window repair business, Purkis said economic justice and helping small businesses is a priority.</p>
<b>Education</b>	University of Florida, B.A., political science Stetson College of Law, J.D	Boston College, B.A., political science Boston College Law School, J.D.	St. Petersburg College, B.S., nursing; University of Tampa, MSN
<b>Do you support the Mueller investigation? Do you support an investigation into Obama/Clinton officials for their conduct during the 2016 election?</b>	Yes, I have supported each of the investigations into whether or not Russia interfered with our elections process, and if there was any wrongdoing on behalf of any campaign. I do think the independent process of both House and Senate Oversight Committees and the Special Counsel is important in order to provide appropriate accountability.	I support Special Counsel Mueller's investigation. An ODNI report issued January 2017 documented Russia's attack on the United States during the 2016 election for the purposes of destabilizing our democracy, supporting Trump's election, and undermining American global leadership. Propaganda and disinformation techniques of the Russian intelligence services have been adopted by partisan politicians in the United States intent on retaining power and deflecting attention from the extent to which our democracy has been compromised.	Any activity that is questionable should be investigated to the fullest extent
<b>Would you support or oppose changes to immigration policy that would include a path to permanent legal status or citizenship for undocumented immigrants? Please explain stance on strengthening the border and Dreamers</b>	There's no doubt our immigration system needs reform. We must enforce current immigration laws, strengthen our borders, and ensure all visas are enforced properly. I recently voted for two different immigration bills that greatly improved our immigration policy, strengthened border security and provided legal status for those who were brought here illegally as children through no fault of their own. I was disappointed my colleagues opposed these because they did not contain everything they wanted.	I support comprehensive immigration reform including a pathway to permanent legal status and protection of Dreamers. The so-called "border wall" is a gimmick—an ill-advised, expensive waste of taxpayer money that will not make us more secure. The long-term solution to securing our borders lies in promoting safe, democratic societies and market-based economies in developing nations to eliminate desperate conditions that drive mass migration while global population levels rise.	We need many more work visas. Frequently workers come here to earn, they pay taxes and lift our economy, then they would like to return home for a season. Large corporations and well to do individuals have used them for years...Those who brought them in on their jets and in their companies to work cheap... should be rooted out and prosecuted....A path to citizenship should be made for those who work hard to achieve it.
<b>Would you support or oppose repealing the Affordable Care Act? Please explain how you would strengthen it or replace it?</b>	I support honoring the commitment I made to my constituents to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with policies that increase access to affordable, quality health care and patient protections. There were elements of the ACA which I continue to support, including protections for those with pre-existing conditions, coverage for preventative care, mental health and substance abuse treatment and allowing children to stay on their parents' insurance until age 26.	We all need affordable health care we can count on. I support the Affordable Care Act and continuously improving our health care system so that everyone has access to quality care at affordable prices. The "Solutions Over Politics" proposal that has bipartisan support from the Problem Solvers Caucus is a great place to start. For example, creating a permanent reinsurance program to mitigate risk from excessively high medical claims will help stabilize and reduce premiums.	Medicare should be available for all to purchase immediately while we look for other answers. I work with Medicare daily and this year it is changing day by day. Less is covered. More is traded away for secondary programs...Insurance should not have a handbook of different ways to get out of paying. Everyone who needs health care should have it. Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary... We need to license Nurse Practitioners Federally so that they can work independently across the nation.
<b>Do you support or oppose closing the gun-show loophole on background checks, banning assault weapons or restricting the capacity of magazines?</b>	I support thorough background checks to keep weapons away from criminals and the mentally ill. I don't believe we should restrict the rights of law-abiding citizens to own firearms. We must address the root cause of the violence, including mental health issues. I was proud to co-sponsor the STOP School Violence Act, help secure \$2 billion for school safety, and help improve crime reporting systems to ensure criminals don't obtain guns. Also, I sponsored legislation to help fund School Resource Officers.	A safer society is within reach if we promote common sense policies, free our government from the grip of special interests, and reject a culture of violence. I support universal background checks and closing the gun-show loophole. I support banning military-style assault weapons, bump-stocks, and high capacity magazines. As a federal prosecutor and FBI agent, I dealt with the consequences of violence, and I believe in having more guidance counselors, not guns, in our schools.	We have rules that impede our right to free travel if we use a vehicle. Different vehicles have different rules. You can ride a bike without a registration. Driving an 18 wheeler is different and requires a different way of treatment. I do not believe everyone has the right to an assault weapon or other means to do harm without some sane sort of rules. A musket might have bicycle type rules.
<b>Assets/liabilities/ income</b>	Assets: property, two prepaid college plans, bank accounts, stocks Liabilities: mortgage, student loans Income: teaching *as of 2017, most recent disclosure available	Assets: two bank accounts, four prepaid college plans Liabilities: a mortgage, loan, credit card Income: Teaching and project work	Assets: art glass business, equipment, bank account, real estate Liabilities: home and business loans, credit card Income: Pinnacle Home Care
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Palm Harbor Marital status: married to Eva Bilirakis Children: Michael, Teddy, Manuel, Nicholas	Home: Trinity Marital status: married to Celeste Hunter Children: Luke, Claire, Grace, Brooke	Home: New Port Richey Marital status: married to Ross Purkis Children: Ross III, Monika, Benno
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$1.4 million Expenditures: \$894,332	Contributions: \$465,626 Expenditures: \$211,441	Contributions: \$7,164 Expenditures: \$9,194
<b>On the web</b>	Website: bilirakisforcongress.com Twitter: @RepGusBilirakis	Website: chrishunterforcongress.com Twitter: @ChrisHunterFL	Website: angelikapurkisforcongress.com Twitter: @itsnotokayfl

**ABOUT THE JOB:** District 12 covers northern Pinellas, all of Pasco and a sliver of northwest Hillsborough counties. U.S. Representatives are elected to two-year terms and are paid \$174,000 annually.

## U.S. House | District 15

This race will fill the congressional seat of Rep. Dennis Ross, R-Lakeland, who is retiring. Congressional District 15 covers eastern Hillsborough and parts of Polk and Lake counties. The candidates are Democrat Kristen Carlson, a Tampa lawyer who lives in Lakeland, and Republican state Rep. Ross Spano, a Dover lawyer.

By William March, Times Correspondent

	Kristen Carlson	Ross Spano
<b>Party</b>	Democrat	Republican
<b>Profession</b>	Lawyer	Lawyer
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Carlson, 64, of Lakeland, is a lawyer with the Macfarlane Ferguson McMullen law firm in Tampa and first-time candidate for office. She is executive director of the Citrus Processors Association, a former state prosecutor and former general counsel for the Florida Department of Citrus and for the Florida Department of Transportation District 1. She's a member of the Lakeland Zoning Board of Adjustment and Appeals.</p>	 <p>Spano, 52, of Dover, is a lawyer specializing in estate planning and probate. He's a three-term member of the state House representing District 59 in eastern Hillsborough County. He's active in his church and a board member of the Brandon Foundation, Lowry Park Zoo, Straz Center and Florida Junior League. He won a five-way Republican Congressional District 15 primary.</p>
<b>Education</b>	B.S., University of Florida; J.D., Stetson College of Law	BA, University of South Florida; J.D., Florida State University
<b>Do you support any measures that address gun violence?</b>	"It is critical that we address the scourge of gun violence. We must ban bump stocks and military-style assault weapons and institute universal background checks."	"I support increased funding for mental health programs. I also support mandating proper communication and coordination between state and federal background check databases."
<b>Please explain your position on the tariffs that President Trump has imposed on Canada, Europe and Mexico.</b>	"We need to ensure that trade deals give Florida's working families and small businesses a fair playing field. The erratic threats to impose restrictions on our allies, like the steel and aluminum tariffs against Canada, Mexico and the EU, have unnecessarily invited retaliation against Florida exports. Dropping out of regional trade agreements and threatening unilateral action ... isolates the U.S. at the very time we need more export access."	"I support the approach of President Trump on trade. Past efforts have created an unfair and unlevel trade environment in which other countries continuously take advantage of the United States. We are now operating from a position of strength, finally."
<b>Should oil drilling off Florida's coast be allowed?</b>	"I oppose drilling off our coast. Florida's beautiful coastline is critical to our economy and our quality of life, and it would be irresponsible to risk the jobs that rely on our coast and endanger our environment by drilling off the Florida coast."	"Oil drilling should be allowed off of Florida's coast, but there should be limitations that take into account operational military needs in the Gulf of Mexico."
<b>Do you support the Mueller investigation?</b>	"As a former prosecutor, I believe that no one is above the rule of law. I believe that the ongoing investigation must be allowed to complete its work and find the truth."	"I do not support the Mueller investigation. It has long since outlived its limited usefulness. They haven't found anything because there isn't anything to find. Time to move on."
<b>Assets/liabilities/ income</b>	Assets: stocks, annuities, IRAs, state retirement account Liabilities: None listed Income: \$225,288 (law firm salary, state pensions, IRA distribution)	Assets: \$400,335 (retirement account, ownership interest in law firm, bank accounts) Liabilities: \$106,391 (student loan) Income: \$92,490 law firm, \$26,646 (state lawmaker)
<b>Personal</b>	Two adult children	Wife, Amie, four adult children
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$304,000 Expenditures: \$253,377	Contributions: \$220,922 Expenditures: \$109,695
<b>On the web</b>	www.kristencarlsonforcongress.com Twitter: @KristenForFL	www.RossSpano.com Twitter: @RossSpano

**ABOUT THE JOB:** The winner will serve a two-year term representing District 15 in eastern Hillsborough and parts of Polk and Lake counties. The salary is \$174,000.



# Know Your Candidates 2018

## Governor

Andrew Gillum and Ron DeSantis are running to be Florida's chief executive. If Gillum wins, he would be the first Democrat to be elected to the governor's mansion since Lawton Chiles in 1994. If DeSantis wins, he would be the fourth straight Republican to occupy the post, which is currently held by Rick Scott. This is the first run at a statewide office for both Gillum and DeSantis. Editor's note: Because the DeSantis campaign declined to answer the *Times'* candidate questionnaire, some of the answers below were pulled from public statements to ensure issue parity.

By Kirby Wilson and Emily L. Mahoney, *Times Staff Writers*

	Ron DeSantis	Andrew Gillum
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	Former U.S. representative	Mayor of Tallahassee
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Desantis, 40, was a U.S. congressman representing northeast Florida until he resigned the post in 2018 to run for governor. The conservative Republican and Freedom Caucus member was endorsed by U.S. President Donald Trump. DeSantis graduated from Yale University and Harvard University before serving as a prosecutor with the U.S. Navy.</p>	 <p>Gillum, 39, has been the mayor of Tallahassee since 2014. Before that, the liberal Democrat, a graduate of FAMU, served on the Tallahassee city commission for more than a decade after being elected in 2003 at the age of 23, the youngest elected to the commission in city history. His longshot bid for governor was given a boost when he was endorsed by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, becoming an instant favorite with progressives.</p>
<b>Education</b>	B.A. from Yale University, J.D. from Harvard Law School	Florida A&M University, B.A., Political Science
<b>What is your position on Medicaid expansion in Florida?</b>	Currently, Medicaid in Florida covers the most vulnerable in our society, serving as a much-needed safety net. Expanding Medicaid, however, would extend to able-bodied adults. That's not what Medicaid was designed for, that's not what taxpayers pay for, and that's not how health care or government should work. We've got to increase access and drive down costs on health care. The best way we can do that is to make sure we are creating an environment where everyone has a great education that leads to a job where they are covered or they have the ability to buy their own insurance in the market.	I believe that access to quality, affordable health care is a fundamental right, not a privilege. But Rick Scott, Donald Trump, and Republican lawmakers have threatened that access for more than 1 million Floridians with ACA coverage — and blocked it for 1 million more who need Medicaid expansion. While I believe that Medicare For All should be our goal as a nation, I'm also the only candidate to propose a comprehensive set of health care policies that will protect Floridians' care. As Governor, we'll work to pass the nation's strongest protections for those with pre-existing conditions, ensure that women aren't charged more for coverage than men, and protect access to no-cost contraception for women. No Floridian should face the inhumane choice between bankruptcy and health care.
<b>How would you solve the toxic green algae crisis surrounding Lake Okeechobee?</b>	The cornerstone of a comprehensive solution to Lake Okeechobee is restoring the Everglades, with the centerpiece being the completion of a southern reservoir to store water. Beginning day one, I will work with the Trump administration and Congress to ensure the federal government honors its 20-year old funding promise to CERP (Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan) by appropriating its \$200 million in matching federal dollars to build the Southern Reservoir and complete the entire suite of projects. The 120-billion-gallon reservoir will be built primarily on state land and will serve as a dynamic storage system discharging clean water into Everglades National Park and then into the Florida Bay.	Our environment belongs to all of us and it's time we put scientists back in charge — not the corporate polluters. I'm ready to fight and protect our precious environment on day one by re-establishing several programs that should never have been cut, like the Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force to combat the effects of Red Tide and toxic algae. I would also put some environmental protection back into the Department of Environmental Protection and finally hold corporate polluters accountable for the pollution and runoff they dump into our groundwater.
<b>How would you approach funding of public schools?</b>	To maximize Florida taxpayers' investment in our students, I will implement the 80% Classroom Spending Plan, which ensures that 80% of public K-12 education spending goes directly into the classroom. This will cut bureaucratic waste and administrative inefficiency and ensure that money is being spent where it matters most. To determine where wasteful spending occurs, I will direct the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education to oversee a complete operational and financial audit of the Florida Department of Education to identify funding that can be put back into the classroom.	As a product of Florida's public schools, I know how a quality public education can interrupt intergenerational poverty. That's why as Governor, I'm committed to investing \$1 billion into our public schools — and I'm the only candidate with a plan to pay for it. As Governor, I'll adjust our state's corporate income tax rate and recoup \$1 billion from Donald Trump's tax giveaway. I'll use those funds to pay new teachers a \$50,000 starting salary, raise pay for veteran teachers and staff to the national average, invest in SHOP 2.0 and vocational training, and rebuild our crumbling public schools.
<b>What's a specific example of an economic goal you would have for your administration?</b>	Reduce the Corporate Income Tax. I know that for business to flourish and job growth to continue, we must be as competitive as possible. As Governor, I will work to lower this business tax to encourage businesses to move to Florida and help Florida-based businesses continue to grow. Lowering this tax will help spur the creation of more high-wage jobs.	Our state's devastating income inequality forces families to live paycheck to paycheck, because our economy isn't built for everyone to succeed. As Mayor, I've presided over Florida's fastest-growing local economy. President Obama named Tallahassee a TechHire city for our commitment to training workers, and we eliminated our local business tax, saving businesses \$2 million annually. I believe the way forward for Florida's economy starts with ensuring workers get the vocational and technical training they need for good jobs, attracting those good jobs by investing in our state's schools and infrastructure, and embracing technology — from ridesharing and home-sharing to renewable energy production — that will remake Florida into an innovation economy that works for all.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$819,545 Liabilities: \$527,350 Income: \$201,500	Assets: \$878,230 Liabilities: \$535,530 Income: \$176,926
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Palm Coast Marital status: Married Children: 2	Home: Tallahassee Marital status: Married Children: 3
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$30,446,348 Expenditures: \$25,128,988	Contributions: \$23,514,949.29 Expenditures: \$15,021,150.43
<b>On the web</b>	Website: <a href="http://www.rondesantis.com">www.rondesantis.com</a> Twitter: @RonDeSantisFL	Website: <a href="http://www.andrewgillum.com">www.andrewgillum.com</a> Twitter: @AndrewGillum

**ABOUT THE JOB:** Florida's governor is the state's highest ranking executive. He or she oversees the state's regulatory agencies under the executive branch and has the power to sign or veto laws passed by the Legislature. He or she also fills open judicial vacancies by appointing jurists across the state.

## Attorney General

The race for attorney general matches state Rep. Sean Shaw, D-Tampa, and former judge Ashley Moody, a Tampa Republican. Moody is a former circuit judge, federal prosecutor and civil lawyer. Current Attorney General Pam Bondi is term-limited.

By William March, *Times Correspondent*

	Ashley Moody	Sean Shaw
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	Lawyer, former judge and federal prosecutor	Lawyer
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Ashley Moody, 43, a Plant City native now living in Tampa, is a former federal prosecutor and civil lawyer who was elected to a Hillsborough circuit judgeship in 2006 and re-elected in 2012.</p> <p>She left the office to run for attorney general, and defeated state Rep. Frank White, R-Pensacola, in the primary. She has been active in civic and legal charitable causes and is a former president of the University of Florida Blue Key honorary society. She contends that her experience in law enforcement makes her best qualified for the office.</p>	 <p>Sean Shaw, 40, of Tampa, grew up in Tallahassee and works with a law firm that represents policyholders in insurance disputes. He previously was appointed by former Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink as state insurance consumer advocate. He was elected to the state House in 2016, and defeated Ryan Torrens of Tampa in the attorney general primary. He promises that as attorney general he will act against corrupt business practices and predatory corporations, will investigate President Donald Trump's business practices in Florida, and withdraw the state from a lawsuit challenging the Affordable Care Act.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Plant City High School; bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting, and law degree, University of Florida; master's in international law, Stetson University	Leon High School; BA, Princeton University, 2000; JD, University of Florida 2003
<b>Do you support Florida's lawsuit against the manufacturers and distributors of opioids that was filed earlier this year by current Attorney General Pam Bondi? Please explain.</b>	"Yes. As a judge and prosecutor, I saw first-hand those that sought to profit from the opioid epidemic and the lives destroyed as a result. Those responsible must be held accountable. ... a doctor wrongfully prescribing drugs or some of the largest companies in the world engaged in the conduct described in the complaint. However, the lawsuit, by itself, is not an end to this crisis. ... We will move forward with a targeted, data-backed approach, focusing on law enforcement, addiction, and education."	"It is highly disappointing that it took (Bondi) until the end of her term to file this lawsuit. The role of the pharmaceutical companies in prolonging and exacerbating this crisis has been well known for years. As ground zero for pill mills, Florida should have been leading on this issue. ... I worry that Floridians will not see the damages they deserve because we were not out in front. I will vigorously pursue this case."
<b>What are your thoughts on the gun legislation that was passed this year (SB 7026) by Florida lawmakers?</b>	"While many aspects of SB 7026 are commendable and will make a difference in preventing another Parkland tragedy. ... I do not support making it illegal for competent, law-abiding adults to purchase firearms. ... Those without parents are on their own at 18. The law would leave them defenseless. We will work ... to deal with the mentally ill who have firearms and provide the necessary resources to protect schools. ... We must improve our justice system to effectively address mental illness in society."	"I agree with the three-day waiting period (but) voted against this legislation because arming teachers was a poison pill I could not swallow. ... My approach: challenging the constitutionality of the gun lobby's pre-emption of local governments' ability to pass firearms safety laws ... enforcing the firearms laws already in statute and advocating for a ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines; closing loopholes that allow violent individuals to purchase guns; challenging (laws that give) gun manufacturers immunity in court for their role."
<b>Please explain what your top priority would be as attorney general and how you would address it.</b>	"As a conservative, I will vigorously enforce the law and defend the Constitution. ... Florida's next Attorney General must be a strong supporter of the men and women within law enforcement. I will be a partner that pushes for training and resources that will keep them safe as they protect us. The strength of our judicial system stems from a legal process that is fair and perceived as fair. I will lead on ... how we can foster a trust between law enforcement and all the communities they serve."	"My top priority is cutting down on the senseless gun violence plaguing our state by pushing for common sense gun safety reforms and enacting the principles I laid out above as Attorney General. When a child is shot every seventeen hours in your state, it is clear there is an epidemic. We need to ban assault weapons and high capacity magazines, institute universal background checks, and work with our local communities to find solutions to keep our citizens safer."
<b>Please explain how campaign contributions influence how Florida's top law enforcement officials address issues involving donors to their campaign.</b>	"My focus as Attorney General will be to enforce the rule of law. Just as I have done throughout my career as a prosecutor and judge, I will follow the facts and make reasoned decisions regardless of parties involved or prior support for my campaign."	"The simple answer is they shouldn't. Unfortunately, we do not live in a world in which we don't have to raise money to get our message out. However, those contributions should never influence how you prosecute or pursue a case. ... Under our current Attorney General, it is clear that she was motivated in some cases by the donations she was receiving."
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$3,488,267 Liabilities: \$469,243 Income: \$183,969	Assets: \$180,702 Liabilities: \$170,000 Income: \$159,697
<b>Personal</b>	Moody comes from a family that has been in Plant City for five generations. She is married to a Drug Enforcement Administration agent, Justin Duralia, and they have two sons.	Shaw is single. He's the son of the late Leander Shaw, Florida's first black Supreme Court chief justice.
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$2,913,400 Expenditures: \$2,837,022	Contributions: \$1,072,906 Expenditures: \$580,539
<b>On the web</b>	Website: <a href="http://electashleymoody.com">electashleymoody.com</a> Twitter: @VoteAshleyMoody	Website: <a href="http://seanshaw.com">seanshaw.com</a> Twitter: @SShawFL

**ABOUT THE JOB:** The winner will serve a four-year term as attorney general, the state's lawyer and chief law enforcement officer. The attorney general is also one of four members of the state Cabinet, along with the governor, chief financial officer and agriculture commissioner. The salary is \$128,972.



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## Know Your Candidates 2018

### Commissioner of Agriculture

Democrats don't typically compete for this Florida Cabinet position, but the minority party hopes it can surprise with Nikki Fried, a Broward County attorney who is an ardent supporter of expanding access to medical marijuana. She faces the conservative Matt Caldwell, who became a champion of Big Sugar interests while pushing legislation in the Florida House that delayed improving water quality in the Everglades for another decade.

By Emily L. Mahoney, Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

	Matt Caldwell	Nikki Fried
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	State lawmaker, real estate appraiser	Lawyer
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>A seventh-generation Floridian, Caldwell, 37, has served in the Florida House since 2010, representing the North Fort Myers area. While in the Legislature, he sponsored bills to further support and permanently fund restoration of the Everglades, and worked to steer the state toward acquiring more land for conservation. Caldwell was the first statewide candidate to be endorsed by the National Rifle Association.</p>	 <p>Fried, 40, is a prominent advocate for increasing access to medical marijuana and lobbied extensively for the passage of a 2016 bill that expanded marijuana use for the terminally ill. She has also worked to ensure passage of a bill in 2014 that granted millions for disabled dependent children to have access to lawyers. As an attorney, she defended homeowners facing foreclosure during the Great Recession.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Florida Gulf Coast University, B.A., history; Edison Community College, A.A University of Florida, bachelor's, master's, law degree.	University of Florida, bachelor's, master's, law degree.
<b>What are your top three priorities?</b>	1. Ensure concealed weapon permits are overseen by a professional who fully understands and upholds our 2nd Amendment rights. 2. Continue to advocate for the removal of barriers to economic growth, most particularly in nonsensical regulation and burdensome tax policy. The Commissioner should advocate for well-rounded economic opportunities in our rural areas, not just for farming land but (also) for packaging, processing, and manufacturing. 3. Water is our most important resource. Balance the demands of growing cities with the needs of our farmers and our environment.	1. Perform an audit of the entire department. Recent revelations of failures to properly oversee permitting of concealed carry potentially indicate broader mismanagement. Reorient the Department to focus more on consumer advocacy and services. 2. Advocate for access to medical marijuana. Ensure there is oversight of pesticides used in growing medical marijuana. 3. Ensure that the Department considers the environmental and community impacts of its decision-making, rather than acting as a rubber stamp for big corporate actors.
<b>Are you satisfied with how the Department of Agriculture handles the state's concealed weapons program? Could it be improved, and if so, how? Should the Dept. of Agriculture oversee the program? Why?</b>	The Dept. of Agriculture should continue to manage and oversee the concealed weapons program. As with all programs in the public or private sector, program management requires ongoing performance measures, performance reviews, and implementation of best practices. . . . It is critical that we screen & process CWL applicants efficiently and thoroughly.	Of course I am not satisfied with the Department's handling of concealed carry. As a single woman who lives alone, I became a gun owner and concealed carry permit holder. Uncovering the full nature of the failures would be one of my first priorities. It's probably wiser to house concealed carry permits at FDLE, but that seems unlikely. I will lobby for more communication with law enforcement. I'd also add a continuing education requirement to concealed carry renewals.
<b>How do you see the role of the office in overseeing the state's agribusinesses?</b>	I will lead the Department by maintaining the level of responsive services to the industries overseen, seeking solutions in partnership with UF-IFAS and our growers; enforcing our laws against consumer fraud; as well as leading energy policy toward a common-sense future. This includes speaking out and leading solutions in critical areas such as immigration, labor, and trade.	Tourism and agriculture are the two biggest economic drivers in our state. There has to be a clearer balance between the concerns of Big Ag, and how their actions potentially affect our land, water, beaches and coasts. But the Commissioner must be an advocate for the industry as well. That means fighting Trump on this unprovoked trade war, combatting citrus greening and other crop threats and doing more to help struggling small farmers and nurserymen.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: Two homes, savings Liabilities: Mortgages, car loans Income: \$81,034	Assets: Savings, investments Liabilities: Student loan Income: \$84,000
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Fort Myers Marital status: Married. Children: one child	Home: Fort Lauderdale Marital status: Single
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$1.2 million Expenditures: \$866,182	Contributions: \$272,739 Expenditures: \$184,421
<b>On the web</b>	Website: <a href="http://Votecaldwell.org">Votecaldwell.org</a> Twitter: @mattcaldwell_fl	Website: <a href="http://nikkifried.com">nikkifried.com</a> Twitter: @nikkifried

**ABOUT THE JOB:** Commissioner of Agriculture is a statewide position with four-year terms and a current salary of \$128,972. The Commissioner is a member of the governor's cabinet and oversees the state's farming industry practices in addition to food safety, pesticides, state land and water

### Chief Financial Officer

Jimmy Patronis seeks to win the job he was appointed to by Gov. Rick Scott after Jeff Atwater left to become CFO at Florida Atlantic University in 2017. To do so, he'll have to beat a well-financed Democrat in Jeremy Ring, a fiscal conservative who served eight years in the Florida Senate. The race has become a particularly nasty one, with each accusing the other of being financed by criminals.

By Samantha Gross, Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

	Jimmy Patronis	Jeremy Ring
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	Chief Financial Officer	Investor
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>It's been a while, but Jimmy Patronis, 46, has thrust himself into campaign heat once again. After three years of working in plum positions Gov. Rick Scott appointed him to, he's fighting to hold onto his current cabinet-level job as the state's chief financial officer. The incumbent candidate for CFO was born to the well-known Panama City family behind Captain Anderson's restaurant and has remained involved with the restaurant — and politics — for most of his adult life. He interned in the Senate while attending Florida State University and was appointed to the Florida Elections Commission upon graduating. In 1998, he was reappointed by then-Gov. Jeb Bush. In the years that followed, Patronis represented Northwest Florida in the statehouse.</p>	 <p>Ring, 48, was born in Canton, Mass. — an affluent suburb southwest of Boston — to a garment salesman father and homemaker mother. In 1994, Ring started work at a boutique ad agency. Ring befriended an ad scheduler (Yahoo! co-founder, Jerry Yang) and was hired soon after. While an employee of Yahoo!, Ring enjoyed life in the circle of tech socialites, taking work trips to places like Monterey, Calif., and throwing lavish hotel parties that prompted "not-so-subtle requests" for the guests to leave. In 2001, Ring left Yahoo! for an opportunity in Florida. He won a seat in the Florida Senate in 2006, where he served for eight years. While in the Senate, he was chair of the Oversight Committee. He often had his hands on pension reform bills, and said if the CFO had a hand in a bill, it was run through his committee.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Associate's degree in restaurant management from Gulf Coast Community College and bachelor's degree in political science from Florida State University.	Bachelor's degree in advertising from Syracuse University.
<b>Insurance consumer service is managed by the CFO. How would you rate Florida's insurance market and what are ways you would work to improve it?</b>	I believe we must root out insurance fraud and waste. Insurance fraud is not a victimless crime and is the main cause that drives up insurance rates. I am proud of the work that's been done since I've taken office. So far, we've arrested 885 people for insurance fraud since I took office, resulting in 767 successful prosecutions. We have to look for new ways to stay ahead of the criminals that commit insurance fraud. After Hurricane Irma, I created the Disaster Fraud Action Strike Team to put boots on the ground to help attack insurance fraud head-on. We go after fraud, but we also alert Floridians of how to spot and prevent fraud.	Florida's insurance market is a "house of cards." Rates are artificially low, which results in potential destabilized market and massive risk to the residents of the state. The legislature suppresses insurance rates for political expediency without regard to the back-end risk post a catastrophic event. I'd shift the focus from rates first to risk first. I believe that allowing the Florida Catastrophic Fund to sell catastrophic financial securities (Cat Bonds, Insurance Linked Securities) in an open market will move risk away from Floridians. Citizens Insurance needs significant reform. While weight needs to be given to families who have lived in smaller dwellings for lengthy periods of time, new expensive homebuilding should have to pay a more fair rate so others outside of flood zones or away from the coast are not bearing all the risk. Other insurers must be allowed an incentive to write policies.
<b>More than two-thirds of Florida's budget is spent on contracts with vendors. What is the role of Florida's CFO to properly audit these contracts — such as SunPass and prisons — to make sure vendors are held accountable?</b>	As CFO, I'm the state's business manager and I know that strong asset management at a state level is critical. My office performs state contract reviews, audits payments over \$35,000, and audits vendor contracts that are more than \$750,000. We're charged with being the watchdogs over the state's finances and ensuring there are checks and balances in place. I am proud of the incredible team we have in the Division of Accounting and Auditing. This capable and talented staff looks at elements that make a good contract and review agreements that provide goods and services to the state. My office protects taxpayers by making sure that we are getting the highest impact for Floridians' tax dollars. We also are quick to look at contracts that are executed. For instance, audits for all contracts over \$750,000 are completed within 30 days after being signed and placed into the Florida Accountability Contract Tracking System.	Currently the CFO is somewhat handcuffed because they do not have the ability to review contracts with vendors prior to execution. I intend to work with the legislature to change this, thus allowing for pre-auditing of agreements. It is impossible without massive appropriations and hiring dozens if not hundreds of auditors for the Department of Financial Affairs to audit every agreement in the state as the system is set up. The FLAIR system has no auditing capabilities. The new PALM system must include auditing functionality, perhaps even using blockchain technology which creates a technological solution allowing the state to more thoroughly audit all of its agreements. Clearly payment should be withheld until the agreements have provided the services contracted for.
<b>What are pressing issues facing the state that you could address with being one of four votes in Florida's Cabinet as CFO?</b>	The role of Florida's Chief Financial Officer is incredibly important. On the Cabinet, we oversee the Office of Insurance Regulation and the Office of Financial Regulation, working to ensure they are looking out for Florida consumers. My role also includes making sure Citizens Property Insurance is operating at its most efficient and with the highest ethical standards. We are constantly looking for new ways to guarantee insurance rates are low. I believe Floridians deserve to keep more of their hard-earned money. One of the most important roles I have as a member of our Cabinet is to look after the fiscal health of the state, including our pension. We must ensure our pension plan is as strong as possible for both current and future retirees. After a lifetime of service, workers deserve to have peace of mind regarding their retirement. Approximately \$2 out of every \$3 paid to a retiree today comes from investment gains, not from taxpayers. As a result, we are one of the lowest "all-in" cost providers among our peers. I'm proud that last year Florida's pension fund showed a positive gain for the ninth straight year in a row.	Reforming the state Clemency program, allowing for non-violent ex-offenders to receive their rights back through a very seamless process. Purchasing land (through existing agreements such as the contract negotiated in the Crist administration with US Sugar or voting on land leases south of Lake Okeechobee) that would provide the state much needed land to build a reservoir to hold and treat water. Having a much more serious role than the current administration with regards to being a Trustee to the State Board of Administration (Florida Retirement System). The legislature is constantly trying to attack the Retirement system and its beneficiaries with entirely unfounded claims of the weakness of the system, when in fact by all financial rating accounts, it is one of the strongest retirement systems in America.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$6.8 million (real estate, investments, partnerships) Liabilities: \$398,882 (mortgage, loan) Income: \$504,954 (CFO salary, restaurant, investments)	Assets: \$5.1 million (investments) Liabilities: \$2.2 million (mortgage, line of credit, auto) Income: \$329,470 (investments, consulting)
<b>Personal</b>	Patronis lives in Panama City with his wife, Katie, and sons Theo and Johnny.	Divorced; engaged to Rachel Friedland; four children.
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$2.1 million Expenditures: \$793,548	Contributions: \$413,151 Expenditures: \$387,157
<b>On the web</b>	Website: <a href="http://joinjimmy.com">joinjimmy.com</a> Twitter: @JimmyPatronis	Website: <a href="http://jeremyring.com">jeremyring.com</a> Twitter: @JeremyRingFL

**ABOUT THE JOB:** The CFO, considered the business manager for the state, oversees a variety of offices, mainly handling the state's finances, retirement fund and both the state's financial regulation and insurance commissioners. The cabinet officers, including the CFO, work with the governor on matters such as the purchase of land, clemency and law enforcement. The CFO makes \$128,972 annually.



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## Know Your Candidates 2018

### State House | District 57

Republican Mike Beltran and Democrat Debbie Katt are competing for the seat vacated by the retirement of Republican Jake Rayburn. The district, which covers much of southern Hillsborough County, has traditionally leaned Republican. In the primary, Beltran beat U.S. Army veteran Sean McCoy, who was endorsed by Rayburn. Katt says because both candidates are newcomers, "It's anybody's game."

By Philip Morgan, Times Staff Writer



	Mike Beltran	Debbie Katt
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	Lawyer	Software Engineer/Analytical Consultant, SAS Institute Inc.
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Beltran, 34, from Lithia, said in an interview, "I understand legislation because I've litigated on the laws after they get passed, and I understand how business regulations can be burdensome," he said. He said he thinks current gun regulations make sense and he does not want to infringe on 2nd Amendment rights.</p>	 <p>Debbie Katt, 54, of Valrico said the current political climate and the Parkland shootings moved her to run. "Parkland sent me over the edge, when the Legislature voted down even the ability to discuss gun reform," Katt said in an interview. She said she's also unhappy with a lack of legislative action on education funding, teacher pay, environmental protection, health coverage and transportation.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, B.A. Magna Cum Laude with Honors in International Relations from the University of Pennsylvania	Bachelor's, Texas A&M University; master's in Math, North Carolina State University
<b>What should state lawmakers do to address sexual misconduct in the Capitol?</b>	Sexual misconduct in any workplace is unacceptable and should be addressed in the Senate as it would be addressed anywhere else. Lawmakers should be held to the highest standard of conduct.	Representatives and staff should be required to undergo sensitivity and harassment training, which would address appropriate workplace behavior. Additionally, I do support rules being put in place. Those who violate those rules through committing acts of sexual harassment and/or abuse must be held accountable. As a woman and a mother, I am horrified and disappointed so little was done to ensure the safety and security of those working and /or visiting Tallahassee.
<b>Please describe your top three legislative priorities.</b>	1. Improve transparency and accountability in government to reduce waste and protect taxpayers. 2. Help support the Administration by addressing sanctuary cities in Florida. 3. Invest in infrastructure to reduce traffic congestion, protect drinking water, and preserve natural resources.	1. Fully fund our public school system, decrease exorbitant testing of our kids, increase teacher salaries/protect the Florida retirement system. 2. Provide health care – far too many Floridians are making impossible choices between health care and ordinary life expenses. It is imperative we expand Medicaid, fix the problems of the ACA, and help millions of Floridians. 3. Protect our environment – promote clean air, clean water, clean rivers, sustainable energy resources; mitigate the effects of global warming and increase environmental resilience, especially in the Tampa Bay area, which is highly susceptible to rising waters and storm surge; prevent offshore drilling and fracking.
<b>Would you support accepting federal Medicaid expansion money? Please explain how you would make health care more affordable to low-income Floridians.</b>	Medicaid is in desperate need of reform and should not be expanded until the problems are addressed. Expansion under the current system would lead to excessive tax burdens and a continuing trend of skyrocketing costs.	I support accepting federal Medicaid expansion as it would provide over a half-million Floridians with access to affordable health care. Floridians pay federal income taxes every year. In opting out of receiving billions of dollars in federal funds for Medicaid, we are throwing our own money away. I am appalled that we are regressing in our conversation about health care coverage and expansion of affordable access. It's unconscionable that eliminating coverage for those with pre-existing conditions is even a part of today's conversation.
<b>Would you support or oppose closing the gun show loophole on background checks for gun buyers? Banning assault weapons? Limiting the size of magazines?</b>	I do not support restrictions on 2nd Amendment rights.	I recognize most gun owners are law abiding and responsible citizens and I am open to a conversation about the laws we need to put in place to make our communities, homes, and schools safer... Yes, I do support the Second Amendment, but I do not believe the Second Amendment protects military-style weaponry that was designed specifically for substantial lethality. I am not opposed to banning the sale of assault weapons, and I fully support limiting the size of magazines. Federal law only requires criminal background checks for firearm sales by licensed dealers, not by unlicensed sellers. As such, I absolutely support closing gun show loopholes and internet sales loopholes by conducting thorough background checks for every firearm sale or trade. Also, I believe we need to allow gun manufacturers to be sued ... One of our methods for public accountability is civil suits. Lastly, I believe we need to repeal the law that forbids doctors from asking patients about guns in their home.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$1,658,225 Liabilities: \$410,660 Income: \$206,097	Assets: \$1,132,648 Liabilities: \$392,147 Income: \$106,117
<b>Personal</b>	Married to Hope Beltran, they have two children: Michael, 3, and Ross, infant.	Lives in Valrico. Married to Michael Katt. They have a daughter, Sarah, 13.
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$182,743 Expenditures: \$173,945	Contributions: \$22,185 Expenditures: \$9,734
<b>On the web</b>	www.facebook.com/electmikebeltran	www.DebbieKatt.com; https://www.facebook.com/DebbieKattForFLHouse/

**About the job:** State representatives serve two-year terms and earn \$29,697 a year.

### State House | District 58

The race to replace former Rep. Dan Raulerson in the District 58 seat began late last year after the longtime Republican legislator resigned for health reasons. Republican environmental mitigation consultant Lawrence McClure managed a decisive victory in his first run for office and was sworn in Jan. 9. But to keep the job McClure will have to reprise his win in the Nov. 6 general election against Ruskin Democrat Phil Hornback, a real estate broker and former middle school science teacher. The reliably Republican-voting District 58 stretches from Temple Terrace east to the Hillsborough County line, taking in Plant City, Thonotosassa, Dover and parts of Brandon.

By Anastasia Dawson, Times Staff Writer

	Phil Hornback	Lawrence McClure
<b>Party</b>	Democrat	Republican
<b>Profession</b>	Realtor, self-employed at Keller Williams Realty	Environmental mitigation consultant, Streamline Environmental, Inc.
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Phil Hornback, 52, is a former middle school science teacher who owns a real estate business with his wife, Sara, in Ruskin. The Des Moines, Iowa, native became a small business owner in college,</p>	 <p>Lawrence McClure, 31, is a conservative Plant City businessman and county Farm Bureau board member endorsed by the NRA. A Tampa native, McClure played soccer and football at Plant</p>
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor's degree in U.S. History (2004), Upper Iowa University, Fayette; master's degree in education (2006), Viterbo University, La Crosse, Wis.	High School. McClure began his career as an environmental mitigation consultant as a summer intern at Tampa-based firm Streamline Environmental. He now operates his own environmental cleanup and consulting firm, located in Tampa, but has lived in Dover for about six years. The move came after his marriage to the former Courtney Newsome, who's from a multi-generation Plant City family.
<b>Please describe your top three legislative priorities.</b>	1. Education: We must fully fund our public schools and increase teacher and support staff salaries. 2. Home Rule: It is ridiculous that Tallahassee continues to force a one-size-fits-all approach on the municipalities in our state. Localities should have the autonomy to help figure out what best works for them. 3. Environmental Protection: As a former science teacher I spent years in the classroom teaching students about the importance of preserving the world around us. I am sickened by the toxic algae clogging our coastlines and the continued exploitation and degradation of our state. ... We should be investing in green energy options that will create jobs and protect our air and water from special interests.	1. Protecting the agriculture industry 2. Improving our transportation 3. Continuing to invest in our schools
<b>Would you accept federal Medicaid expansion money? How would you make health care more accessible for low-income Floridians?</b>	I unequivocally support the expansion of Medicaid. Millions of Floridians are suffering because of Rick Scott's and the Florida GOP's inaction. Citizens of our state are forced to make outrageous choices between health care and necessary life expenses. This is untenable.	No, but I do believe things like direct primary care, health care price transparency, tele-medicine and allowing for the purchase of insurance across state lines would help bring more access and lower costs.
<b>Should Florida's public schools receive more funding from the state?</b>	The greatest crisis facing our state is public education. The statistics measuring Florida's public education system speak for themselves – we are in the bottom five in any measurable statistic, whether it be teacher pay or spending per pupil. ... For-profit charter schools are fleecing and defrauding our state of tax dollars meant to assist public schools. We have split school financing 50-50 when 89 percent of Florida's students attend traditional public schools – this is outrageous. ... As a former teacher running a campaign by and for my fellow teachers – I see fully funding our public education system as my No. 1 issue.	In my brief time in office, I was able to vote for record funding for education. As the son of a Hillsborough County public school teacher, I will continue to advocate for record funding for our schools.
<b>Would you support closing the gun show loophole on background checks for gun buyers? Banning assault weapons? Limiting the size of magazines?</b>	I completely support the closing of gun show loopholes and a more universal application of background checks on potential firearm purchasers. I do not believe weapons of war belong in our states or in the hands of a citizen. I would support a specifically-informed ban on assault weapons, as well as placing limitations on the size of magazines. As a former teacher I am wholeheartedly opposed to the arming of teachers which, quite frankly, is the absolute opposite approach we should be taking toward gun and school safety.	I support the NCIS background checks that are already required by law in every gun show for federally licensed firearm dealers.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$790,650 (homes in Ruskin, Brandon, and Des Moines, Iowa, real estate company, savings) Liabilities: \$439,800 (mortgages and loan) Income: \$107,000 from Hornback Real Estate Group	Assets: \$1,152,744 (home in Dover, business interests in environmental consulting firms, debt and equity securities) Liabilities: \$250,336 (auto loan, real estate loans, bank loan) Income: \$327,090.02 (Streamline Environmental, Inc., \$13,176 from CLM Investments, Inc.)
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Ruskin Marital status: Married to Sara Children: one son, Max	Home: Dover Marital status: Married to Courtney Children: none
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$20,425.27 Expenditures: \$16,137.46	Contributions: \$59,454.34 Expenditures: \$15,211.56
<b>On the web</b>	Website: www.philfor58.com Twitter: @PhilHornback	Website: www.ElectMcClure.com Twitter: @RepMcClure

**ABOUT THE JOB:** State representatives serve two-year terms and earn \$29,697 a year.



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## Know Your Candidates 2018

### State House | District 63

Democrat and political newcomer Fentrice Driskell is challenging Shawn Harrison, District 63's Republican incumbent and a former Tampa City Council member. Neither candidate competed in a party primary. District 63 includes northern Tampa, Pebble Creek, Lake Magdalene, the University area and Carrollwood in northern Hillsborough County

By Paul Guzzo, Times Staff Writer

	Fentrice Driskell	Shawn Harrison
<b>Party</b>	Democrat	Republican
<b>Profession</b>	Attorney	Florida legislator and attorney
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Fentrice Driskell, a 12-year-resident of Tampa now residing in the Lake Magdalene community, is running in her first election. She is a shareholder with the law firm of Carlton Fields' business litigation practice group. Driskell, 39, serves as president of the George Edgecomb Bar Association for black Tampa lawyers, is involved in other bar groups, and has been active in local charities. She previously served on the advisory board of the SHARE Florida Food Network and was director of the board at Tampa Crossroads.</p>	 <p>Shawn Harrison, a 35-year resident of Tampa now residing in the Hunters Green community, is the race's incumbent, having served in the seat since 2014. The 53-year-old founder of the Shawn Harrison Associates law firm previously served on Tampa City Council from 1999 to 2007 and as the state representative for Florida House district 60 from 2010-2012. When the state's legislative districts were redrawn in 2012, Harrison was moved to district 63 but lost in that year's election. He also owns the Medical Collection Group and works in commercial real estate.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor's degree in government, Harvard University, 2001; Juris Doctor degree, Georgetown University Law Center, 2004.	Bachelor's degree in political science, University of South Florida, 1987; Juris Doctor degree, University of Florida Law School, 1990
<b>Some Democrats and school superintendents urged a special session to address what they called a funding shortfall for public schools. Should Florida's public schools receive more funding from the state?</b>	Yes. We need to ensure that all children are receiving the high-quality education that they deserve and that no child is trying to learn in a building with a broken air conditioning system or a leaky roof. To do so, we must raise teacher salaries and provide the necessary resources to ensure that our schools are secure and properly maintained.	Yes, if possible. Public education funding should be increased whenever it's possible and prudent to do so.
<b>Would you support or oppose closing the gun show loophole on background checks for gun buyers? Banning assault weapons? Limiting the size of magazines?</b>	Yes, I would support all three of these common sense efforts to protect Floridians from gun violence. I also support greater funding for mental health care and better coordination with law enforcement to help ensure that we keep weapons out of the hands of people that should not have them.	Gun show loophole must be defined, but I am open to consideration. The assault weapons ban must be defined. I am not inclined to support a blanket ban on semi-automatic weapons. Magazine capacity is a potential gun safety item I would consider.
<b>What other measures would you support to make schools safer? Would you support or oppose increasing the amount of money sent to school districts so that each county that wants school resource officers in every school would have the money to pay for them?</b>	The Legislature needs to increase funding for our school districts and counties to ensure that we have school resource officers at every school. I do not support arming our teachers, and school hardening measures will only take us so far. The Legislature must also increase funding for in-school counseling and mental health screening to help prevent gun violence from happening in our schools in the first place.	I support Gov. Scott's efforts to reallocate Marshall Program money to school resource officers. I fully support school hardening measures and funding for them.
<b>Name one issue embraced by members of the other political party that you would support</b>	In recent years, both Democrats and Republicans have realized the need to reform our criminal justice system. I would welcome an opportunity to work across the aisle to find practical solutions, including providing support for programs and initiatives that help place young people on a path to attaining a high-quality public education, finding a good career, and avoiding the prison pipeline altogether.	Medicaid expansion
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: Residence, cash, 401(k), stock — \$469,293 Liabilities: Student loans, mortgage, auto lease, home equity line of credit, capital loan — \$285,191 Income: Carlton Fields — \$189,153	Assets: Cash, residence, two businesses, 401(k) — \$7,456,570 Liabilities: Auto loan — \$53,241 Income: Shawn Harrison Associates, \$226,266; Medical Collection Group, \$729,487; Franklin Florida Properties, \$33,222; Legislative salary, \$26,646
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Lake Magdalene, Tampa Marital status: Single	Home: Hunters Green, Tampa Marital status: Married to Susan Harrison Children: An adult daughter and a teenage son
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: Monetary \$158,113; In-kind \$34,311 Expenditures: \$47,727	Contributions: Monetary \$184,761; In-kind \$25,740 Expenditures: \$75,611
<b>On the web</b>	Website: fentriceforflorida.com Twitter: @FentriceForFL	Website: shawnharrison.com Twitter: @Shawnfor63

**ABOUT THE JOB:** State representatives serve two-year terms and are limited to four terms. They are paid \$29,697 annually.

### State House | District 60

Republican incumbent Jackie Toledo is seeking a second term representing this district, which extends from Tampa's Westchase area to Ruskin and includes the South Tampa peninsula. Her Democratic challenger is Debra Bellanti, who is making her first bid for public office. Both ran unopposed in the this year's primary.

By Tony Marrero, Times Staff Writer

	Debra Bellanti	Jackie Toledo
<b>Party</b>	Democrat	Republican
<b>Profession</b>	Marketing consultant	State representative, civil engineer
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Bellanti, 49, is the founder and creative director of Bellanti Creative, a marketing consulting company in Tampa she started in 2015. She previously worked as director of marketing for McNichols Company in Tampa. The Fort Myers native has lived in Tampa for 26 years. She is an active PTA member, has provided pro bono marketing and design services to the Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels and the Humane Society and has chaired galas for the American Cancer Society as well as Tampa General and St. Joseph's hospitals.</p>	 <p>Toledo, 42, was born in Lima, Peru, and has lived in Tampa for 28 years. A civil engineer by trade, she works as a consultant for NUE Urban Concepts, Inc., a transportation consulting firm. During her first term in the House, Toledo served as deputy majority whip and was assigned to the House Commerce Committee. She has served as president of Walk Bike Tampa, a citizen-based group that advocates for safer streets for bicyclists and pedestrians.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor's degree in visual communications, Florida State University	Bachelor's degree in civil engineering, University of South Florida
<b>What are your top three legislative priorities?</b>	First, we must restore and respect funding for public education; second, defend responsible growth to ensure safe water, land, and coastline; and third, economic development for Tampa and Florida.	Fixing our transportation challenges: Particularly locally as we have some of the most dangerous roads for pedestrians and flooding problems in neighborhoods. Texting and driving: I was proud to ... help pass a texting and driving ban. Unfortunately, this didn't pass the Senate and I will continue to advocate for this or hands-free legislation. Improving education: I support increasing teacher pay and ensuring funds go directly into the classroom.
<b>Should Florida's public schools receive more funding from the state?</b>	Yes. Our legislators have woefully underfunded our public schools since 2007, using the recession as a reason to cut funding. Even though our economy rebounded, our legislators never restored education funding back to pre-recession levels. Our per-pupil spending is 44th in the nation... It is our legislators' constitutional duty to fully fund a free and equitable public school system.	I supported a record investment into education of over \$24 billion. This included more money for teacher bonuses, money for children who are victims of violence and bullying ... as well as permanently funding the Bright Futures Scholarship. We invested hundreds of millions into school safety... As a mother of five, I will always fight for proper funding for our schools and I believe this past year the Legislature made significant investments into our schools.
<b>Would you support accepting federal Medicaid expansion money? Explain how you would make health care more affordable and accessible to low-income Floridians.</b>	Yes, I support accepting the federal Medicaid expansion money and using the money to expand access to health care to over 500,000 Floridians. Florida ranks 38th in the nation for the well-being of women and children and this is directly due to lack of access to affordable health insurance. Also, if you are poor and don't work, you are eligible for Medicaid, and if you work but make over something like \$30,000 you qualify for the Affordable Health Care Act, but if you're working class, especially those making minimum wage, you're getting screwed. It is the "health care gap."	I don't believe the state of Florida should tie its financial future to a promise made by Congress. If Congress were to change the rules in the middle of the game — which it can do — Florida would be left on the hook to raise taxes by billions to meet the health care spending obligations. The House has taken steps to lower the cost of care via Direct Primary Care and tele-medicine, which can be particularly helpful in rural parts of the state. We've also made great strides in making the cost transparent so patients can see what the procedures will cost them in different parts of their community — as well as the quality of the care.
<b>Would you support closing the gun show loophole on background checks for gun buyers? Banning assault weapons? Limiting magazine sizes?</b>	I am in favor of closing the gun show loophole, banning assault weapons and limiting high-capacity magazines. As a Moms Demand Action Candidate of Distinction, I want common sense solutions to prevent gun violence. Let's honor our 2nd Amendment, but we can and should do more to keep the people of Florida safe.	Every sale of a firearm, whether at a store or gun show by a federally licensed firearms dealer, must have a background check performed. Banning magazine sizes or certain types of weapons doesn't strike to the core of the problem, which is we have to keep weapons out of the hands of those incapable of handling them. I was proud to support some of the most common sense gun safety legislation ever passed in this state that allows law enforcement to remove guns from the possession of those deemed mentally unstable.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$766,000 (Home, retirement fund, marketing company, savings) Liabilities: \$338,000 (home and car loans) Income: \$100,000 from marketing company	Assets: \$1,653,027 (Home, mutual funds, retirement funds, bonds, cash) Liabilities: \$420,317 (Two mortgages) Income: \$26,646 from legislative salary; No salary from NUE Concepts was included on disclosure form because Toledo did no consulting work for the company in 2017, according to her campaign.
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Tampa Marital status: Married Children: One daughter	Home: Tampa Marital status: Separated Children: Three sons, two daughters
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$59,960 (including \$8,250 to candidate's political action committee, Getting Things Done) Expenditures: \$37,390	Contributions: \$301,402 (including \$25,000 to candidate's political action committee, Engineering a Better Future) Expenditures: \$100,633
<b>On the web</b>	Website: votebellanti.com Twitter: @bellanti2018	Website: jackietoledo.com Twitter: @toledofortampa

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# Know Your Candidates 2018

## State House | District 64

James Grant didn't face competition in the 2016 general election for District 64, which includes northeast Pinellas County and northwest Tampa. This year, he faces off against two opponents — Democrat Jessica Harrington and Andy Warrenner, who has no party affiliation.

By Paul Guzzo, Times Staff Writer

	James Grant	Jessica Harrington	Andy Warrenner
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat	NPA
<b>Profession</b>	Florida legislator	Teacher	Freelance journalist and carpenter
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>James Grant, 36, is an attorney and a member of the Florida House representing District 64. Grant was first elected to the state House in 2010, was easily re-elected in 2012 and 2014 and then ran unopposed in 2016. With 68 percent of the votes, Grant defeated Terry Power in the Republican primary this year. He was co-founder of the health care IT company CareSync, which closed in late June.</p>	 <p>Jessica Harrington, 34, is a middle school social studies teacher in Hillsborough County. This is her first time running for office. Through the University of Florida's Non-Profit Branch of Children Beyond Our Borders, she has worked with children in South America. Harrington is also the founder of the ocean advocacy group Straw Free Florida</p>	 <p>Andy Warrenner, 40, is a carpenter and free-lance journalist whose articles have been published in the <i>Tampa Bay Times</i> and <i>Creative Loafing</i>. He also helped write the movie <i>The Black String</i> starring Frankie Muniz. It will screen at this year's Austin Film Festival. This is his first time running for office.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor's degree in business administration, Auburn University; Juris Doctor law degree, Stetson College of Law	Bachelor's degree in political science, University of Florida	Bachelor of fine arts, University of Central Florida
<b>The Florida Senate proposed rules that would address sexual harassment earlier this year, but didn't pass them. What, if anything, should state lawmakers do to address sexual misconduct in the Capitol?</b>	Continue the course set in the Florida House last year to enforce the highest of standards and a zero tolerance policy against harassment.	They should pass a bill that holds lawmakers accountable for sexual misconduct. They should absolutely lose their position as an elected official if an investigation shows that they have acted inappropriately.	Something that may have not drawn a second thought 10 or 20 years ago may be perceived as a form of harassment today. It's very important that all parties involved are educated on the matter. I also think an independent entity needs to be in charge of handling sexual harassment claims. It can become a conflict of interest if a claim is brought against a senator or representative and the people handling the claim have a relationship with the accused.
<b>Some Democrats and schools superintendents urged a special session to address what they called a funding shortfall for public schools. Should Florida's public schools receive more funding from the state?</b>	We should start first by acknowledging and pursuing truth in this or any other policy debate. The truth is that last year there was yet another increase in school funding and a significant one. What some did not like is that more of the funding went directly into the classroom rather than to bureaucracy. Regardless, efficiently funding education in this state that puts students, parents, and teachers first is and should be a priority.	Yes, of course. As a school teacher, I can tell you from personal experience that schools are not being fully funded. We are currently at the very bottom when it comes to funding for education in this country.	Yes. We hear constantly about the "record" funding in the 2018 state budget. The reality of it is that state funding for public education dropped off the cliff during the recession in 2008-09 when per-pupil spending was more than \$10,500. It dipped as low as \$9,000 in 2013 according to 'A Decade of Neglect'... Cost of living increases over the 10-year span far out-pace the tiny increase in state funding in the 2018 budget.
<b>Please describe your top three legislative priorities.</b>	1. Ensuring that every child in this state has choice to access the best education for that child. 2. Protecting and promoting Florida as the destination to start and grow a business by keeping taxes low, repealing burdensome regulations, enacting occupational licensure reform and investing heavily in workforce development. 3. Defending our God-given and constitutionally protected individual liberties against the repeated attempts to use government as a mechanism to erode the freedoms that are the very foundation of this Republic.	Education funding Environmental protection Health care as a right for all	1. Restoring funding for Land and Water Conservation Amendment, particularly the Land Acquisition Trust Fund. 2. Providing adequate funding for public schools. 3. Better wages across the state. Jobs are great but a job with poor wages doesn't help the employee or the local economy and strains public assistance programs.
<b>Would you support or oppose accepting federal Medicaid expansion money? Please explain how you would make health care more affordable and accessible to low-income Floridians.</b>	Health care accounts for 1 in every 5 dollars spent in this country and is aggressively trending towards 1 in 3 dollars spent. That will not change until we enact market driven, consumer-focused reforms, and healthcare innovation is invited rather than prevented. I am in full support of Medicaid reform that increases access to better health outcomes at a lower cost. Expanding the status quo will not do that.	Support it by expanding Medicaid and we must work towards Medicare for all.	I fully support the expansion of Medicaid in Florida. The decision not to expand was cruel and threw thousands of hardworking Floridians into a coverage gap. The fact that health care is a for-profit industry is one of, if not the, primary driver of health care costs... At the state level, I would like to see some state investment in doctor-patient co-ops. The concept of a doctor-patient co-op is not new but it's a way to obtain basic health care needs at a very low cost.
<b>Assets/liabilities/ income</b>	Assets: Cash, real estate, household goods, vehicles, \$461,047. Liabilities: Loans and mortgage, \$211,924 Income: CareSync Inc., \$110,294. Florida House of Representatives, \$28,602.	Assets: Home and vehicle — \$413,000 Liabilities: Auto loan and credit cards — \$24,986 Income: Teacher's salary — \$42,848	Assets: Two cars — \$18,582 Liabilities: None Income: Journalism — \$17,624
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Tampa Marital status: single Children: none	Home: Odessa Marital status: Husband David Harrington	Home: Odessa Marital status: Wife Lya Mendoza Children: Two
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: Monetary — \$194,200; In-kind — \$31,977 Expenditures: \$171,938	Contributions: Monetary — \$2,780.42; Expenditures: \$3,136.29	Contributions: Monetary — \$5,653.14; In-kind — \$599.90 Expenditures: \$4,980.16
<b>On the web</b>	Website: jamesgrantfl.com Twitter: @JamesGrantFL	Website: harringtonforfl.com Twitter: @HFor64	Website: floridaforall.net Twitter: @Warrenner4FLD64

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## State House | District 59

This race in eastern Hillsborough County pits Army veteran Joseph Wicker against Navy veteran Adam Hattersley. Wicker beat Ronda Storms in the primary; Hattersley ran unopposed.

By Howard Altman, Times Staff Writer

	Adam Hattersley	Joseph Wicker
<b>Party</b>	Democrat	Republican
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Adam Hattersley, 40, is a Navy veteran who owns C-Suite Promotions. He has never run for public office before.</p>	 <p>Joseph Wicker, 40, is an Army veteran who previously ran for this seat in 2012. He is a business manager for a division of International Paper Company.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Aerospace (2000) University of Michigan; Master of Science and Engineering, Aerospace (2001) University of Michigan	Associate of Science in criminal justice from Georgia Military College and a bachelor's degree in political science from Oglethorpe University
<b>The Florida Senate proposed rules that would address sexual harassment earlier this year, but didn't pass them. What, if anything, should state lawmakers do to address sexual misconduct in the Capitol?</b>	Elected officials must be held to the same - if not higher - standard as everyone else. Sexual harassment is not permitted in the workplace (including salient rules/regulations), and should not be permitted at the Capitol.	Politicians are not above the law. If anything, the standards of behavior should be higher for those in elected office.
<b>Some Democrats and school superintendents urged a special session to address what they called a funding shortfall for public schools. Should Florida public schools receive more funding from the state?</b>	Yes. Florida's level of public school funding is near the bottom of the country, which is evident in not only the lack of classroom materials and low teacher pay, but the physical state of our schools.	I believe there is room to pay teachers more and put more funds into the classroom if it weren't for such high administration costs.
<b>Please describe your top three legislative priorities.</b>	Education, health care and transportation .	Health care, Transportation (specifically road improvement and planning), regulatory agency reform.
<b>Would you support or oppose accepting federal Medicaid expansion money? Please explain how you would make health care affordable and accessible to low-income Floridians.</b>	I would support Medicaid expansion. Taking care of our citizens is a core responsibility of a modern country. We cannot allow over 800,000 low-income Floridians to be without access to health care when we have the opportunity to care for them as well as people in better financial situations	I'm opposed to accepting money from the Federal Government when they place strings attached and dictate to us exactly how those funds must be used by the state or if there is no plan to replace those federal funds once expended.
<b>Assets/liabilities/ income</b>	Assets: \$821,635 Liabilities: \$187,430 Income: \$73,728	Assets: \$884,944 Liabilities: \$433,803 Income: \$90,625
<b>Personal</b>	Home: Riverview Marital status: Married Children: None	Home: Dover Marital status: Married Children: 2
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$30,433.80 Expenditures: \$27,173.21	Contributions: \$85,532.18 Expenditures: 40,502.35
<b>On the web</b>	Website: www.adam4florida.com Twitter: @adam4florida	Website: http://joewicker.com/ Twitter: @JoeWickerFL

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## Know Your Candidates 2018

### School Board | District 1

The replacement for longtime Hillsborough County School Board member Susan Valdes will either be a retired school district administrator who is dissatisfied with what he has seen from the sidelines, or a construction industry association executive who wants to see the district run with more efficiency and professionalism. The winner will serve two years, and can seek re-election for a full four-year term in 2020. *By Marlene Sokol, Times Staff Writer*

	Steve Cona	William Henry Person
<b>Profession</b>	Construction industry executive	Retired school district administrator
<b>About the candidate</b>	 Cona, 44, is president and CEO of the Associated Builders and Contractors Golf Coast Chapter. He is a past candidate for the Hillsborough County Commission and has two children in the Hillsborough County Public Schools.	 Person, 67, rose to the level of high school principal before joining the administration in the years when the district was coming out of mandatory busing for desegregation. This is his second run for School Board.
<b>Education</b>	University of South Florida, bachelor's degree	University of Tampa, master's degree, education
<b>How would you address the district's financial constraints and its maintenance and capital needs?</b>	Our teachers are our number one asset, and all things need to be on the table to protect those making a difference in the lives of our students each and every day, including exploring cutting administrative costs and streamlining services. Unfortunately, we don't have fiscal transparency to truly understand how our tax dollars are being spent, something I will advocate for as a School Board member. Additionally, I will advocate that the Legislature restore a portion of the millage that was taken back during the recession and use those dollars for deferred maintenance and long-term capital needs.	Downsizing must occur only in non-classroom personnel positions. Consolidation can be achieved via reduction in some newly added administrative divisions. Cuts must be kept to support personnel, non-school-based, especially administrative support personnel. Deferred maintenance must discontinue and increased capital outlay must be addressed via improved funding from state and through local tax initiatives.
<b>How would you improve the academic performance of the district's lowest-performing schools?</b>	I will be an advocate for VPK boot camps across our district, especially those areas that have been identified as traditionally low performing. In addition to targeted intervention before kindergarten, parent engagement and summer programs have the ability to improve outcomes and reverse the summer slide trend. I will advocate for summer learning institutes in partnership with USF and other leading universities and colleges. Finally, we must hire and keep high-quality teachers, and to do this our compensation must be competitive.	Academic performance improvement must be achieved through meaningful assessment, re-allocation of all resources, full community involvement, and long term commitment to long term activities without an exit strategy! Too many initiatives have been attempted with little results. A meaningful plan of action, sanctioned by community shareholders over an extended time line may yield improvement in performance. Recruiting high-performing principals and teachers into low performing schools shows promise.
<b>What is the appropriate role and place for charter schools in Hillsborough?</b>	Public charter schools can fill a need in our community, especially with some subsets of students and geographic areas of the district. We can't be afraid to compete or partner with charter schools that can meet the unique needs of our diverse student population. When collaboration happens, we improve together. But if a charter proves to not meet these expectations, we must hold them accountable.	Charter schools need to be differentiated as nonprofit versus for-profit managed charter schools. Nonprofit charters have traditionally served the community as a viable alternative to traditional public schools by offering a choice to parents who seek unique education offerings and environments for students. For-profit charters managed by for-profit corporations increasingly rob badly needed funds from traditional public schools. Eleven percent of all students attend charter schools in our county, yet they draw 50 percent of existing capital outlay from the state.
<b>How would you address the racial and ethnic disparities in student discipline and achievement?</b>	We need to make sure teachers have the necessary tools for focused learning when students are in the classroom. And we need to do a better job of offering alternatives outside of the traditional college pathway and offer relevant curriculum for career tracks. Three years ago, I partnered with the school district to start the Build Tampa Bay Foundation, a not-for-profit foundation that was formed in an effort to address the workforce shortage in the building and construction industry. I know firsthand that a more inspired student is a more motivated student.	Over the last five decades, schools have become resegregated. The advent of for-profit charter-operated schools, the increase of vouchers and the unabashed promotion of privatization of public education is returning public schools systems back into dual school systems. Unequal facilities have returned, unseasoned teachers are mainly hired into low-performing schools with high minority populations in mainly urban schools. Resources are not distributed in an equitable fashion. I would increase recent practice toward increase of all resources in an equitable, not equal manner.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: House, investments. Liabilities: Mortgage, car loan, credit cards Income: Salary from Associated Builders	Assets: Pick-up truck Liabilities: Mortgage, credit union loan Income: State pension, Social Security
<b>Personal</b>	Lives in the Westchase area. Married to Audra Cona. Has two children.	Lives in Tampa. Married to Laurie Jean Rodriguez. Has one grown child.
<b>Fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$83,089 Expenditures: \$51,855	Contributions: \$60,048 Expenditures: \$35,846
<b>On the web</b>	Website: votestevecona.com	Website: BillPersonSchoolBoard.org

**ABOUT THE JOB:** District 1 extends from Keystone in the northwest to Town 'N Country and then into parts of West Tampa. Board members serve four-year terms and oversee one of the largest school districts in the nation, with a \$3 billion budget. The nonpartisan position pays \$44,423 a year.

### School Board | District 6

From a field of six, two very different candidates emerged: A retired administrator who spent more than 40 years in the school district, and a social worker who sees the results when children experience misfortune. *By Marlene Sokol, Times Staff Writer*



	Karen Perez	Henry Washington
<b>Profession</b>	Social worker	Retired school district administrator
<b>About the candidate</b>	 Perez, 54 and a graduate of King High School, works as a social worker at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital. She also has a private social work practice.	 Washington, 69, retired after a long career with the Hillsborough County School District, holding positions including high school principal and area superintendent.
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor's and master's in social work, University of South Florida	Bachelor's, Kentucky State College; Master's, Nova Southeastern University
<b>How would you address the district's financial constraints, maintenance and capital needs?</b>	"It's about the children. And the fact that none of the services for the children, especially their mental services, have been touched is awesome. But looking more at administrative cuts, the administration that's not hands-on with the kids, that's not there, would be the ones to really look at when cutting that budget."	Reduce the number of area superintendents from 8 to 5. "Consolidating geographical areas allows the district to minimize cost in service delivery and direct funding where needed the most." Some maintenance needs can be deferred, but "we must consider safety at all times where students and teachers are concerned."
<b>How would you improve the academic performance of the lowest-performing schools?</b>	"By assuring that HR and union work hand in hand to place the best of the best in leadership roles and teaching positions in those schools we need to make sure that when we are making decisions we are putting the children first and not the adults."	"Global recruitment of teachers who are experienced and accustomed to teaching in urban school districts; provide progressive salaries and excellent leaders including principals, area superintendents, etc. As a large district, it should have ongoing professional development training on cultural sensitivity and differentiate learning styles for a large student body of color and with different ethnic backgrounds."
<b>What is the appropriate role and place for charter schools in Hillsborough?</b>	"I believe because of the overcrowded classrooms, I think that they help. But as a School Board member, I'm going to continue to keep my eyes on them to make sure they're doing what they need to do as far as what their promises are."	"Charter schools should be held as accountable and transparent as the traditional schools. Charter schools are funded with public dollars and the school district should report on their students' academics and discipline, teachers' preparedness, and principal and leadership practices."
<b>How would you address the racial and ethnic disparities in student discipline and academic achievement?</b>	"As a social worker, my youngest patient right now is 3 years old. And when they sit with me, and they talk about being bullied, when they talk about not being able to make friends, when they talk about having nightmares about going to school, the issues of race... I believe the teachers, they get courses in diversity. They get courses in learning and engaging and being able to work well with others. But I think we miss out when we don't help our children learn that."	"Age-old problem. Do a better job of selecting teachers and administrators by having pre-service training workshops, preparing teachers to work in an urban school district, preparing early learning teachers to engage with students that may have not experienced a structural classroom setting until kindergarten or first grade. Conduct ongoing training on implicit and explicit biases, share authentic history, cultural sensitivity and bring parents into the conversations of race, class, and stereotypes."
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: Two cars and a boat. Liabilities: Loans for cars and boat. Income: Salary at VA hospital, private practice	Assets: Cars, savings, retirement accounts. Liabilities: Mortgage, car loans, credit cards. Income: Military pension, Social Security
<b>Personal</b>	Perez lives in New Tampa and has three adult children.	Washington lives in Tampa. His adult children are Henry Washington, Jr., JaMia Washington.
<b>Fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$11,565 Expenditures: \$10,894	Contributions: \$21,913 Expenditures: \$18,075
<b>On the web</b>	votekarenperez.com	Shakeforschoolboard.com

**ABOUT THE JOB:** Hillsborough County School Board members serve four-year terms overseeing one of the largest school districts in the nation, with a \$3 billion budget. The position is nonpartisan and pays \$44,423 a year. District 6 is a countywide office.

### County Commission

#### District 2

Incumbent Ken Hagan is attempting to continue his 16-year run on the commission by switching to a countywide seat. First-time candidate Angela Birdsong says Democratic voters will flock to her campaign in a "Blue Wave" cycle. Hagan, a Republican, is the leading elected official involved with bringing a new Tampa Bay Rays ballpark to Ybor City. *By Charlie Frago, Times Staff Writer*

	Angela Birdsong	Ken Hagan
<b>Party</b>	Democrat	Republican
<b>Profession</b>	Health and Life Insurance Agent	County Commissioner
<b>About the candidate</b>	 Birdsong, 58, is making her first run for political office. The health and life agent for Bankers Life and Colonial Penn was recruited by Ruth's List to challenge Hagan, a 16-year-incumbent.	 Hagan was first elected to the county commission in 2002. He has led the effort to bring the Tampa Bay Rays to Tampa.
<b>Education</b>	Ithaca College, B.S. Commonwealth Institute, Houston, Texas, A.A.	University of Florida, B.S. University of Tampa, MBA.
<b>What do you consider the county's most pressing need?</b>	The lack of urban planning and smart growth. Tampa is at a crossroads. Our county can continue to have commissioners that are lining their campaigns with donations from developers and green-lighting urban sprawl or we can start implementing smart growth. ... I plan to support smart urban infill and make sure developers pay impact fees...I will demand that developers include housing alternatives for every pay grade.	Transportation. In my view, our lack of an integrated, modern transportation system is our Achilles' heel. It is the one thing that puts us at risk of losing our momentum and our competitive edge in economic development and job creation. I've tried to understand and support transportation options that make sense in the daily lives of everyone. I believe strongly that includes both roads and buses, relief in traffic flow and congestion and better addressing our significant maintenance backlogs.
<b>How do you propose to address the county's transportation deficit?</b>	Our County Commission has punted on investing on transportation for years and the lack of investment is holding our community back. We need a comprehensive plan that starts with fully funding HART. We also need to increase our county investment in our roads and bridges, many of which are functionally obsolete.	As a fiscal conservative, I am opposed to tax increases. However, with an \$8 billion transportation deficit, cutting the budget alone will not adequately address our needs. A dedicated funding source is needed that will allow Hillsborough County to leverage our local investments and qualify for much needed state and federal dollars.
<b>Explain your views on allowing growth outside the Urban Service Area</b>	For too long our County Commission has been caving in to developers who want to build in rural areas. We need to start holding the line on urban sprawl. New proposed high-density development in the east county should be halted in its tracks. I plan to ensure growth stays focused in the urban areas where services for daily living can be provided.	Ideally, we can control growth within the USA. However, the Planning Commission tells us that 27,000 people a year are moving to Hillsborough County. By 2030, Hillsborough County's population will be 1.72 million, and in 2045, our population will exceed 2 million. As the Planning Commission's Executive Director stated, in the future we will need to either increase density within the USA or change our growth patterns outside the USA.
<b>What can Hillsborough do to promote economic growth? Explain why you do or do not support job incentives.</b>	Along with good schools, providing viable means of public transportation is an economic driver. Good companies will be attracted to Tampa, bringing with them quality jobs. I support employer-driven programs for colleges so students can be trained for jobs that are available now. Also getting more young people in trade apprenticeships. Those are the kind of job incentives I want to promote.	I have been strategic in encouraging diverse and high-wage, high-quality job and understand the nexus between transportation and economic development. We need to continue to support the following: Qualified Targeted Industries Tax Refund (QTI). Expedited Permitting; Redevelopment Program; Ad Valorem Tax Exemption Program; Entrepreneur Collaborative Center (ECC)-Assisting Small Businesses; ED12 Program-Assisting Tech Startups
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets Car Liabilities: Student and car loans. Credit cards. Income: Insurance salary/commissions	Assets: Stock, mutual funds, retirement accounts, municipal securities, bank accounts, life insurance Liabilities: Mortgage, car loan, credit line Income: County Commission salary
<b>Personal</b>	Divorced, lives in Carrollwood. One adult son.	Married, lives in Lake Magadalen, has two children, 16 and 11.
<b>Fundraising</b>	Through Aug. 31 Contributions: \$27,817 Expenditures: \$21,556	Contributions: \$ 487,074 Expenditures: \$ 136,715
<b>On the web</b>	facebook.com/angelabirdsongforcc Twitter: @votebirdsong	votehagan.com

**ABOUT THE JOB:** District 2 covers northern and east-central Hillsborough County, including Citrus Park, Lutz and Brandon. Commissioners are paid an annual salary of \$99,997.





## Know Your Candidates 2018

### County Commission | District 4

Republican incumbent Stacy White is seeking a second term in this rural and suburban seat. He faces political newcomer Andrew Davis, a Democrat. As the only two candidates to qualify, neither competed in a primary election.

By Christopher O'Donnell, Times Staff Writer

	Andrew Davis	Stacy White
<b>Party</b>	Democrat	Republican
<b>Profession</b>	Service adviser for auto repair shop	Pharmacist
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Davis is making his first bid for office. A New Jersey native, he has lived in Hillsborough for more than two years.</p>	 <p>White won this seat in 2014 after a four-year stint as a School Board member. He has lived in Hillsborough County nearly his entire life.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Trade School Degree in Auto Mechanics	Bachelor's degree and doctor of pharmacy from University of Florida
<b>What do you consider the county's most pressing need, and how would you address it?</b>	I think developing a plan for responsible growth is key. We need to take the power back from developers and give it back to the people. Impact fees need to be raised and we can not continue to allow sprawl to happen at its current rate.	There are two needs that are equally pressing and intertwined: growth and transportation. Improvements to our transportation system must begin with better land use planning. I have been a strong proponent of better land use policy, such as encouraging dense in-fill development in or near the urban core, discouraging unmitigated sprawl that stretch county services, preserving large lot rural living for those that desire that option, and strongly supporting the county's environmental land program to preserve ecologically sensitive green space.
<b>What, if anything, do you propose to address the county's transportation deficit?</b>	The needs in the eastern part of the county are different than much of the rest of Hillsborough. We need our roads widened to meet the massive increase in population. We also want to be included in mass transit options yet not pay for a plan that only services Tampa. For years, our area has been excluded from transit. The county has yet to give a decent option for traveling to and from Plant City, it has taken away buses from the mostly senior population in Sun City, and we wait for planning to take shape after problems occur from growth. We need to significantly raise the impact fees on developers so we can grow our infrastructure as the population increases and not continue in this manner.	Encouraging dense in-fill development in or near the urban core leads to a community that better lends itself to pedestrian and bicycle transportation. Additionally, transit options such as the bus system can be operated more efficiently in such a scenario. This would then support an initiative to improve road capacity within our suburban areas. The County Commission recently replaced the transportation impact fee with a mobility fee, which significantly increases the amount that developers pay towards the impact of new growth on our transportation system. A percentage of growth in tax revenues from new construction will provide over \$800 million for transportation over the next 10 years.
<b>Explain your views on allowing growth outside the Urban Service Area.</b>	I am very against it and feel it has been allowed to occur because of the campaign contributions certain current commissioners have received. We are destroying our county's agriculture and allowing Tampa to grow outwards instead of upwards or filling in empty spaces closer to the city.	I believe strongly in preserving a rural lifestyle choice for residents of Hillsborough County. That means holding the line on the Urban Service Area boundary, beyond which the county does not provide suburban-scale services, such as water and sewer. I am working on some exciting initiatives that will strengthen policies to preserving rural lifestyle choices.
<b>What can Hillsborough do to promote economic growth? Explain why you do or do not support job incentives.</b>	Supporting public education including paying teachers appropriate wages and fixing the embarrassing issues our schools are currently facing including lead in drinking water and the air conditioning issues. We can also improve our transit system. Businesses do not want to settle down in areas that have such problems. This would bring quality jobs into the area and mean we do not need to give larger businesses incentives to come to Hillsborough.	Businesses want to relocate to communities with high quality of life measures, affordable homes and amenities to enjoy, where taxes aren't burdensome, and where they aren't stuck in traffic for hours. In order for me to support job incentives, they must bring high paying jobs and support businesses that are committed to calling Hillsborough County home for the long term.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$49,566 Liabilities: \$3,322 Income: \$27,583	Assets: \$794,328 Liabilities: \$371,851 Income: \$126,897
<b>Personal</b>	Engaged to Jacqui Donnelly.	Married to Barbie White; children: Savannah, 19, Meghan, 16, Austin, 14.
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$7,879 Expenditures: \$7,028	Contributions: \$187,261 Expenditures: \$87,621
<b>On the web</b>	votefordavis.com	www.votestacywhite.com

**ABOUT THE JOB:** District 4 covers eastern parts of Hillsborough County, including Riverview, Lithia, Sun City Center and Dover. Commissioners are paid an annual salary of \$99,997.

### Hillsborough County Sheriff

Hillsborough Sheriff Chad Chronister has held that title since September 2017, when he was appointed by Gov. Rick Scott to take over for David Gee, who announced his retirement barely six months into his fourth term and recommended Chronister as his successor. Challenging Chronister is Democrat Gary Pruitt, a retired Tampa police corporal and political newcomer who is director of security at Westfield Citrus Park mall. The winner will serve the remainder of Gee's term and will have to run again in 2020.

By Tony Marrero, Times Staff Writer

	Chad Chronister	Gary Pruitt
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	Sheriff	Law enforcement and security
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Chronister, 50, was born in York, Penn., and moved to Tampa in his 20s. He began his law enforcement career in 1992 as a patrol deputy at the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and has worked as a detective, deputy commander of the Community Outreach Division, patrol district commander and most recently as a colonel overseeing the agency's Department of Operational Support. He has served on the boards of Metropolitan Ministries, Boys &amp; Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay, Brooks-DeBartolo Collegiate High School and the Tampa Bay Sports Commission.</p>	 <p>Pruitt, 50, was born in Lima, Ohio, and moved to Tampa as a teenager. He spent 25 years with the Tampa Police Department, working as a patrol officer and detective, and retired as a patrol squad corporal in 2015. He started that same year as director of security at Westfield Citrus Park mall, working for a private, California-based contractor called Professional Security Consultants. This is his first bid for political office.</p>
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor's and master's degrees in criminal justice, St. Leo University	GED; some college coursework
<b>What do you think is the biggest challenge currently facing the Sheriff's Office and how would you address it?</b>	Responding to and caring for individuals with mental health issues. All sworn personnel ... receive blocks of education dealing with mental health. New sworn personnel receive 40 hours of mental health training. Affording individuals the opportunity for a ... medical professional to provide an accurate diagnosis and prescribe an effective treatment plan is essential. Our (patrol) deputies regularly provide referrals and in many cases provide transportation to treatment centers. Inmates are evaluated during the booking process ... and voluntary treatment options are offered. We are working with external partners to provide follow-on care once the inmate is released.	The command staff doesn't respect the deputy which in turn causes the deputy not to respect the staff. The deputy is the backbone of the agency and my first priority will be to make sure that we have the right staff and they are respected by the deputy.
<b>HCSO is one of the largest agencies in Florida that has not implemented body cameras. Should it?</b>	A number of concerns still exist with the use of body cameras. For these reasons, I do not support (their) use at this time... While the startup costs associated with body cameras continue to decrease ... the costs associated with digital video storage, maintenance and retrieval would be a significant impact for taxpayers. Additionally, privacy concerns for deputies and the public remain undecided.	Yes, without a doubt the agency should have body cameras. Although the only thing that makes the news is when something bad is caught on tape, it is important for the public to know that their deputies are always working with the professionalism that the citizens deserve.
<b>Critics say HCSO is wrong to partner with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Do you agree?</b>	As the Sheriff, my agency is not in the business of enforcing immigration laws. When a person is arrested, individual biometric information is shared with all federal agencies which concludes our mandated requirements.	If we are just casting a large net in an attempt to catch a few then the innocent will be harmed more than the guilty will be caught. We too often associate "immigrant with illegal" and "illegal with criminal" so we immediately narrow it down to "immigrant = criminal" and this is simply not true. The agreement needs another look and I believe this would be a perfect place for my Citizens Advisory Committee to start.
<b>The Sheriff's Office's rank-and-file and command staff do not reflect the diversity of the county. What will you do to address that?</b>	While we continue to make progress, under my administration, diversity amongst our command staff has never been greater. Donna Luszcynski is the agency's first female Chief Deputy, and of the 36 members, nine are female, four are of Hispanic heritage and four are African American. I am absolutely committed to improving the agency in this area to ensure our leadership and workforce reflects the community we serve.	First, the command staff must be diverse so that there is no bias in hiring which will in turn create a more diverse agency.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$3,899,638 (cash, deferred compensation plan, investment holdings company) Liabilities: \$218,110 (line of credit) Income: Sheriff's salary, \$183,589; DeChron Holdings, \$55,000	Assets: \$165,000 (cars, truck, household goods and personal effects) Liabilities: Income: Security director salary, \$52,749; Tampa Police Department pension, \$69,034
<b>Personal</b>	Married, lives in Tampa, has two sons	Married, lives in Tampa, has three daughters
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$1,227,231 (including \$437,820 to political action committee, Law Enforcement for Responsible Government) Expenditures: \$499,246	Contributions: \$12,740 Expenditures: \$11,913
<b>On the web</b>	Website: chadchronister.com Twitter: @chadchronister	Website: votegarypruitt.com Twitter: @garyallenpruitt

**ABOUT THE JOB:** Elected every four years, the sheriff holds the top law enforcement post in unincorporated Hillsborough County and leads an agency with a budget of about \$418 million and roughly 3,500 sworn and civilian employees. The current base salary, derived in part from the county's population, is \$179,408.



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## Know Your Candidates 2018

### State Senate | District 20

This race pits incumbent Tom Lee, Republican and former Florida Senate president, against Democratic newcomer Kathy Lewis, a writer and motivational speaker. They're competing for a district that leans Republican and covers the corner where Hillsborough, Pasco and Polk counties meet and includes much of the University of South Florida area.

By Philip Morgan, Times Staff Writer

	Tom Lee	Kathy Lewis
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	Home builder, executive with Sabal Homes of Florida, Inc.	Writer and motivational speaker. Now cares for grown autistic daughter full time.
<b>About the candidate</b>	 Tom Lee, 56, a veteran of 16 years in the Florida Senate, took 85 percent of the vote in the primary race against little-known challenger John Houman. Lee ran for state Chief Financial Officer in 2006 but lost.	 Kathy Lewis, 57, won the Democratic primary with 60 percent of the vote over Joy Gibson, a 40-year-old labor union official. Lewis said she was inspired to run by her struggle with the state bureaucracy over government aid and services for her autistic, adult daughter.
<b>Education</b>	Hillsborough Community College- AA Degree, University of Tampa- B.S. Business	Johns Hopkins University - bachelor's in Liberal Arts
<b>The Florida Senate proposed rules on sexual harassment earlier this year, but didn't pass them. What should state lawmakers do to address sexual misconduct in the Capitol?</b>	In February, the Legislature understandably shifted its focus to addressing the tragedy in Parkland. As #metoo moved off the front page, sexual harassment legislation moved to the back burner. A lot of this is common sense. Most people in the Capitol were raised with manners and know right from wrong. The Senate did amend its rules to require that Senators complete workplace decorum training, but they should pass the bill that was left pending in 2018.	Earlier this year, the Florida Senate changed its employment policy, but did not change its formal rules. The Florida Senate should incorporate sexual harassment policy into its formal rules, just like the Florida House did. If a senator is found guilty of sexual harassment, the taxpayers should be reimbursed for the cost of the investigation. Additionally, Senators should not be able to use political committees to finance their defense during an investigation ... Sexual harassment is entirely inappropriate in any workplace, and the Florida Senate is no exception.
<b>Please describe your top three legislative priorities.</b>	Reduce the micro-management of public education from Tallahassee (this includes excessive testing), Increase access and efficiency in health care (the current path we are on is not sustainable) and improve workforce development programs and funding in K-12, Community Colleges and Apprenticeship Programs (too many people coming out of the state university system with more student loan debt than employable skills).	1) My top priority is improving our health care system in Florida ... My adult daughter has autism, and ensuring that she has the care she needs and that she is entitled to is a full-time job. .... (2) Increasing public funding for schools is another priority. This is an issue that I am very passionate about because I know first-hand how a quality education can help lift people out of poverty. I grew up incredibly poor, but because I had teachers who cared about me, access to after-school programs, and resources available to me both inside and outside the classroom, I was able to succeed and make a better life for myself and my family. ...3) Raising the minimum wage is also one of my priorities. Right now, over 50 percent of Floridians are working in jobs that pay less than \$15 an hour. If we raise the minimum wage, millions of families will be able to lift themselves out of poverty.
<b>Would you support or oppose accepting federal Medicaid expansion money? Please explain how you would make health care more affordable and accessible to low-income Floridians.</b>	As Senate Appropriations Chairman, I supported a plan in 2015 to draw down federal funding to provide health insurance for low-income Floridians with a job. Ironically, under the Trump administration, CMS has recently approved similar plans for other states. The office of Economic and Demographic Research testified that the Senate plan would have created tens of thousands of health care jobs in Florida and saved the state \$500-million over 10 years. Medicaid has its problems... access is poor, reimbursement rates are low and outcomes need improvement, but the current system of funding low-income care in Florida is inefficient and the program continues to grow at an unsustainable rate, while Floridians watch their health care tax dollars go to support other states.	I would support accepting federal Medicaid expansion money. Accepting Medicaid expansion money would make health care more affordable and accessible for low-income Floridians. Florida is consistently ranked as having one of the worst health care systems in the country, and we're doomed to continue on this path if we don't accept Medicaid expansion funds.
<b>Would you support closing the gun show loophole on background checks for gun buyers? Banning assault weapons? Limiting the size of magazines?</b>	I support evidence-based legislation that keeps guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill. All licensed firearm dealers in Florida are required to conduct background checks regardless of where a transaction takes place. Only private firearm sales are unregulated. I do not support a ban on semi-automatic weapons. I don't know a lot about magazines.	I support closing the gun show loophole on background checks for gun buyers, banning assault weapons, and limiting the size of magazines. I was extremely disappointed when the Legislature did not pass more common-sense gun control measures to protect Floridians, and I will be fighting for this issue when I'm elected.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$5,117,415 (home, stocks) Liabilities: \$865,905 Income: \$368,255	Assets: \$97,000 Liabilities: \$42,021 Income: \$465,024 (jointly with husband)
<b>Personal</b>	Married to Hillsborough Circuit Judge Laurel Lee. They live in Thonotosassa and have three children: Ryan, Brandon and Faith Lee	Married to physician Betram Austin Lewis Jr. They have two children, Katherine Josephine Lewis, 24, and Remington Chloe Lewis, 21.
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$382,432 Expenditures: \$162,991	Contributions: \$18,374 Expenditures: \$17,440
<b>On the web</b>	Facebook: @TomLeeFlorida Twitter: @TomLeeFL	Facebook: www.facebook.com/KathyLewisfor2018 Twitter: twitter.com/KathyLewis2018

**About the job:** The winner of the race will serve a four-year term representing Florida Senate District 20, which covers parts of Hillsborough, Pasco and Polk counties. The job pays \$29,697 annually.

### State Senate | District 18

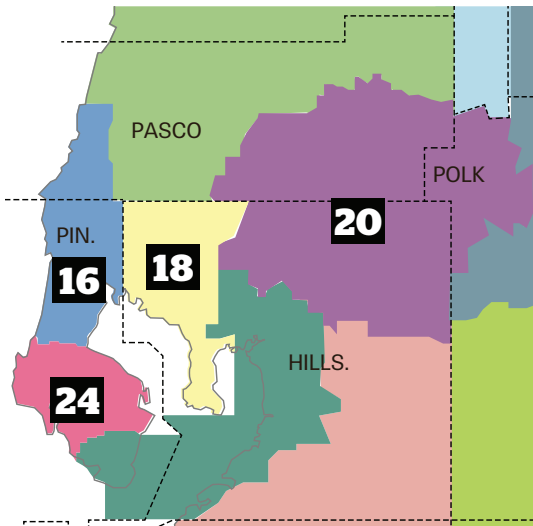
Democratic state Rep. Janet Cruz of Tampa is challenging incumbent Republican state Sen. Dana Young for Tampa's state Senate District 18 seat. The outcome could affect whether Democrats approach parity with Republicans in the state Senate.

By William March, Times Correspondent

	Janet Cruz	Dana Young
<b>Party</b>	Democrat	Republican
<b>Profession</b>	Legislator, former optician, health care executive and small business owner.	Attorney
<b>About the candidate</b>	 Janet Cruz, 62, of Tampa, was born in Ybor City and grew up near West Tampa. She became a mother at 16, but completed high school and an optician program at Hillsborough Community College and started a franchise business which she says lifted her young family out of poverty. She was elected to the state House in 2010 and re-elected since, including serving as minority leader in 2017-18. She is campaigning as an advocate for public education and working people.	 Young, 54, of South Tampa, grew up in Tallahassee and worked as a lawyer in the field of regulated industries for the Fowler White Burnett law firm in Tampa. She was elected to the Florida House in 2010, served as majority leader in the 2015-16 sessions, and was elected to the state Senate in 2016. She has served on the boards of Lowry Park Zoo, the Florida Aquarium and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence. In the Legislature, she says, she aims for "an exceptional business climate and a world class quality of life" in Florida..
<b>Education</b>	Robinson High School; Hillsborough Community College, opticianry dispensing, 1977	B.S. in political science, Florida State University, 1985; J.D. degree, University of Virginia School of Law, 1993
<b>The Florida Senate proposed rules that would address sexual harassment earlier this year, but didn't pass them. What should state lawmakers do to address sexual misconduct in the Capitol?</b>	"As House Democratic Leader, my caucus understood that I had a strict zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment. I believe that women deserve to be heard, they deserved to be believed and they deserve a safe workplace free of harassment. ... I was extremely disappointed that the Senate refused to consider the reforms passed by the House last session that would have been an excellent step in putting an end to the frat house atmosphere that has permeated Tallahassee."	"No one should be subjected to sexual harassment or misconduct in the workplace. I supported the rules proposed by the Senate last session and will work to ensure that strong protections are enacted into law next session."
<b>Some Democrats and school superintendents urged a special session to address what they called a funding shortfall for public schools. Should Florida's public schools receive more funding from the state?</b>	"Absolutely. Right now, Florida ranks in the bottom ten in per-pupil funding and teacher pay nationwide ... Our per-pupil funding continues to lag behind its pre-Recession peak. ... Our students are going to school in sweltering classrooms due to lack of AC ... are packed into portables (and) don't have a qualified teacher because of a shortage. ... We are siphoning hundreds of millions of dollars into for-profit corporations each year at the expense of our public schools. There is no doubt that we are in crisis."	"I support increased funding for our public schools and look forward to working on some new proposals for high growth districts, like Hillsborough, next session."
<b>Please describe your top three legislative priorities.</b>	1. "Increase funding for our public schools and raise teacher pay. 2. Expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act to expand access to quality, affordable health care to almost one million Floridians. 3. Enact commonsense firearm safety reforms to stop the epidemic of gun violence impacting every community in Florida.	"My first priority is the economy, so that quality jobs are available to Floridians. My second priority is ensuring Florida families have access to quality education choices suited for the individual needs of their children. My third priority is bringing common sense reforms to government regulations."
<b>Would you support or oppose accepting federal Medicaid expansion money? Please explain how you would make health care more affordable and accessible to low-income Floridians.</b>	"I fully support expanding Medicaid and voted to do so in 2015. Over 800,000 Floridians including 40,000 veterans are cruelly being denied access to quality, affordable health care due to petty partisanship from our Republican leadership. ... I will fight to restore the cuts to community health centers that have disproportionately hurt low-income and rural Floridians ... to repeal the asinine law that bars Florida from negotiating rates with insurance companies offering plans under the ACA (and oppose Medicaid work requirements)."	"Oppose. I support market-based approaches to strengthen our safety net, increase access to quality care and reduce costs. I am open to considering innovative ideas to increase access to care, such as Federal Medicaid Block Grants, to ensure that Florida could develop a program specifically tailored to our population."
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$1,408,182 (two homes, brokerage accounts, interest in two businesses, checking accounts, state pension plan, household goods). Liabilities: \$268,309 (auto loan and lease, mortgages and credit card debt) Income: \$36,760, including rental income and legislative salary.	Assets: Homes in Tampa and Tallahassee; household goods, IRA, joint investment, checking and money market accounts, college savings and prepaid tuition plans. Liabilities: Mortgages and auto loans. Income: \$101,179, investment account and legislative salary.
<b>Personal</b>	Married to physician Stephen Rifkin, four children.	Married to equity firm manager Matt Young, two children.
<b>Campaign fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$242,180 plus \$123,447 party aid Expenditures: \$227,243	Contributions: \$675,057, plus \$397,413 party aid Expenditures: \$215,176
<b>On the web</b>	Website: janetcruz2018.com Twitter: @repjanetcruz	Website: danayoung.com Twitter: @DanaYoungFL

**ABOUT THE JOB:** The winner will serve four-year terms representing state Senate District 18, which covers West Tampa, Town 'N Country and South Tampa. The salary is \$29,697 annually.

#### Florida Senate districts



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## Know Your Candidates 2018

### County Commission | District 5

Even as Donald Trump swept to victory in 2016, Democrats won the only countywide seat on the ballot in Hillsborough County. This year they are targeting two more countywide seats, including District 5 as they hope to overturn Republicans' long-held majority on the county commission. This race will pit Democratic newcomer Mariella Smith against long-time commissioner Victor Crist. Former commissioner Joe Kotvas is running as an independent. *By Christopher O'Donnell, Times Staff Writer*

	Victor Crist	Joe Kotvas	Mariella Smith
<b>Party</b>	Republican	NPA	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	County commissioner and advertising agency owner	Retired X-ray technician	Business owner
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>A commissioner since 2010, Crist, 61, is also a former state lawmaker. He is switching from District 2 to avoid term limits. Outside of politics, he is the owner and president of a local advertising agency.</p>	 <p>Kotvas, 75, is a former police officer and commissioner who was convicted following a 1983 bribery scandal. This is his second run to get back on the commission. He also ran for the school board.</p>	 <p>Smith, 64, is a fourth-generation Tampa native. She lives in Ruskin and has owned InSight Graphic Design since 1988. This is her first try at elected office.</p>
<b>Education</b>	BA, concentration and business administration, University of South Florida	High school graduate	M.A. Philosophy: Ethics, Florida State University, B.A., University of Tampa
<b>What do you consider the county's most pressing need, and how would you address it?</b>	A constitutional amendment will likely pass this year that will increase the Homestead Exemption for all Florida residents and reduce Hillsborough County revenue by tens of millions of dollars. I will continue to work to identify and cut waste, grow efficiencies while cultivating viable and acceptable funding sources.	Transportation, affordable housing, traffic, pothole repairs and public safety. On transportation, will try to bring all of our cities and the county together. Too long each has been going their own way and we need to address the problem as a united body. We need to work with our builders and contractors, plus Realtors to work together to provide affordable housing in our community. Better lighting in neighborhoods where needed, more sidewalks and working closely with our Sheriff's department will help address public safety.	We have traffic gridlock resulting from poorly managed development and uncontrolled sprawl. We need to stop making the problem worse by stopping the approvals of more sprawl. Then we have to prioritize funding for transportation infrastructure and provide a multi-modal mass transit system with greatly increased bus service, and other modalities (ex: ferries, BRT, possibly trolleys/rail where feasible) as well as safe cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. Finally, we have to guide growth into transit-oriented patterns, with more mixed use, focusing on redevelopment and in-fill.
<b>What, if anything, do you propose to address the county's transportation deficit?</b>	I fought hard to legalize ride-sharing in Hillsborough County so that companies like Uber and Lyft could expand their valuable services in our communities. Recently, I voted to commit to a 10-year transportation program focused on road improvements, safety and congestion relief projects at an estimated cost of over \$812 million without raising taxes. I support efforts of expanding mass transit in a way that would get it going sooner and at a lower cost.	This has been a problem for the county for many, many years. There is no easy answer, but we all need to work together to come up with a workable solution and we have to start somewhere, not everybody will be happy with it. For traffic and pot holes, we need to get our crews out in a timely manner to repair roads and streets. We need more stop signs and traffic lights and improve major intersections and roads so traffic can move more swiftly.	Developers must begin paying their fair share of transportation costs. Our county's mobility fees (transportation impact fees) are much lower than surrounding counties. This means our taxpayers are burdened with a greater share of transportation costs than in other counties. There's no excuse for this. We are an attractive housing market — we don't need to subsidize development this way to attract growth. We also need to bring funding for HART up to par with other metropolitan areas our size.
<b>Explain your views on allowing growth outside the Urban Service Area.</b>	The county needs to encourage growth within the Urban Service Area. Concentrating growth and redevelopment where county services and infrastructure are already available is a very smart and economical approach to new development. This strategy minimizes urban sprawl by focusing public and private investments where sufficient existing or planned services and infrastructure like roads, drainage, water, schools, libraries and first responders already exist.	We need to stick to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which has not been done in the past few years. We no longer can support massive growth outside of the Urban area without a means of transportation to be able to move the people from one point to another. Our roads are already overburdened and overcrowded. We need to put a little sanity back in our zoning and development.	Growth outside the Urban Service Area is sprawl, which is very expensive for our taxpayers. It forces us to spread our infrastructure out too far and too thin — draining our budget, overcrowding our roads and schools, and overburdening fire rescue and other services. Sprawl also wastes our transportation budget on building and widening roads, farther and farther out. It is unsustainable. Last December, the Urban Land Institute issued a report urging that we hold development inside the Urban Service Area for the next decade. We have plenty of room to accommodate growth for the foreseeable future.
<b>What can Hillsborough do to promote economic growth? Explain why you do or do not support job incentives.</b>	I believe in a cautious and careful use of job incentives that require realistic deliverables. On the County Commission, I have made the economy and job development a top priority. We have been successful in significantly increasing our economy and reducing unemployment. I supported the successful, strategic use of our Qualified Target Industries (QTI) Tax Refund Program. It has proven to be very successful at creating quality jobs. The tax refunds are contingent upon the company fulfilling its job creation target and would be paid over 20 years.	By trying to improve our transportation system, encourage businesses to expand and try to bring more businesses to the area. But without a good transportation system and better roads, economic growth will be slow. Look for clean industries to come to our community and offer incentives to get them to stay.	We must provide transit and transportation systems that get workers to their jobs quickly. We also need affordable workforce housing, close to jobs, services, and transit hubs. And we must provide an educated and well-trained workforce. To that end, a top priority should be improving our public schools and promoting job training and apprenticeships. We must set a high bar to give the minimum incentives needed, and only where they are absolutely necessary to bring good-paying jobs with good benefits that would not otherwise have come here.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: \$1,113,507 Liabilities: \$368,789 Income: \$160,029	Assets: \$186,400 Liabilities: \$115,000 Income: \$72,874	Assets: \$2,434,121 Liabilities: \$0 Income: \$43,268
<b>Personal</b>	Married to Angela Severino-Crist, daughter Sophia, 6.	Widowed; four grown children	Married to Rupert "Tres" Smith III
<b>Fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$190,215 Expenditures: \$95,197	Contributions: \$10,325 Expenditures: \$9,966	Contributions: \$99,008 Expenditures: \$54,953
<b>On the web</b>	votevictorcrist.com/	joekotvascares.com	MariellaSmith.com; Twitter: @MariellaSmith

**ABOUT THE JOB:** District 5 covers all of Hillsborough County. Commissioners are paid an annual salary of \$99,997.

### County Commission | District 7

An open seat race, Todd Marks defeated Aakash Patel in a heated primary while Kimberly Overman emerged from a crowded Democratic primary field for this countywide seat being vacated by term-limited Al Higginbotham. Green Party candidate Kim O'Connor rounds out the ballot. *By Charlie Frago, Times Staff Writer*

	Todd Marks	Kim O'Connor	Kimberly Overman
<b>Party</b>	Republican	Green	Democrat
<b>Profession</b>	Attorney	Retired attorney	President of financial advisory company
<b>About the candidate</b>	 <p>Marks, 48, ran unsuccessfully for a state house seat in 2010. The Westchase resident vows to slow sprawl outside the county's urban areas.</p>	 <p>O'Connor, 70, a retired lawyer, resigned from the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District after marijuana was found in her hotel room at a Okeechobee retreat. Protecting the county's air and water is her top priority.</p>	 <p>Overman, 60, says long-range planning and more robust transportation is crucial to keeping the county moving forward.</p>
<b>Education</b>	University of Cincinnati, BBA. George Mason School of Law	University of South Florida, BA. University of Florida, J.D.	University of Maryland, BS
<b>What do you consider the county's most pressing need, and how would you address it?</b>	A County Commission that will protect and improve our quality of life. That means protecting the more rural and suburban lifestyles outside our urban core by slowing sprawl and allowing landowners to sell density credits in more dense areas. It also means prioritizing transportation in the county budget without increasing taxes so we finally fix the traffic problem in the county.	Protecting clean water and air for all citizens of Hillsborough County. Address the challenges of climate change by having Hillsborough County join the Tampa Bay Regional compact among counties and municipalities from Manatee through Citrus communities to address clean water and air issues that affect us all including red tide and carbon emissions... Free water testing at all high schools for all citizens... We must never be Flint, Mich. with those lead contamination horrors inflicted on our children.	Our county is as large as some states and growing...by hundreds every day. With this growth comes opportunity, but only if planned for and done right. Instead, our long-standing incumbent leadership has violated our growth plans with its lack of discipline and accountability... We need leadership that sees the value of using a comprehensive working plan that innovates, serves the public good...while balancing the needs of citizens that want diverse communities and lifestyles, whether urban, suburban or rural.
<b>What, if anything, do you propose to address the county's transportation deficit?</b>	We don't have a budget problem; we have a spending problem. Millions are wasted each year on projects and programs that don't address the critical needs of our community's transportation system... We should emphasize the use of public-private partnerships as it relates to private investment opportunities involving public projects to ease the burden on the taxpayer and to put capital to work to create new jobs.	We need to think small and target solutions to the desires of our citizens...Kudos to HART for providing this service to Tampa International Airport, but I have done it several times and have never seen more than six riders... Very nice, but such a waste to send a large bus for such small ridership...Ridership needs should be addressed by local citizens more than central, seemingly out of touch, management.	The lack of implementation of innovative transportation planning, i.e. single occupancy vehicle transportation planning only, has left citizens without a car with minimal alternative means of achieving full employment, eroded economic competitiveness and reduced the county's sustainability. Eliminating sprawl policy and bad urban planning, prioritizing public transit funding and implementing complete street standards that support safe streets and effective transit service will improve utilization of tax revenues and offer an opportunity to qualify for state and federal funds where available.
<b>Explain your views on allowing growth outside the Urban Service Area</b>	I would protect the Rural Services Area to the maximum extent possible. The county's comprehensive plan entitles each community to livable areas which are guided by their own individual community plans and we should start allowing more rural areas to sell their land's density to more dense areas to preserve the rural and more suburban areas of the county.	Responsible growth must be allowed. Environmental needs should be addressed before permitting begins. New development must pay its fair share for transportation, infrastructure and school needs...The process is failing.	Our county commissioners have not held true to the land use plans to build density first...Lax discipline by our local legislators permitted unbridled sprawl...The lack of financial planning and courage to charge adequate impact fees to afford the required services to communities is seriously coming back to haunt us...I will work tirelessly to ensure development pays its fair share. I will also specifically work to increase the impact fees to reduce the deficit we now face.
<b>What can Hillsborough do to promote economic growth? Explain your position on job incentives.</b>	With our low taxes, unbeatable weather and world-class airports and seaports, we remain the place to be. We must keep our taxes low and eliminate superfluous regulations which will create economic growth in our county. We should consider permit-ready development sites, expedite permitting and reduce red tape, promote and encourage trade schools for skilled labor.	People want to come to Hillsborough County. Our growth is phenomenal. Economic growth is inevitable. We need to make sure it is sustainable with clear air, clean water, good schools, safe spaces, addressing affordable housing needs and caring for our disadvantaged, elderly and disabled.	Incentives offered to subsidize low-paying jobs is counter to the purpose of incentives unless the effort is to restore blighted and economically depressed areas...The incentive should provide more jobs and revenues...As a commissioner, I would make sure that no matter what incentives we consider, every project would need to be reviewed carefully to ensure the taxpayers are benefiting and not just the company.
<b>Assets/liabilities/income</b>	Assets: Two homes, law firm, title company, Life Insurance, Checking accounts, Whitmarsh Properties, LLC Liabilities: Vehicle leases, home mortgages Income: law firm, title company salaries	Assets: Bank account Liabilities: Mortgage Income: Social Security Disability	Assets: Home, Business, Retirement Account, Cash Asset/Notes Liabilities: Mortgage, Credit Cards Income: Businesses
<b>Personal</b>	Divorced, lives in Westchase and has three children	Single, lives in Ybor City, no children	Divorced, lives in Tampa, has two grown children
<b>Fundraising</b>	Contributions: \$175,941 Expenditures: \$158,010	Contributions: \$26,000 Expenditures: \$50	Contributions: \$77,322 Expenditures: \$64,014
<b>On the web</b>	Website: toddmarks.com Twitter: @ToddMarks	Website: None Twitter: None	Website: vote4kim.com Twitter: vote4overman

**ABOUT THE JOB:** District 7 covers the entire county. Commissioners serve four-year terms. The salary is \$99,997.