

Annual Report

2020

FROM THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION TO THE PANDEMIC,
FLORIDA TAXWATCH WAS ON THE
JOB FOR FLORIDA'S TAXPAYERS

About Florida TaxWatch

As an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit taxpayer research institute and government watchdog for more than 40 years, it is the mission of Florida TaxWatch to provide the taxpayers of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and analysis of issues related to state and local government taxation, expenditures, policies, and programs.

Florida TaxWatch works to improve the productivity and accountability of Florida government. Its research recommends productivity enhancements and explains the statewide impact of fiscal and economic policies and practices on residents and businesses.

Florida TaxWatch is supported by voluntary, tax-deductible memberships and private grants, and does not accept government funding. Memberships provide a solid, lasting foundation that has enabled Florida TaxWatch to bring about a more effective, responsive government that is more accountable to, and productive for, the residents it serves since 1979.

Table of Contents

2	Message from Chairman, Senator Pat Neal
3	Message from Chairman, U.S. Senator George S. Lemieux
4	Message from President & CEO, Dominic M. Calabro
5	Research Snapshot
9	Senior Research Fellows & Florida Council of Economic Advisors
12	Investing in Florida Taxpayers
14	Principal Leadership Awards
15	Florida Citizenship Institute
18	What Florida's Leaders Say about TaxWatch
20	TaxWatch Productivity Awards
21	State of the Taxpayer
24	Volunteer Leadership
25	Officers & Executive Committee
26	Board of Trustees
28	Selected Research
35	Treasurer's Report
36	Professional Staff



Steady, Reliable, Trustworthy

WHEN I TOOK OVER AS CHAIRMAN OF FLORIDA TAXWATCH

two years ago, I saw new political leadership across the state as a sign of exciting and potentially unpredictable change, and looked forward to how this important institution could play a strong part in that change.

Celebrating together at what was a beautiful and moving 40th Anniversary meeting, no one could have predicted what would happen just 90 days later. But while the pandemic was a surprise, the reaction and work of Florida TaxWatch was anything but. We heard from so many at The Breakers that week about the great work of this organization over the past 40 years, and it was a perfect prologue for our work in 2020.

While the state hunkered down, Florida TaxWatch got to work. Not only did our research production not slow down, the series of thoughtful, actionable reports released this year is a testament to the team's dedication to the taxpayers of Florida.

It was my goal for my tenure as Chairman to enhance the research and organizational relevance and impact of Florida TaxWatch, as well as to ensure the solid financial foundation and long-term stability of the organization, and I am proud to say that we accomplished these goals.

It has been a genuine honor and pleasure working with each and every one of you during my tenure as Chairman, and I thank you all for entrusting this great organization to my care.

Respectfully,

SENATOR PAT NEAL

Chairman of the Board of Trustees (2018-2020)

Building a Sustainable Future



WHETHER THEY REALIZE IT OR NOT, ALL FLORIDIANS OWE Senator Pat Neal a thank you. Guiding this essential organization through a once-in-a-century pandemic without missing a beat is no small task, and his leadership made that possible.

There is no question that the successful recovery of Florida's economy and workforce will be job one for all of us during my tenure as Chairman. I am thrilled to see the breadth and depth of research we have already produced and its relevance and impact thus far, and there will be more to come.

The challenge that currently faces us will require new approaches, as businesses of all types are dealing with the fallout differently, average Floridians are experiencing unforeseen circumstances, and government revenues will continue to be affected for years to come. While our traditional, evidence-based research can show the way in most cases, the engagement of our membership can help close the gap.

As Chairman, I am challenging each of our members and supporters to bring both their experiences and their colleagues into the fold to help us grow our base of support and knowledge. I am excited to get to work as your Chairman, and I look forward to what I know will be a collaborative, informative future helping our great state grow and serve each of you—our partners and taxpayers—better than ever.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George S. Lemieux".

U.S. SENATOR GEORGE S. LEMIEUX
Chairman of the Board of Trustees (2020-2022)





Taxpayers' Trusted Eyes & Ears

I CANNOT EXPRESS ENOUGH HOW MUCH I APPRECIATED seeing so many of you at The Breakers for the 40th Anniversary celebration. Spending time catching up with old friends, reliving the early days of Florida TaxWatch and seeing how far we've come was heartwarming, but it also gave me a renewed sense of perspective about where this organization has come from and how much good can come from our work.

As you know, I have always been proud of our team. For more than 40 years now, their dedication to the taxpayers, their work ethic, and their immense skill have allowed Florida TaxWatch to succeed where others may have faltered. But by any measure, the work of our staff and volunteer leaders during lockdown and in the months that have followed has been inspiring and unbelievably impactful.

From the *COVID-19 Taxpayer Task Force*, to the *Roadmap to Recovery*, to identifying the need for a Liability Shield to protect responsible businesses, your Florida TaxWatch team dug in on the recovery effort from day one. As we did with the Great Recession in early 2009, we pulled together actionable steps that the state could take to help the economy recover, get Floridians back to work, and open our businesses once again.

It is my belief that as we move further into the recovery, state lawmakers, the Governor and Cabinet members, and agency leaders will continue to look to the reports and recommendations of Florida TaxWatch as essential guidance, and Florida will emerge from this unprecedented year stronger than ever before.

Respectfully,

Dominic M. Calabro
DOMINIC M. CALABRO
President & CEO

Research Snapshot



LIKE THE GREAT DEPRESSION, THE MOON LANDING, OR SEPTEMBER 11, NO ONE WILL EVER FORGET WHAT 2020 WAS LIKE. There was not a single American (or virtually any citizen of the world) unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the stories of the past year will be told for generations. From the rapid advancements in telework, to spending more time with our families than we had ever thought possible, to learning the differences in types of protective masks, 2020 will go down as perhaps the strangest year in the past century.

The pandemic had a devastating effect on Florida's economy and the health and wellbeing of its 21 million residents. The economic impacts of COVID-19 began to manifest themselves in early March. As businesses closed, tens of thousands of Floridians lost their jobs. Florida's unemployment rate, which had remained steady at 2.8 percent prior to the pandemic had increased to 14.5 percent as of May 2020. More than 5 million reemployment assistance (unemployment insurance) claims were filed by the end of the year.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused problems for the people of Florida and their government at all levels. While the government's response has and must continue to take many forms – from public safety mandates and health interventions, to safety net support services – and been costly to public coffers, the taxpayer burdens created by the pandemic needed to be an important component that received appropriate attention.

When businesses are without customers and people are without jobs, tax burdens become amplified. For many taxpayers, paying tax bills was difficult, if not impossible. With layoffs, sick leave, and remote working impacting companies, all services were affected.

Other questions sprang up as the virus took hold. What is massive unemployment going to do to Unemployment Compensation Taxes? What about the increased costs for businesses to protect their employees and customers? What can be done to help some of the economic sectors and workers most severely impacted? How can we help the economy and Floridians bounce back?

To proactively address these issues, in close partnership with our volunteer leadership and network of subject matter experts and business partners, Florida TaxWatch began researching ways to help Florida dig out from under the inevitable rubble of what was to come. To start, the *Roadmap for a Responsible Recovery* was released, detailing immediately actionable ideas in the event that a significant budget deficit occurred in FY2020-21.

TaxWatch then formed the *COVID-19 Taxpayer Task Force* to discuss opportunities and options to help Florida recover and ease the burdens created by the pandemic on Florida taxpayers.

Made up of public policy professionals, tax and budget experts, and leaders of both small and large businesses, the Task Force was established to identify those areas of state tax policy that

could be addressed both immediately and in the long term to provide Florida's businesses—and their employees and customers—appropriate relief and assistance.

The Task Force and Florida TaxWatch recognized that there are other policy challenges that must be addressed to help the state fully recover from the pandemic (e.g., eviction and housing needs, healthcare costs, unemployment, etc.), but the Task Force was brought together to identify specific tax and revenue policy issues. The report was released over the Summer and quickly gained traction throughout statewide media and the Capitol.

Florida TaxWatch then undertook an independent analysis to better understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on each sector that makes up Florida's economy, and to offer industry-specific recommendations and options to help Florida recover and further ease the burdens created by the pandemic on Florida taxpayers.

The success of Florida's economy may hang on the decisions made in the latter half of 2020 and the start of 2021, and it is our sincere hope that the Governor, Cabinet, Legislature, state agency leadership and local officials strongly consider the recommendations put forth by Florida TaxWatch research in 2020 as a starting place to determine the best course of action on tax policy for the state moving forward.

Building Florida's Next Generation of Leaders

This year saw the graduation of the fifth class of the Florida Citizenship Institute, a multi-phase leadership training program focused on Florida's young business leaders. The Institute focuses on preparing the participants to engage with local and state government in an informed, effective manner.

Through hands-on workshops with current and former agency leaders, legislators, and the close involvement of Governor Bob Martinez and other high-profile TaxWatch volunteer leaders, participants in the program gain an understanding of the intricacies of the process and structure of government that were previously available only to those working in the process.

TaxWatch Board of Trustees members have the first opportunity to nominate participants for the Institute each year, and we assure you, your up-and-coming leaders will find the program highly worthwhile.



KURT WENNER SPEAKS IN SUPPORT OF REDUCING THE COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES TAX



SENATOR JEFF BRANDES SPEAKS TO THE CROWD AT THE STATE OF THE TAXPAYER DINNER



LAKE RAY AND TAXWATCH SENIOR ADVISOR STEVE EVANS CATCH UP AT A TAX ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Transformational Leadership

Now in its eighth year, the TaxWatch Principal Leadership Awards (PLA) Program continues to be one of the highlights of each year at Florida TaxWatch.

The PLA Program annually identifies Florida's most effective principals in at-risk K-12 public schools, recognizes and rewards their work, and promotes their transformational practices throughout the state by recognizing the actions and approaches that have made the difference. The goal of the program is to improve student performance in at-risk schools, thereby closing the achievement gap.

In 2019, through a continued partnership with the Florida Prepaid College Foundation, the program continued the Academic A+ Scholarship Program, awarding one two-year prepaid scholarship to a student in each of our winning principals' schools.

The students eligible for the scholarship are nominated by the winning principals, and are required to meet several criteria designed to ensure that a two-year scholarship would be a life-changing event for them. This year, we met more students whose success to this point is nothing short of remarkable, and we are excited to see what comes next for each and every one of them.

Each of the scholarship students experiences significant obstacles to academic success. Of all of the programs and initiatives in which Florida TaxWatch is involved, the Academic A+ Scholarship Program is one of the most rewarding and genuinely transformational on an individual level.

Thanks to the work of TaxWatch and our generous members and sponsors, students truly in need of support will have access to the kind of educational opportunities that lead to future success.

The Budget & the Budget Turkey Watch Report

Grounded in nearly four decades of expertise in the state's budgeting process, TaxWatch continued the monthly series of *Budget Watch* publications, as well as our widely-known publication, the *Budget Turkey Watch Report*. The "Turkeys" were released again this year, reinforcing the role of TaxWatch as the watchdog for spending projects that did not receive the proper amount of public scrutiny.

The only organization in the nation that releases such a report, the Budget Turkey Watch report has saved the taxpayers billions over nearly four decades, and has ruffled more than a few feathers.



The long history of Florida TaxWatch includes several employees that served the organization for many years, but none is perhaps as instantly recognizable as **MR. ROBERT E. WEISSERT**.

Famous around Tallahassee for his Converse sneakers of every conceivable color to complement his dapper sartorial choices, Robert worked his way up from a research analyst to Executive Vice President & General Counsel, spending nearly 15 years with Florida TaxWatch. Nearly every TaxWatch employee since the turn of the century has at one point worked for Robert, and his impact on the organization will be evident long into the future. Robert and his wonderful wife Katie (also a TaxWatch alum) have relocated to continue their careers outside of Florida, and on behalf of all of the Florida TaxWatch family, we wish them the very best.

Thank you, Robert, for your service and leadership

Senior Research Fellows

The Senior Research Fellows assist and advise Florida TaxWatch with its research agenda. Each Fellow is a prominent scholar or professional of national repute chosen for his or her public policy analysis and evaluation expertise in the areas of state and local government accountability, finance, and taxation.

CHAIRMAN

Dr. William Earle Klay
PROFESSOR, FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

VICE CHAIRMAN

Dr. Roger Kaufman (DEC. 1932-2020)
PROFESSOR EMERITUS, FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
.....

Dr. Frances Stokes Berry
PROFESSOR, FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Arnold A Heggstad
PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Dr. John V. Lombardi
PRESIDENT, LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Dr. Stephen O. Morrell
PROFESSOR, BARRY UNIVERSITY

Dr. Craig E. Reese
PROFESSOR, ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY

Dr. Lance Dehaven-Smith
PROFESSOR, FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Antonio "Tony" Villamil
FOUNDER, WASHINGTON ECONOMICS GROUP

Florida Council of Economic Advisors

The TaxWatch research team's work is also supported by the Council, a group of nine prominent public and private economists from around the state, which is comprised of:

CHAIRMAN

Stephen Morrell, Ph.D.
BARRY UNIVERSITY

VICE CHAIRMAN

J. Antonio Villamil, D.Sc.
ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY

MEMBERS

Robert D. Cruz, Ph.D.
MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE

David A. Denslow, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Richard K. Harper, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA

Susan A. MacManus, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Stefan C. Norrbin, Ph.D.
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Jerry D. Parrish, Ph.D.
FLORIDA CHAMBER FOUNDATION

John E. Silvia, Ph.D.
WELLS FARGO SECURITIES



GOVERNOR BOB MARTINEZ WITH DOMINIC CALABRO AND GOVERNOR BOB GRAHAM AT THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING AT THE BREAKERS



Investing in Florida Taxpayers

MANY FLORIDA COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SHOWN THEIR SUPPORT OF FLORIDA TAXPAYERS THIS YEAR by being generous contributors to Florida TaxWatch programs and events. Thank you for supporting the programs of Florida TaxWatch and making our independence possible.

If your company is committed to the taxpayers of Florida, and you want to make a difference each and every day, call us and become a partner today.





CAREERSOURCE FLORIDA PRESIDENT & CEO MICHELLE DENNARD SPEAKS AT THE RELEASE OF A FLORIDA TAXWATCH REPORT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MANUFACTURING FOR FLORIDA'S ECONOMY



DOMINIC & DEBBIE
CALABRO

STEVE & LINDA
EVANS

Principal Leadership Awards



Supporting this program can transform the lives of students and their schools.

Building on more than four decades of serving Florida's taxpayers by improving government efficiency and taxpayer value in all areas of public policy, the Principal Leadership Awards program uses data to identify Florida's most effective principals in at-risk K-12 public schools, recognizes and rewards their work, and promotes their transformational practices throughout the state, in areas where educational success can transform a community.

Unlike other awards programs, our annual winners are not nominated by colleagues, or school boards, or superintendents. They are, in fact, not nominated at all. This awards program is the nation's only data-driven principal recognition initiative.

Additionally, through this program's *Academic A+ Student Scholarship Program* (a partnership with the Florida Prepaid College Foundation), one deserving student at each winner's school receives a two-year prepaid scholarship to attend the Florida college of their choice.

2019-20 WINNERS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ms. Simran Bakshi
WAYMAN ACADEMY OF THE ARTS (DUVAL)

Mr. Anthony Marucci
SOMERSET ACADEMY VILLAGE (BROWARD)

Ms. Laura Mendicino
HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (COLLIER)

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr. Osvaldo Garcia
PASSPORT CHARTER SCHOOL (ORANGE)

Ms. Barbara Sanchez
LINCOLN-MARTI INTERNATIONAL CAMPUS (MIAMI-DADE)

Ms. Sadie Milliner-Smith
J.E.B. STUART MIDDLE SCHOOL (DUVAL)

HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. Teresa Santalo
IMATER PREPARATORY ACADEMY (MIAMI-DADE)

Mr. Stewart Hancock
LAFAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL (LAFAYETTE)

Ms. Marie Turchiaro
PALM BEACH MARITIME ACADEMY (PALM BEACH)



GOVERNOR BOB MARTINEZ WITH THE GRADUATES OF CLASS V OF THE INSTITUTE, ALONG WITH VP OF RESEARCH BOB NAVE.

Florida Citizenship Institute

Being a Florida TaxWatch Citizenship Institute graduate is more than just a line on a resumé.

Graduates learn firsthand from Florida's most influential policy leaders and business executives how state and local government policies impact their community and their business, and the most effective ways to ensure that their voices are heard and respected.

Participants learn to understand the key points, whether issues have federal, state, or local components, whether they are statutory or administrative regulations, and what the differences mean to their business.

Do you know an
up-and-coming
executive that would
be a great candidate
for the Institute?
Let us know



40th Anniversary Celebration

The Florida TaxWatch 40th Annual Meeting was the most-attended TaxWatch event in more than a decade, bringing together founding members (T. Wayne Davis, above), original staff (Babs Taff, above), and current national and state leaders (U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao and Governor Ron DeSantis, below). **Thanks to everyone who joined us at The Breakers!**





MICHELLE HILLERY FROM THE PALM BEACH FILM COMMISSION AT THE 40TH ANNUAL MEETING

TaxWatch has helped taxpayers to **BECOME BETTER INFORMED** about unnecessary government spending—and to make themselves, and government **BETTER ABLE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**

— PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

What we've got in Florida TaxWatch is an **OLYMPIC-SIZED EFFORT** to make sure that public policy in the state of Florida is **SECOND TO NONE.**

— GOVERNOR BOB MARTINEZ

HEED TAXWATCH

— MIAMI HERALD EDITORIAL HEADLINE

The state is undoubtedly more healthy and prosperous because TaxWatch has been on the job. It has been **AN HONEST WATCHDOG** in warning of abuses, **A CREDIBLE GUIDE DOG** in finding thrifty solutions to problems, and **A TIRELESS BIRD DOG** in making sure taxpayers get their money's worth.

— TAMPA TRIBUNE

This is the first time in the history of the state of Florida that **ALL THREE MAJOR CREDIT RATING AGENCIES** have given us a **“AAA” BOND RATING...** it's because of being fiscal stewards of our resources...it's also **ATTRIBUTED TO THE GOOD FOLKS AT TAXWATCH HOLDING US ACCOUNTABLE.**

— FLORIDA CFO JIMMY PATRONIS

I cannot think of a more important time to have an organization like TaxWatch...an **INTELLIGENT WATCHDOG** that is **PAYING ATTENTION TO THE DETAILS** and **HOLDING OFFICIALS ACCOUNTABLE** to taxpayers.
– ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHLEY MOODY

The contribution of Florida TaxWatch is **UNPARALLELED IN THE HISTORY OF FLORIDA GOVERNMENT**, and deserves the thanks of all the taxpayers of Florida.
– US SENATOR & GOVERNOR BOB GRAHAM

...Fortunately for the legislators, **TAXWATCH** already has done much of **THEIR WORK FOR THEM.**
– ORLANDO SENTINEL

Florida TaxWatch **NEVER FORGETS OUR TAXPAYERS**...It's so important for government to have access to **TIMELY RESEARCH TO HELP MAKE SOUND DECISIONS**...TaxWatch is helping keep taxpayers informed.
– AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER NIKKI FRIED

Florida TaxWatch is a testament to democracy in action...bringing a **VALUE-ADDED DIFFERENCE TO THE LIVES, HEALTH, AND PROSPERITY OF ALL FLORIDIANS** because of your constructive ideas and vision.

Thank you for your **UNRELENTING EFFORTS** to safeguard the long and short-term interests of the citizens of Florida.
– GOVERNOR JEB BUSH

Florida TaxWatch is **HELPING TO ENSURE THAT FLORIDA TAXPAYERS ARE WELL SERVED.**
– PRESIDENT GEORGE H. W. BUSH

Tax Watch Productivity Awards

Presented by **Kyra Solutions, Inc.**

Even though the co-founders of the program, J.E. Davis and A.D. Davis, are no longer with us, they would be proud to know that, since 1989, more than 16,000 nominations have been submitted totaling nearly \$11 billion in cost-savings, cost-avoidances, and added value to the lives of Florida's residents and visitors, including this year's total of more than \$600 million.

This year's winners come from nearly every state agency in Florida, and include everything from university professors, to transportation safety workers, to environmental engineers. Thirty-three years of this awards program has shown that Florida truly has the nation's best public employees, and we are excited to see what groundbreaking ideas and actions are still to come.

The distinguished members of the **Panel of Judges** donate their time for a thorough review and spirited discussion of the best of this year's achievements. A special thank you to this year's judges:

Dr. Matthew Duke ACCENTURE

Ms. Allison Harrell THOMAS HOWELL FERGUSON

Ms. Heidi Otway SALTERMITCHELL PR

Mr. Daniel Petronio CAPITAL CITY BANK GROUP

Ms. Zoraida Velasco FLORIDA MAKES

2019-20 WINNING AGENCIES

Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Dept. of Business and Professional Regulation
Dept. of Children and Families
Dept. of Elder Affairs
Dept. of Environmental Protection
Dept. of Financial Services (Office of the CFO)
Dept. of Juvenile Justice
Dept. of Management Services
Dept. of Corrections
Dept. of Health
Dept. of Revenue
Dept. of Transportation
Florida Atlantic University
Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Dept. of Law Enforcement
Dept. of Veterans Affairs
Florida International University
Florida State University
Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission
Guardian ad Litem Program
Judicial Administrative Commission
Office of Financial Regulation
University of Florida
Volunteer Florida

Our partners allow
us to promote &
recognize
efficiencies and
innovation among
dozens of state
agencies



CHARIMAN NEAL WITH SPEAKER-DESIGNATE PAUL RENNER AND DOMINIC CALABRO



ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHLEY MOODY SPEAKS TO THE CROWD AT THE STATE OF THE TAXPAYER DINNER

The State of the Taxpayer

Become a partner and help us keep the focus on the taxpayers of Florida

As the trusted eyes and ears of Florida taxpayers for more than 40 years, Florida TaxWatch embraces our responsibility to provide a forum for our state's elected leaders to speak directly to the interests of the taxpayers.

While the annual State of the State address and opening statements of each legislative chamber cover the accomplishments and future plans of our elected leadership, none specifically highlight the issues affecting taxpayers.

As the premier event each Session for Florida's elected leaders to discuss the issues that will impact taxpayers over the next year, the dinner presents an all-star lineup of some of Florida's top policymakers addressing a capacity crowd, ensuring that as Legislative Session begins, **the attention of Florida's leaders is where it belongs: on the taxpayers.**



DR. JERRY PARRISH, BILL TALBERT & DR. STEVEN MORRELL



REV. MATTHEW CARTER, KAREMA HARRIS, AND THE CALABROS



ANNA
UPTON

ERIC
EIKENBERG

THOMAS
FRAZER

NOAH
VALENSTEIN

AMONG THE EXPERTS AT THE 40TH ANNUAL MEETING WAS THIS STAR-PACKED PANEL ON FLORIDA'S ENVIRONMENT



MARVA BROWN JOHNSON SERVED AS THE EMCEE FOR THE STATE OF THE TAXPAYER DINNER



BELINDA
KEISER

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER BELINDA KEISER LOOKS ON AS KURT WENNER DISCUSSES A POLICY ISSUE AT THE 40TH ANNUAL MEETING



ALAN WILLIAMS AND DR. SUSAN MACMANUS CATCH UP AT THE BREAKERS



L TO R: COLIN BROWN, MICHELLE ROBINSON, KEITH KOENIG, BOB MOSS, SYD KITSON, AND ERIC SILAGY MADE FOR A FANTASTIC BUSINESS PANEL AT OUR 40TH MEETING

Volunteer Leadership

Florida TaxWatch has been fortunate over the past 40 years to have a remarkable group of volunteer leaders guide the organization.

From former Governors, to United States Senators, to leaders of both chambers of the Florida Legislature, to the state's most influential and well-known private sector leaders, few organizations can boast the leadership roster of TaxWatch.

Co-Founders

Mr. James E. Davis (1907-1993)
CO-FOUNDER, WINN-DIXIE STORES, INC.

Mr. T. Wayne Davis
TINE W. DAVIS FAMILY FOUNDATION

Mr. Mark C. Hollis (1934-2012)
PRESIDENT, PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS, INC.

Mr. George Jenkins (1907-1996)
CO-FOUNDER, PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS, INC.

Sen. Philip D. Lewis (1929-2012)
FORMER PRESIDENT, FLORIDA SENATE

Sen. Kenneth A. Plante (1939-2015)
FORMER MIN. LEADER, FLORIDA SENATE

Past Chairmen

Mr. David Mann
2016-2018

Ms. Michelle Robinson
2014-2016

Mr. John B. Zumwalt, III
2012-2014

Mr. Marshall Criser, III
2010-2012

Mr. David A. Smith
2007-2010

Mr. Michael A. Jennings
2005-2007

Mr. Barney Barnett
2003-2005

Mr. Steve Evans
2001-2003

Mr. T. O'Neal Douglas
1999-2001

Mr. Joseph P. Lacher
1997-1999

Mr. David McIntosh
1995-1997

Mr. Byron E. Hodnett
1994-1995

Mr. L. Charles Hilton, Jr.
1993-1994

Mr. Buell G. Duncan
1992-1993

Mr. Michael Zagorac, Jr.
1990-1992

Mr. T. Wayne Davis
1981-1982, 1988-1990

Mr. Tom L. Rankin
1986-1988

Sen. Philip D. Lewis
1984-1986

Sen. Kenneth A. Plante
1982-1984

Mr. Mark C. Hollis
1979-1981

2019-20 Corporate Officers



CHAIRMAN
SENATOR PAT NEAL



PRESIDENT & CEO
DOMINIC M. CALABRO



CHAIRMAN-ELECT
U.S. SEN. GEORGE S. LEMIEUX



TREASURER
PIYUSH PATEL



SECRETARY
JAMES REPP



IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN
DAVID MANN

2019-20 Executive Committee At Large

Ms. Samira Beckwith
HOPE HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Mr. Tom Hoban
KITSON & PARTNERS

Mr. Daniel Martell
FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT

Mr. Colin W. Brown
JM FAMILY ENTERPRISES, INC.

Ms. Belinda Keiser
KEISER UNIVERSITY

Governor Bob Martinez
HOLLAND & KNIGHT

Mr. David Casey
MAXIMUS

Ms. Natalie King
RSA CONSULTING

Mr. John Provenzano
PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS, INC

Ms. Claudia Davant
ADAMS STREET ADVOCATES, LLC.

Mr. David Mann*
(IMM. PAST CHAIRMAN)
SUNTRUST BANK

Ms. Michelle Robinson*
VERIZON

Mr. Steve Evans*
IBM (RET.)

*FORMER CHAIRMAN

Board of Trustees

2019-20 Members

Mr. A. Paul Anderson
PORT TAMPA BAY

Mr. Tony Argiz
MORRISON, BROWN, ARGIZ AND FARRA

Mr. Robert Bacon
EARL BACON AGENCY

Mr. Gordon Bailey
FLORIDA BLUE

Mr. Bill Barker
GANNETT NEWSPAPERS

Ms. Samira Beckwith
HOPE HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Mr. Richard Berkowitz
BERKOWITZ, POLLACK & BRANT
ADVISORS AND ACCOUNTANTS

Mr. Jeff Binkley
RYAN LLC

Mr. Joseph Boyd (DEC. 1949-2021)
BOYD & DURANT

Mr. Colin Brown
JM FAMILY ENTERPRISE, INC.

Ms. Monesia Brown
WALMART

Ms. Marva Brown-Johnson
CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Dominic M. Calabro
FLORIDA TAXWATCH

Mr. Ed Canup
CAPITAL CITY BANK GROUP

Mr. William Carlson, Jr.
TUCKER/HALL, INC.

Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Carter, II
CARTER & ASSOCIATES

Mr. David Casey
MAXIMUS

Mr. Thomas Crummy
WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Kris Dake
WELLS FARGO

Ms. Claudia Davant
ADAMS STREET ADVOCATES, LLC

Mr. Bob Dearden
FLORIDA RESTAURANT & LODGING
ASSOCIATION

Ms. Ann Duncan
SAVILLS STUDLEY, INC.

Mr. Eric Eikenberg
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION

Mr. Steve Evans
IBM (RET.)

Mr. David Faulkenberry
FRINGE BENEFITS MANAGEMENT
COMPANY

Speaker Tom Feeney
ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

Ms. Debbie Franklin
FLORIDA HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION

Mr. T. Martin Fiorentino, Jr.
THE FIORENTINO GROUP

Mr. Charles Frazier, Jr.
GATEWAY INVESTMENT PARTNERS

Mr. Jim Fogler
FLORIDA PRESS ASSOCIATION

Mr. John Fumero
NASON YEAGER GERSON HARRIS &
FUMERO, P.A.

Mr. Mauricio Gonzalez
LEAD ENGINEERING CONTRACTORS

Ms. Margy Grant
FLORIDA REALTORS

Ms. Stacy Gromatski
FLORIDA NETWORK OF YOUTH & FAMILY
SERVICES

Mr. James Harris, Jr.
STATE GOVERNMENT CONSULTING

Mr. Chris Hart
FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COURT
CLERKS & COMPTROLLERS

Mr. Bill Herrle
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES

Ms. Viann Hardy
MAXIMUS

Mr. Thomas Hoban
KITSON & PARTNERS

Mr. Winston Howell
THOMAS HOWELL FERGUSON

Mr. Fred Karlinsky
GREENBERG TRAURIG, P.A.

Ms. Belinda Keiser
KEISER UNIVERSITY

Representative Kurt Kelly
FLORIDA COALITION FOR CHILDREN

Dr. Bill Kent
TEAM HORNER

Ms. Natalie King
RSA CONSULTING

Mr. John Kirtley
STEP UP FOR STUDENTS

Mr. Michael Kohner
HILL, BARTH & KING CPA & CONSULTANTS

Lt. Governor Jeff Kotkamp
JEFF KOTTKAMP, P.A.

Ms. Karen Lake
BERKOWITZ, POLLACK & BRANT
ADVISORS AND ACCOUNTANTS

U.S. Senator George LeMieux
GUNSTER

Dr. Frederick Lippman
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Mr. Michael Maddaloni
BEALL'S INC.

Mr. Daniel Martell
FP&L

Governor Bob Martinez
HOLLAND & KNIGHT

Mr. Dave McIntosh
BLUEFIELD RANCH MITIGATION BANK

Mr. A. Ryall McMullin, Jr.
FLOWERS FOODS, INC.

Mr. Michael Minton
DEAN MEAD

Mr. Raymond Monteleone
PALADIN GLOBAL PARTNERS

Ms. Karen Moore
MOORE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Dr. Mark Moore
MEDCAN, LLC.

Mr. Peter Moore
CHEN MOORE & ASSOCIATES

Senator Pat Neal
NEAL COMMUNITIES

Ms. Cynthia O'Connell
FLORIDA PREPAID COLLEGE FOUNDATION

Mr. W. Bruce O'Donoghue
CONTROL SPECIALISTS COMPANY

Mr. Max Oligario
BANK OF AMERICA

Mr. Piyush Patel
KYRA SOLUTIONS, INC.

Mr. Ed Pozzuoli
TRIPP SCOTT

Mr. John Provenzano
PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS, INC.

Mr. David Ramba
RAMBA CONSULTING GROUP

Mr. James Repp
AVMED

Mr. H. Dean Ridings
AMERICA'S NEWSPAPERS

Ms. Michelle Robinson
VERIZON

Ms. April Salter
SALTER MITCHELL PR

Mr. Alejandro Sanchez
FLORIDA BANKERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. Scott Shalley
FLORIDA RETAIL FEDERATION

Mr. Paul Shoukry
RAYMOND JAMES & ASSOCIATES

Mr. Doug Smith
REDWIRE

Mr. John Smith
BIZPAC

Mr. Bill Talbert
GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION AND
VISITORS BUREAU

Mr. Justin Thames
FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF CPAS

Mr. John Thomas
BRANDT INFORMATION SERVICES

Ms. Dawn White
BAPTIST HEALTH SOUTH FLORIDA

Lady Dhyana Ziegler
ZCREATORS

Selected Research

Expanding Early Childhood Courts in Florida

SEPTEMBER 29, 2020

Florida TaxWatch

undertook this review of Early Childhood Courts to better understand how Early Childhood Courts can provide improved child-parent outcomes while saving taxpayer money. Florida TaxWatch is proud to have presented this report to highlight the importance of expanding Early Childhood Courts, which initiated the conversation with state policymakers in the 2021 legislative session.



Economic Commentary: The Economic Impact of a Rebounded and Revitalized Space Program on Florida's Space Coast

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

August 2020's historic

SpaceX launch does more than simply showcase human ingenuity and exploration; for residents on Florida's Space Coast, the SpaceX mission signifies an economic rebound ten years in the making. For a local economy once devastated by the Space Shuttle Program's end and the Great Recession, achievements in the private space industry have promoted a revitalized economy that continues to display an upward trajectory.



2020 Florida Taxpayers Voter Guide to the 2020 Constitutional Amendments

SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

Florida TaxWatch was honored to provide this service to the taxpayers of Florida in order to help educate voters on the issues before them on the 2020 ballot. The 2020 Voter Guide details the six amendments on the November 3, 2020 ballot, provides a TaxWatch recommendation of which way to vote, and the reasoning for each recommendation.



Amendment 2: Florida's \$15 Minimum Wage Initiative

SEPTEMBER 7, 2020

In this report, Florida TaxWatch examines the potential impacts of raising Florida's minimum hourly wage to \$15 on Florida businesses and taxpayers. Like many amendments, the increased minimum wage comes with both positive and negative impacts. While it would help lift many workers out of poverty and increase wages even for those not making minimum wage, it would also increase the cost of doing business in the state, and the cost of being a consumer in the state.





NOTHING MAY SYMBOLIZE 2020 MORE THAN THE UBIQUITOUS VIRTUAL MEETING. ABOVE, ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHLEY MOODY ADDRESSES THE 2020 ANNUAL MEETING.

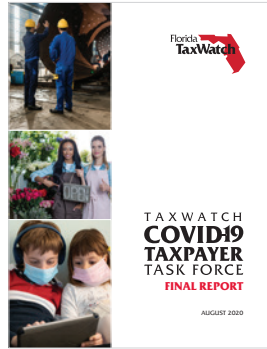


BOB NAVE LEADS A DISCUSSION AT THE 40TH ANNUAL MEETING (MATT FLOYD, BACKGROUND)

TaxWatch COVID-19 Taxpayer Task Force

AUGUST 20, 2020

Made up of public policy professionals, tax and budget experts, and leaders of both small and large businesses, the Task Force was established to identify those areas of state tax policy that could be addressed both immediately and in the long term to provide Florida's businesses—and their employees and customers—appropriate relief and assistance.



2020 Education Leadership Roundtable Summary Report

JULY 27, 2020

On May 14, 2020, Florida TaxWatch held a virtual roundtable discussion composed of nine current winners of TaxWatch's prestigious Principal Leadership Award to discuss ways to improve the overall quality of pre-K–12 education by improving the leadership qualities of our principals. The panel discussed obstacles to effective school leadership; ways to attract and retain high-quality teachers; professional development for principals; how to get the most from teachers; and principal autonomy.



The Suncoast Connector: What We Still Need to Know

JULY 20, 2020

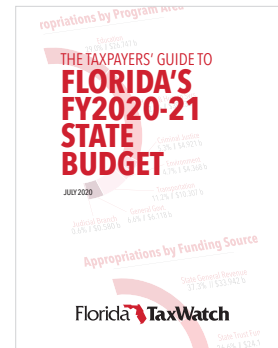
While much remains unknown about the specifics of the Suncoast Parkway (including the exact route of the road), this Florida TaxWatch report examines the potential costs and long-term financial challenges and obligations of constructing the Suncoast Connector portion of the M-CORES program. Essentially, this analysis focuses on the need for, cost of, and revenue potential from the Suncoast Connector toll road as an expansion of Florida's Turnpike System.



2020 Taxpayers Guide to the FY2020-21 Florida State Budget

JULY 8, 2020

Boiling the state budget down to a pocket-sized guide, this report gives taxpayers a helpful breakdown of each area of the state budget. As is usually the case, the 2020 budget was the largest in state history. In addition to many facts and figures explaining this year's budget, past data are also provided to put it in historical context. This annual budget pocket guide gives taxpayers the information they need to better understand where and how their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent.



Bringing Florida's Budget Back From COVID-19

A Roadmap for a Responsible Recovery

JUNE 18, 2020

As the nation recovers from one of the worst economic recessions in history, Florida continues to battle unprecedented fiscal challenges and budget shortfalls that have made business-as-usual in state government unsustainable. In response to this crisis, this report presents immediately actionable ideas relative to the FY2020-21 budget.



2020 Budget Turkey Watch Report:

An analysis of the transparency and accountability of the budget process

JUNE 11, 2020

The report promotes additional oversight and integrity in the state's budgeting process based on the principle that:

because money appropriated by the Legislature belongs to the taxpayers of Florida, the process must be transparent and accountable, and every appropriation should receive deliberation and public debate. The budget review identifies appropriations that circumvent transparency and accountability standards in public budgeting.



Telehealth in Florida: Where We Are and What is Next

MAY 20, 2020

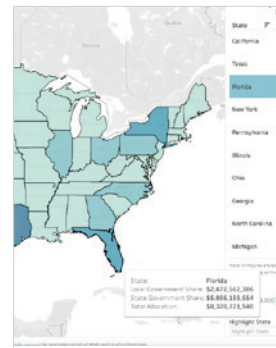
There is no shortage of licensed physicians willing to provide telehealth in Florida. Section 456.47, Florida Statutes, enacted in 2019, is the governing language for the practice of telehealth in Florida. This briefing outlines the necessary steps to advance the use of telehealth in Florida, a service which became a much more ubiquitous part of the delivery of health care in 2020.



State and Local Funding Under the CARES Act

APRIL 13, 2020

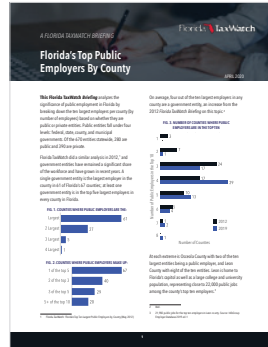
In two interactive dashboards, we explored the distribution of \$150 billion in federal aid under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to states and to qualifying local governments. Each state is allocated an amount proportional to its population size with at least \$1.25 billion guaranteed regardless of population share. In addition, local governments with populations over 500,000 can also claim up to 45 percent of the amount allocated for their population, while the other 55 percent is retained by the state to serve that same population.



Florida's Top Public Employers by County

APRIL 8, 2020

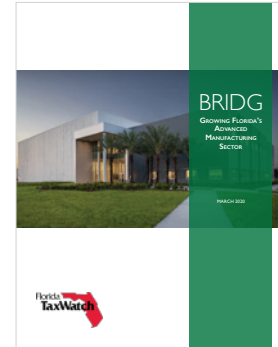
This Florida TaxWatch Briefing analyzes the significance of public employment in Florida by breaking down the ten largest employers per county (by number of employees) based on whether they are public or private entities. Public entities fall under four levels: federal, state, county, and municipal governments. Of the 670 entities statewide, 280 are public and 390 are private.



BRIDG: Growing Florida's Advanced Manufacturing Sector

MARCH 31, 2020

For the 2019-20 fiscal year, state funding for BRIDG was withheld. BRIDG has the potential to generate thousands of high-skill, high-wage jobs, with billions of dollars in total earnings and hundreds of millions of dollars in state and local tax revenues. BRIDG has the potential to establish Central Florida as a major hub, if not THE major hub, for information technology research, innovation, and manufacturing in the world. Florida TaxWatch released this report to encourage the Governor and Legislature to continue its investment in BRIDG for fiscal year 2020-21 and beyond.



2020 Florida Legislative Session Wrap-Up

MARCH 19, 2020

The bills passed by the 2020 Legislature included many recommended or supported by Florida TaxWatch research. The annual Legislative Wrap-Up discusses all these bills and more. It shows what passed and what did not—both issues supported by Florida TaxWatch research and other important bills we monitored all session long to keep our members and the public informed on our Legislative Update webpage.



An Independent Analysis of the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation (MFAR) and its Impacts on Florida's Medicaid Program

MARCH 20, 2020

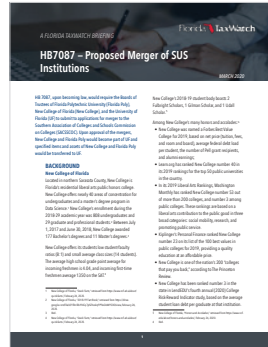
Florida TaxWatch released this independent review to assess the impacts of certain key changes proposed by MFAR that would have a far-reaching and dramatic impact on Florida's Medicaid program, Florida's safety-net providers, the 3.8 million Medicaid-eligible Floridians, and Florida taxpayers.



HB7087 — Proposed Merger of SUS Institutions

MARCH 2, 2020

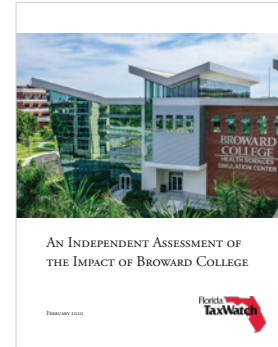
HB 7087, upon becoming law, would have required the Boards of Trustees of Florida Polytechnic University (Florida Poly), New College of Florida (New College), and the University of Florida (UF) to submit to applications for merger to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSSCO). Florida TaxWatch strongly warned against this proposed merger in this Briefing.



An Independent Assessment of the Impact of Broward College

FEBRUARY 26, 2020

Governor DeSantis signed a 2019 Executive Order establishing the goal to make Florida number 1 in the U.S. for workforce education by 2030 and to ensure that Florida students are ready for high-demand, high-wage jobs. Building a workforce in health services, transportation, education, computing, trade, utilities, and jobs that require an industry certification or license will require a sizable investment of public and private funds. In this report, TaxWatch takes a fresh look at Broward College and its role in producing Florida's workforce.



Diverting Tourist Development Tax Revenue

Florida Shouldn't "Eat Our Seed Corn" by Diverting Tourist Development Tax Revenue

FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Tourist Development Taxes (TDTs) play a vital role in Florida counties' promotion of tourism in their areas. Over the years, the Legislature has added more and more authorized uses of this revenue, diluting the funding available for tourism promotion and advertising. During the 2020 session, efforts to further expand the authorized uses are continuing. The "slippery slope" warning raised by the tourism industry and Florida TaxWatch in the past has become a reality.



An Accurate Count in the 2020 Census is Vital for Florida

Billions of Dollars are at Stake

JANUARY 24, 2020

Florida is now the third largest state in the nation with 21.5 million people and one of the fastest growing—adding 640 people a day. Florida has a history of being undercounted in the census and an undercount in this census will negatively impact the state for another ten years. This report was a significant part of the Florida TaxWatch outreach efforts on the 2020 Census, looking to *Make Every Floridian Count*.



We Can't Wait on Water

The Restoration and Protection of Florida's Water Resources is an Essential Taxpayer Investment

JANUARY 8, 2020

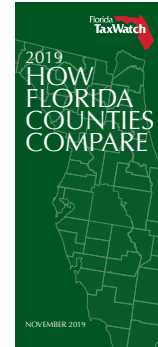
Water is perhaps Florida's most valuable resource. In addition to sustaining life, it provides many environmental, economic, and recreational benefits to the public. With more than 7,700 lakes, 10,550 miles of rivers, more than 1,000 springs, and 2,276 miles of tidal shoreline, it is also central to Florida's identity and a key reason why so many people visit the Sunshine State. This report examines the investment in water resource restoration, protection, and the potential benefits it provides.



2019 How Florida Counties Compare

DECEMBER 17, 2019

Local taxing and spending is a major part of Florida government operations. More than half of all Florida government revenue (53.1 percent) is raised at the local level, one of the highest shares in the nation. Florida's 67 county governments, more than 400 municipal governments, and approximately 1,000 independent special districts spend nearly \$80 billion annually. This report compares the magnitude and makeup of Florida local governments' fiscal operations.



From Grease & Grime to Technology & Talent

A Summary of the 2019 Florida Make More Manufacturing Summit

NOVEMBER 5, 2019

Manufacturing is the transformation of raw materials into new products and it ranges from small, home-based businesses that make products by hand to the largest, most technologically sophisticated factories and plants. This report summarizes the 2019 Make More Manufacturing Summit, and makes recommendations on the future of this sector in Florida.



Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) Report 2019

OCTOBER 9, 2019

As of 2010, there were 2.5 million Floridians in their 50s, 2.1 million Floridians in their 60s, 1.4 million Floridians in their 70s and almost 1 million Floridians in their 80s and above. There is every reason to believe that these numbers will continue to rise. Recent estimates predict that Florida's 65 and older population will represent 24.1 percent of Florida's overall population by the year 2030. As Florida's population continues to age, the elderly population will require vastly different and more costly forms of health care, such as long-term care for chronic conditions, more frequent examinations and follow-ups, and services and care for cognitive and mental impairments.



Treasurer's Report

Dear Members,

Florida TaxWatch further expanded its statewide representation of taxpayer concerns in Florida during the fiscal year that ended September 30, 2020. This widening support demonstrates the recognized quality and enhanced public value of the institution's mission and research program accomplishments. During this fiscal year, Florida TaxWatch continued to adhere to the sound fiscal standards required of such a respected research institute.


According to the year-end record of expenses, all expenditures went to prepare, conduct, publish, disseminate, and properly communicate the research program's findings, conclusions, and recommendations about Florida government tax and spending policies and practices.

No funds were expended on lobbying activities, as specifically restricted by the Institute's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

The Treasurer's Report for FY2020 demonstrates the sound management practices and proper financial controls applied by the institute which ensure effective and productive operations with direct accountability.

According to the financial statement and Treasurer's Report, total expenses were slightly less than \$2,039,081 while total revenue slightly exceeded \$2,045,642, generating a net positive for the fiscal year.*

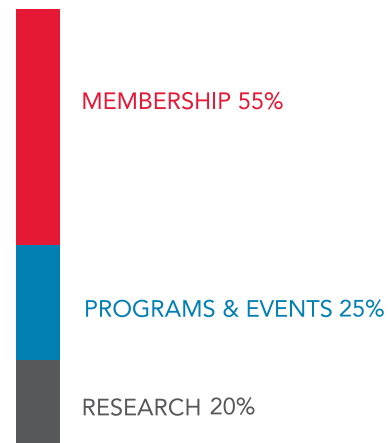
Respectfully,



Mr. Piyush Patel
Treasurer

* Unaudited

FY2020 INCOME



FY2020 EXPENSES



Professional Staff

Oct. 1, 2019 – Sept. 30, 2020



PRESIDENT & CEO
DOMINIC M. CALABRO



SENIOR ADVISOR
STEVE L. EVANS



EXEC. VICE PRES. & GEN. COUNSEL
ROBERT E. WEISSERT, ESQ.



CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
KEITH DEAN, CPA



SR. VP OF RESEARCH
KURT WENNER



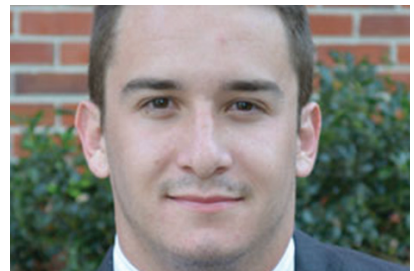
SR. VP OF RESEARCH
ROBERT G. NAVE



VP OF DEVELOPMENT
MARK DOWIS



VP OF COMMS. & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
CHRIS BARRY



VP OF DEVELOPMENT
KYLE BALTUCH



EXECUTIVE ASST. TO THE PRES. & CEO
TINA GRIER



RESEARCH ECONOMIST
JONATHAN GUARINE



ACCOUNTANT
TERRI REA



RESEARCH ANALYST
KIRBY ALLEN



DIGITAL MEDIA COORDINATOR
FABIANA FERRANTE



RESEARCH ANALYST
SHANNON BELMONT



DIGITAL PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
BAILEY O'HARA



DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE
ISOBELLE ELLIS

We Believe

You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong

You cannot help small men by tearing down big men

You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich

You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer

You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income

You cannot further the brotherhood of men by inciting class hatreds

You cannot establish security on borrowed money

You cannot establish character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence

You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves

– From the pen of Reverend William John Henry Boetcker (1873-1962)
& often attributed to Abraham Lincoln

Florida  TaxWatch

Stay Informed

 floridataxwatch.org

 [@floridataxwatch](https://www.facebook.com/floridataxwatch)

 [@floridataxwatch](https://twitter.com/floridataxwatch)

 [@fltaxwatch](https://www.youtube.com/fltaxwatch)

Florida TaxWatch
106 N. Bronough St.
Tallahassee, FL 32301

o: 850.222.5052
f: 850.222.7476

Copyright © May 2021
Florida TaxWatch
Research Institute, Inc.
All Rights Reserved