



2009 LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

Annual Report



Broward County Legislative Delegation

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Message from the Chair

Along with Vice Chair, Representative Ari Porth, and on behalf of the Broward Legislative Delegation, I am proud to present the 2009 Annual Report. The achievements noted in this report would not have been possible without the perseverance, dedication and cooperation of all of our members and their staff.

This report includes a local bill report and information regarding the Broward Delegation members' offices, phone numbers, legislative committee assignments and staff. Information regarding specific legislation sponsored by the members can be found at: www.myfloridahouse.gov and www.flsenate.gov.

The 2009 Legislative Session was the most difficult in memory. The economic downturn felt throughout the world, hit Florida especially hard because of our reliance on revenue from real estate transactions and tourism. Members of the Legislature were challenged to pass a budget with a \$6 billion budget deficit and with a mandate to hold education and healthcare as harmless as possible. The 2009-2010 final budget, as it relates to Broward County, is provided in this report. It should be noted that the Budget Report for 2009 is detailed and compares the 2009-10 appropriations with 2008-09. The Report provides figures on revenue enhancements, trust fund sweeps and federal stimulus funds. The Budget Report is not only illustrative of the difficult year for Florida and the American economy, but reflects the main focus of this legislative session.

Although the budget dominated the session, important new policies were enacted and signed into law. Property tax relief for businesses and non-homesteaded households was a positive highlight as was legislation that allows individuals to pay their property tax bills in multiple payments versus a single payment. The legislature tackled the property insurance crisis in a responsible manner by decreasing the risk on the Florida taxpayer should a catastrophic event such as a severe hurricane occur.

The Broward Legislative Delegation held public hearings throughout Broward County in order to provide a forum for local organizations and members of the public to bring their issues to the attention of our legislators. In addition, workshops were held with the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, the Broward School Board and the Broward League of Cities for presentation of its legislative issues.

Since 1995, the Broward Delegation has provided a process by which all unincorporated areas in the county would be annexed into municipalities. To further that goal, I appointed Representative Evan Jenne as chair of the Annexation Committee. Members on the committee are Senator Chris Smith, Representatives Perry Thurston and Gwyndolen Clarke-Reed. The committee will continue their purpose through the 2010 Legislative Session.

The decennial census will take place in 2010. Broward County has been instrumental in promoting and educating the community of elected officials and the public on the importance of the process and the fact that an accurate count of our citizens will result in not only federal funding for grants and local programs, but will provide data that will provide for better planned communities and information for increased economic development. In cooperation with the U.S. Census Bureau and Broward County government, I appointed the Census Committee chaired by Senator Nan Rich. Committee members are Senator Chris Smith, Representatives Perry Thurston, Gwyndolen Clarke-Reed and Hazelle Rogers. The committee met following the 2009 Legislative Session and plans to encourage delegation members to include information and promotional material for their constituents at town hall meetings.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as Chair of the Broward County Legislative Delegation this year. I want to thank my distinguished colleague, Representative Ari Porth, our Vice Chair, and the members of the Delegation for their support and confidence. In addition, I would like to thank the staff of the Delegation including our Executive Director Sandy Harris; Administrative Assistant Dee Lynch; and Delegation Counsel Eugene M. Steinfeld. Their commitment to professionalism is an asset not only to the Delegation but to the citizens of Broward County.

Sincerely,

Senator Jeremy Ring
Chair, Broward Legislative Delegation