



REV UP Florida! Questions for Candidates for '18 Florida Gubernatorial Race

1. According to a [recent report](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Florida has the third highest percentage of uninsured adults in the United States at 20.1 percent. If the state were to expand Medicaid, an estimated 384,000 people would be eligible for coverage. *As Governor, would you seek to expand Medicaid coverage in the state as prescribed in the Affordable Care Act of 2010, or through a similar federal participation initiative? Do you support or oppose proposals to block grant Medicaid spending or to convert this funding to a per-capita cap system in Florida? Why or why not?*

It will be my first priority. The refusal of Gov. Rick Scott — the man responsible for the largest Medicare fraud case in U.S. history at the time — to expand Medicaid coverage to some 600,000 to 700,000 working-class Floridians will forever be a blemish on this state. We must take immediate steps to ensure that everyone in Florida has access to quality, affordable health care.

2. As of [July 2018](#), there were 21,471 children, adults, and seniors with developmental disabilities in the state on a waitlist for approved iBudget Medicaid Waiver services. Many of these individuals have been on this waitlist for years longer than the national average of 23 months across all waivers with waiting lists. As recently as [2015](#), Florida ranked 49th out of 50 states in spending for developmental disabilities services. *As Governor, what steps would you take to eliminate the current waitlist for home and community-based services in Florida, and to emphasize the need for increased funding for individuals with developmental disabilities in the state?*

The Medicaid Waiver waiting list is inexcusable and has proven to be financially devastating to hundreds of struggling Florida families with loved ones with developmental disabilities. The last decade has been utterly disastrous with many families having to needlessly wait as long as six years — and in some cases longer — to determine their eligibility. Much to his credit, Gov. Jeb Bush — a fiscal conservative with a heart — was the last governor to make reduction of the waiting list a high priority, but that, sadly, was more than a decade ago. Florida's disabled community desperately needs a voice in Tallahassee. Drastically reducing or eliminating the Medicaid Waiver wait list will be one of the top priorities of the Richardson-Argenziano administration. Our goal is to eliminate the waiting list altogether within twelve months of taking office.

3. When the state legislature passed Senate Bill 7026 (2018) following the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the legislation included "mental health assistance allocations" to assist school districts in establishing or expanding school-based mental health care. *As Governor, how will you work to expand the provision and coordination of mental health service delivery in the state's school system*

without worsening the stigma of mental illness for the students in need of these services? How will you work to fight this stigmatization?

It is time to fully fund and expand the state's woefully inadequate mental health infrastructure. While the Republican-controlled legislature called for the establishment or expansion of mental health resources for Florida's school districts in its recent school safety legislation, it inexplicably failed to provide the funding necessary to make that worthy goal a reality. My administration will ensure that those resources are available, even if it means eliminating Gov. Scott's prized Enterprise Florida economic development program— crony capitalism at its worst. The millions of dollars saved by scrapping that expensive and ineffective public-private partnership will be redirected to our schools — and specifically to fund those mental health programs.

4. In some jurisdictions, students with disabilities are not taught the challenging curriculum available to students without disabilities. *As Governor, how would you work to ensure that students with disabilities have the same access to ambitious educational opportunities that other students have, and that incorporate developmental milestones considered comparable to their peers without disabilities?*

As governor, I will work with public school districts across the state to ensure that students with disabilities have the same access and opportunities afforded to other students without disabilities.

5. In 1992, the Sadowski Act was passed by the state legislature, creating a dedicated revenue source to fund Florida's affordable housing programs. Such monies are annually deposited in both state and local housing trust funds; however, since 2000 the state has [swept \\$2.2 billion](#) of this funding for purposes other than support for affordable housing initiatives. *As Governor, how would you act to encourage the state legislature to utilize this vital funding as intended and earmarked, and how would you respond to the state's growing affordable housing needs?*

As governor, I will veto any spending bills that takes money from the affordable housing trust funds for any purposes other than what they were intended for under the Sadowski Act.

6. Despite the protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act (the ADA), the unemployment rate of people with disabilities continues to be much higher than that of people without disabilities. *As Governor, how would you work to promote meaningful opportunities for supported employment and competitive, integrated employment of people with disabilities in the state? How would you focus these efforts towards transition-age youth with disabilities in the state's school systems?*

As the only candidate for governor who has taken the time to tour the Conklin Center for the Blind in Daytona Beach and to visit the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine, I am deeply proud to say that I'm the only gubernatorial candidate who has made disability rights a centerpiece of his campaign.

As such, my administration will strive to provide meaningful employment opportunities for our talented and under-utilized disabled community. We will also work to provide those same opportunities for younger transition-age individuals, beginning with vocational training for persons with disabilities who are still in high school and through other specially-designed programs for those disabled individuals who are in college or have recently graduated from college.

7. Americans with disabilities face many barriers to voting, including inaccessible polling places and voting equipment, difficulty getting to polling places, and poorly-informed election officials and poll workers. *As Governor, what will you do to ensure voters with disabilities have equal access to the fundamental right to vote, and that the state's voting systems and mechanisms promote and accommodate this access?*

Voting accessibility and assistance for the disabled is of utmost importance. Nobody should be denied the right to vote. Each of Florida's polling places should be wheelchair accessible, including providing ramps or elevators, if necessary. Similarly, parking lots and the walkways at those polling sites must be accessible.

Florida law currently allows every citizen to request and have assistance provided in marking their ballot or absentee ballot if such assistance is needed due to blindness, disability or inability to read or write. My administration will vigorously enforce that statute.

8. Large portions of the disability community adhere to the proverb "nothing about us, without us" as a guiding or foundational tenet of sorts. *What work have you done with disability-led organizations? What is your prior experience addressing and responding to disability issues, and how will you ensure that people with disabilities play an active role in your administration? As Governor, how would you make or approach new investments in consumer- or advocate-led organizations to further the leadership of those with disabilities and the movements for freedom and self-determination in Florida?*

I plan to name several disabled Floridians to high-profile positions in my administration.

9. Access to public transportation and adequate paratransit service coverage are key components to promoting independence and full community participation for people with disabilities. *As Governor, what would you do to expand accessible transportation options for people with disabilities, especially in rural areas of the state?*

While we intend to push for expanded public transportation throughout the state, including in our sparsely-populated rural communities, we will work diligently to also make sure that every form of public transportation in Florida will be fully accessible to our citizens with disabilities.

10. Accessible mainstream communication and information technologies, as well as assistive and adaptive technologies, allow people with disabilities to secure and maintain employment, participate in educational activities, and experience entertainment as readily as people without disabilities. *As Governor, what will you do to ensure the accessibility of government websites and other online services that are of increasingly central importance in the lives of all Floridians, so that people with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in these spaces?*

The Richardson-Argenziano administration will adopt the latest assistive and adaptive technologies available to guarantee that all of Florida's government websites and other online resources are readily available to anyone — and everyone — with a disability.