



# FIGHTING FOR FLORIDA

MID-TERM UPDATE: 2019

marco   
**RUBIO**  
US SENATOR for FLORIDA



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# Welcome Letter

Dear Friends:

Three years ago, you entrusted me to serve the great state of Florida another six years in the United States Senate. I understand Washington looks dysfunctional at times, especially with daily headlines highlighting partisan gridlock and the upcoming presidential election. But beneath it all we have also accomplished some incredible victories for Florida and for our nation.

One of my highest priorities is to ensure that my staff and I are available to help Floridians with whatever federal assistance they may need. My federal casework team helped over 9,000 Floridians with issues ranging from veterans benefits to housing. The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) recognized their efforts, awarding my office the 2019 Democracy Award for Excellence in Constituent Services. Regardless of how partisan the legislative process becomes in Washington, the dedication of our constituent services team is humbling.

Last year, after decades of delay, we began making real progress on Everglades restoration and sustainable water management in the state. Working closely with the Trump Administration, we have ensured record federal funding levels for water infrastructure and ecosystem protection projects in southern Florida. We also secured significant funding for timber recovery in Northwest Florida, ensured production of the Coast Guard's new Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC) remains in Panama City, and have set the stage for Florida's seasonal produce industry to finally begin to receive relief from unfair Mexican dumping. Not all policy changes in Washington are as high-profile, but we have been working to address problems in the state, create new opportunities, and secure a more prosperous future for Floridians.

And in a year when Congress could barely agree on anything, my **Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019** passed unanimously in the Senate and 417-1 in the U.S. House. By signing the bill into law, President Donald Trump marked one of the most consequential changes in America's relationship with the Chinese Communist Party in nearly two decades. Similarly, the comprehensive response to the crisis in Venezuela and the recognition of Interim President Juan Guaidó by the Trump Administration came, in large part, as a result of my efforts in the Senate.

As we look forward to 2020, there is much to be done. I have several bills - ranging from comprehensive security in the Middle East to reforming the federal government's emergency contracting standards - that await action by the U.S. House. Another seven have passed out of a Senate committee and await action on the Senate floor. I will also continue to use my position as chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship to advocate on behalf of our nation's more than 30 million small businesses. This year, my committee held nearly two dozen hearings and drafted a bipartisan overhaul of the **Small Business Act**, which has not been reauthorized in nearly twenty years.

I hope this report serves as a marker of what we have accomplished on behalf of Floridians this last year. As you read this, remember that my team and I work for you.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio

# Legislative Accomplishments

Over the past three years, Senator Marco Rubio has been one of the most effective and impactful lawmakers in Congress. A non-partisan analysis ranked him 4th out of 100 Senators in both 2017 and 2018 for the number of bills he wrote that became law. In 2018, that same analysis ranked Rubio 4th overall in Senate leadership and 4th in bipartisan support for his bills. Those are not just numbers - they show that Rubio is a senator who achieves real results for the people of Florida and for the nation.

## Landmark Laws

*While Senator Rubio has authored dozens of laws over the past three years, several stand out as landmark accomplishments for Florida and the nation.*

In 2016, Oklahoma Senator Jim Inhofe, the chairman of a critical Senate committee, wrote in the *Miami Herald* that his opposition to federal funding for Everglades restoration “has since changed, largely in part to [his] friend and colleague Sen. Marco Rubio.” From that point forward, Rubio used every tool at his disposal to expedite the construction of the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP). In 2018, Rubio wrote and passed the congressional authorization to construct the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Storage Reservoir as part of CEPP to reduce Lake Okeechobee discharges to coastal communities.



And as a member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Rubio secured the highest funding levels in a decade for critical Everglades restoration projects administered by the Army Corps, including breaking ground on CEPP in 2020. Audubon Florida named Rubio its 2019 Champion of the Everglades for his “strong commitment to Everglades restoration.”

In 2017, President Donald Trump signed Rubio’s **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act** into law. Rubio fought to give the VA secretary the power to fire and dismiss bad employees and to protect whistleblowers who come forward. “Credit is due to Senator Marco Rubio for championing this bill,” said Concerned Veterans for America. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) “saluted” Rubio and praised the bill for sending an “unmistakable signal to all employees that maintaining the status quo no longer works for those who have borne the battle.”



Later that year, the president signed the **Tax Cuts and Jobs Act** into law.

Thanks to Rubio’s efforts, the law expanded the size of the Child Tax Credit from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per child and for the first time made the first \$1,400 refundable against an individual’s payroll taxes. Passing pro-family policy is never easy in Washington, but as the *Miami Herald* reported, “Rubio had his own leverage to exert” in his fight for Florida’s families. A former Trump administration official observed that “there was

division in the White House” about the Child Tax Credit, but Rubio “was determined to keep fighting for that” and ultimately won. One independent analysis found that Floridians with two children would see their average income tax liability drop by 13.3 percent. Lower-income communities would benefit significantly from the expanded and newly refundable Child Tax Credit.

In 2018, Rubio authored the ***Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act***, which was signed into law by President Trump. This law strengthens and expands the scope of economic and financial sanctions imposed by the original ***Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act***, which Rubio authored in 2015. Iranian-backed Hizballah terrorists are responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Americans and pose a great threat to the United States and our allies. This new law is critical to strengthening international efforts to combat Hizballah’s terrorist and missile threats.

This year, Rubio’s ***Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act*** sent a unambiguous message to Beijing: America will lead the world in standing with the people of Hong Kong as they defend their autonomy against the Chinese Communist Party’s growing aggression. The act, which was passed with only a single dissenting vote in Congress before being signed into law by President Trump, gives the U.S. powerful new tools to deter Beijing’s attempts to expand its malign influence in Hong Kong.

Rubio also led the response to the man-made crisis in Venezuela. Passed in the year-end spending bill, the ***Venezuela Emergency Relief, Democracy Assistance, and Development (VERDAD) Act of 2019***, which he coauthored, provides \$400 million in humanitarian aid to support Venezuelan refugees and codified crucial sanctions against the corrupt Maduro regime. Earlier in the year, the *New York Times* noted that Rubio had become the “lead policy architect and de facto spokesman” for the administration’s approach to Venezuela. The *Miami Herald* dubbed it the “Rubio Doctrine.”

## SNAPSHOT: QUICK FACTS (2019)

# 79

### BILLS INTRODUCED

# 12

### BILLS OUT OF COMMITTEE

# 9

### BILLS OUT OF THE SENATE

# 9

### BILLS BECAME LAW

## In Depth: New Laws (2019)

*Senator Rubio's leadership led to the enactment of nine new laws this year that he authored and sponsored to protect families, expand opportunities for work, make our communities safer, and ensure our country flourishes.*

### **Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act (S. 1838).**

Rubio led Congress to take near-unanimous action with the passage of the **Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act**, which reaffirmed U.S. commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law at a time when Hong Kong's autonomy is under assault by interference from the Chinese government and Communist Party. The bill became a rallying cry for protesters in Hong Kong and a source of concern for Beijing. In fact, the official paper of the Communist Party called Rubio an "extremist" and "fanatic" and pondered sanctioning him for daring to stand up for human rights. His bill, which the president signed, was the most substantial policy change in the U.S.-China relationship passed by Congress in over a decade.



### **Strengthening the National Disaster Medical System Act of 2019 (S. 11).**

Signed into law as part of the **Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act**, Rubio's bill temporarily gives the secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) direct hiring authority to fill vacant positions for emergency response personnel. HHS relies upon disaster medical teams often composed

of part-time personnel who typically work two weeks a year outside of their normal employment. These teams are deployed for emergency medical responses during natural or man-made disasters. This is a critical capability that helps HHS respond to natural disasters, which all too often hit Florida. During the 2017 hurricane season, HHS exhausted its emergency response personnel teams by November, long before recovery was complete.

Also included in the **Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act**:

### **Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act (SMASH).**

Legislation that Senator Rubio championed in the 115th Congress, the SMASH Act reauthorizes critical public health tools that support states and localities in their mosquito surveillance and control efforts, especially those linked to mosquitoes that carry the Zika virus.

### **Protecting Seniors During Disasters Act.**

Senator Rubio first introduced this legislation in 2017. This bill requires HHS to have an emergency response plan to care for vulnerable populations, including seniors. This need sadly came to light after the death by homicide of a dozen residents of a Hollywood Hills nursing home.

### **Enhancing Regional Disaster Partnerships.**

This provision, which the Senator worked with committee leaders to include in light of natural disasters, will strengthen coordination and cooperation between state and regional emergency response teams, including hospitals and providers, with federal support services to provide rapid, effective care for those in need.

### **Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act of 2018 (S. 1580).**

In the summer of 2017, Rubio began building a coalition in Congress to direct America's foreign assistance programming to ensure children overseas who are displaced due to ongoing conflicts have access to a quality basic

education. Millions of people are displaced globally due to conflicts and humanitarian crises leaving children – particularly girls – vulnerable and without educational access. Education is critical to ensuring children have an opportunity to succeed and contribute to their communities.

### **Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Border Security and Disaster Relief, 2019 (S. 811).**

Key elements of Rubio’s bill to secure our southern border and provide much needed disaster relief were included in the ***Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 (H.R.2157)***. The new law included provisions that will benefit Florida’s agriculture industry, providing access to more than \$4.4 billion in funding. The bill also provides \$1.67 billion in funding for the Air Force, some of which they will use to rebuild Tyndall Air Force Base. It includes multiple provisions related to Puerto Rico, including \$600 million for disaster nutrition assistance; \$304 million in Community Development Block Grant funds; and \$5 million for a Puerto Rico Nutrition Study to assess the impact of additional benefits provided through disaster nutrition assistance.



### **Family First Transition Act (S. 107).**

In January 2018, Rubio introduced the ***State Flexibility for Family First Transitions Act*** to extend waivers for states receiving funds from Title IV-E of the ***Social Security Act*** for foster care and adoption services, including Florida. This would have maintained Florida’s funding levels and

ability to run programs that best fit the unique needs of the state, instead of facing an immediate drop in funding and adherence to new standards enacted by the 2017 ***Family First and Prevention Services Act***. Substantial portions of the Rubio bill were included in the end-of-year omnibus, which gave funding certainty to waiver states like Florida by guaranteeing at least 90 percent of prior-year funds for 2020 and at 75 percent of prior-year funds for 2021. The law also increases state flexibility by expanding the definition for new standards and created a new, \$150 million funding stream for states like Florida implementing evidence-based foster care programs.

### **Reauthorization of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) (S. 2503).**

Rubio led a bipartisan compromise to reauthorize USCIRF for three more years and require enhanced transparency and accountability of the crucially important commission. The reauthorization was signed into law as part of the ***Consolidated Domestic and International Assistance Bill (H.R. 1865)***. Rubio “has long been a champion of international religious freedom,” wrote a staffer from the non-profit Open Doors. “The USCIRF’s arduous past reauthorizations simply might not have occurred had it not been for his efforts.”

### **Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act (S. 153).**

Building on his previous efforts to support our nation’s veterans, Rubio’s bill would assist veterans re-entering the workforce by directing the National Science Foundation to encourage veterans to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). The bill would also require the Office of Science and Technology Policy to establish an interagency working group to improve veteran and spouse equity and representation in STEM fields and to develop a strategic plan to address the barriers that veterans face when re-entering the workforce. The bill passed the Senate in December unanimously, and became law in 2020.

## Snapshot: New Laws

*Senator Rubio also co-sponsored more than 15 bills that became laws in 2019:*

- Rebuilding Small Businesses After Disasters Act (S. 862)
- National POW/MIA Flag Act (S. 693)
- Christina McAuliffe Commemorative Coin Act of 2019 (S.239)
- Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act (S. 151)
- Blue Water Navy (HR299/S. 679)
- Never Forget the Heroes (H.R. 1327/S. 546)
- Veteran STEM Scholarship Improvement Act (HR 2196/S. 2011)
- HAVEN Act (H.R. 2938/S. 679)
- Hidden Figures Congressional Gold Medal Act (H.R. 1396/S. 590)
- Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commemorative Coin Act (H.R. 2423/S. 1235)
- FUTURE Act (S. 1279/H.R. 5363)
- Protect Medical Innovation Act (repeal of medical device tax created by Obamacare) (S. 692/H.R. 1865)
- The Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act (“Cadillac tax” repeal) (S.684/H.R. 1865)
- ACE Kids Act (S. 317/H.R. 1839)
- Autism CARES Act (S. 427/H.R. 1058)

## Awaiting House Action

*Additionally, Senator Rubio has several bills he authored and passed through the U.S. Senate that are awaiting action in the U.S. House of Representatives. These bills could become law in 2020.*

### **Strengthening America’s Security in the Middle East Act of 2019 (S. 1).**

The first major bill passed by the U.S. Senate in the 116th Congress, Rubio’s bipartisan measure packaged four bills from the previous Congress. This bill bolsters American and allied security in the Middle East by (1) authorizing U.S. security assistance to Israel over a 10-year period pursuant to the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding; (2) reauthorizing the **United States-Jordan**

**Defense Cooperation Act of 2015**; (3) imposing new sanctions against Syria’s Assad regime and its supporters for their egregious human rights abuses; and (4) empowering state and local governments in the United States to counter the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement’s discriminatory economic warfare against the Jewish state. It passed the Senate in February in an over-whelming, bipartisan vote of 77 to 23.

### **Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2019 (S. 178).**

Rubio’s bill represents the first serious legislative response to the continued gross human rights violations in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, including the mass internment of over one million Uyghurs. It also provides new capabilities for the U.S. Government to protect U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents from Chinese government harassment and intimidation on American soil. The bill passed the Senate in September unanimously, and the House passed a different version in December.

### **Federal Advance Contracts Enhancement Act (S. 979).**

In a continuing effort to improve emergency response, Rubio’s bill would require the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure more effective use and management of its advance contracts for goods and services. The bill requires federal preparedness actions to be coordinated with states and localities to prevent gaps in recovery efforts from occurring. The bill passed the Senate in November unanimously.



# Constituent Services

*"As a Democracy Award winner, Sen. Rubio's office is one of the best in Congress. This designation demonstrates that Sen. Rubio has made a significant commitment to being the best public servant for his constituents in Florida. Sen. Rubio and his staff are to be congratulated for not only being a model for colleagues in Congress, but for helping to restore trust and faith that our democratic institutions can work."*

*- Bradford Fitch, President and CEO of the Congressional Management Foundation*

## Award-Winning Casework Team

*Not a day goes by when Senator Rubio's constituent services team is not solving problems for the people of Florida. The nonpartisan Congressional Management Foundation recognized their tireless dedication and unparalleled compassion as a model for the rest of Congress.*

The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) recognized Senator Marco Rubio as a national leader in constituent services and a winner for the 2019 Democracy Awards. CMF recognized Rubio's focus on how his office interacts with and serves constituents, especially how it utilizes and leverages specific, methodical, and consistent processes for achieving measurable results in constituent service.



*"One of my highest priorities is to ensure that my staff and I are available to help Floridians with whatever federal assistance they may need,"* **Rubio said.** *"Regardless of how tense or partisan the legislative process becomes in Washington, the dedication of our constituent services team is humbling. I am grateful for their service and honored that the Congressional Management Foundation recognized the culture of service and compassion displayed by our teams in Florida and Washington."*

## By the Numbers

Every year, Senator Rubio's team of caseworkers helps thousands of Floridians with requests as mundane as finding the appropriate federal agency contact to as complicated as employment and travel authorizations. This year was no exception, and the team opened and closed more cases than ever before on issues ranging from Social Security and Medicare to Veterans Affairs and Immigration.

- *78 percent satisfaction rating in 2019*
- *9,000 new cases opened, with nearly 25,000 total over the past three years*



## Constituent Voices

*As impressive as the numbers are, constituent service isn't about numbers - it is about serving the people who elected Senator Rubio to represent them in Washington and helping them navigate an incredibly complex federal government.*

**"In my 47 years on God's beautiful earth I have never experienced a Congressman/woman who has put as much time and effort into connecting with their constituents."**

*- A Villages resident who came to Mobile Office Hours event requesting assistance navigating disability payments.*

**"The whole process involving the VA bureaucracy was a staggering ordeal for me and my family ... It is commonly said that politicians don't care about average Americans anymore, but Senator Rubio's office proves that there are national leaders who still care for their constituents."**

*- A Boca Raton resident who needed assistance with VA survivor benefits*

**"If it wasn't for you and your interest in resolving this issue, I would be surely dealing with a difficult situation today... I'm really thankful for the importance that you gave to my case and the positive outcome is thanks to all what you did."**

*- A Miami resident seeking assistance on an immigration issue*

**"I am so grateful for your help...This has been a constant worry and big part of feeling hopeless. I am so relieved and can't thank you enough..."**

*- A Cape Coral resident who has been working with the office on various veterans issues since 2016*

## Disaster Recovery

*In addition to securing critical funding to help local communities and industries recover from a series of devastating hurricanes, Senator Rubio also worked with state, local, and federal officials to ensure help found its way to those in desperate need.*

### Following up.

After Hurricane Michael devastated Northwest Florida in 2018, Rubio's team went door to door assisting residents. After meeting 90-year-old widow Vera Shuck, who was given just seven days' notice that she had to vacate her damaged building, the entire team pitched in to help her move from Panama City to Port St. Joe. "These people have been a Godsend to us," Mrs. Shuck told the local news. A year later, Rubio's team and airmen from Tyndall Air Force Base volunteered their time to move Mrs. Shuck back to her newly repaired Panama City apartment. "It's just indescribable. I can't really say. I'm so excited," Shuck told the local news.



### Recovery Assistance Centers.

After major disasters, Rubio's state team hosts comprehensive recovery assistance centers (RAC) to connect Floridians with the federal resources they needed to recover and rebuild. A constituent named Rachael attended a RAC in Panama City because an inspector said that her house was safe to occupy. She knew that her home had serious issues the inspector did not report and, with the help of Rubio's staff, received a second inspection. After filing an appeal, Rachael was approved for repair assistance to make her home safe and rental assistance while she was displaced during repairs.

### FEMA Clinics.

After major disasters, Rubio's state team also hosts clinics to provide constituents with access to FEMA resources and information. At one clinic in Chattahoochee, a constituent named Barbara sought help because FEMA said she did not have adequate proof she owned her home. Rubio's staff worked with Barbara to collect the necessary documentation and submit her package successfully. With her ownership verified, Barbara's home received an inspection, and she was approved for repair assistance.

## Assisting Veterans

*In 2017, Senator Rubio's Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act became law. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) "saluted" Rubio and praised the bill for sending an "unmistakable signal to all employees that maintaining the status quo no longer works for those who have borne the battle." Senator Rubio and his team continue to fight on behalf of those who served our nation.*

### Homelessness.

A homeless veteran in Orlando was denied assistance due to a bureaucratic error. The veteran contacted Rubio's office, which was able to help confirm his homeless status to the Veterans Administration, which made the housing program available. He was able to move into an apartment on Veterans Day weekend.

### Retroactive Benefits.

Richard, a military retiree and federal civilian retiree, contacted Rubio's office seeking assistance in receiving his retroactive benefits payment from the VA. Originally owed over \$40,000, Richard was denied payment because of a bureaucratic dispute between the VA and the Defense Finance and Accounting Services, as Rubio's staff found. After the staff went to work on his case, the VA sent Richard the retroactive payment of the over \$50,000 he was by then owed. "Thank you so much for resolving this issue for me," Richard wrote to the office. "I would still be in finger-pointing limbo, if not for you and your efforts."



### Mistaken Death.

Mario, a 93-year-old veteran, had his monthly VA compensation benefits suspended and over \$12,000 removed from his bank account when the VA mistakenly classified Mario as deceased. Very much alive, Mario contacted Rubio's office, which worked with the VA to restore his monthly benefits and returned the money to his account. "If it wasn't for your office, I believe we would still be waiting for this money," Mario's daughter wrote.

# Voice of Small Businesses

*As chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Senator Marco Rubio provides a critical voice in Washington for America's more than 30 million small businesses. From protecting small businesses from over-regulation and the threats posed by China to ensuring Small Business Administration (SBA) resources are available to homeowners and businesses that face hardship after hurricanes, floods, and other disasters that threaten their livelihoods, Chairman Rubio has conducted robust oversight and proposed forward-thinking policy reforms to help American entrepreneurs, including the 3.4 million small business owners in Florida.*

Chairman Rubio has used his leadership role to highlight what makes small business unique in today's modern economy. Small businesses are owned by individuals rather than by shareholders or a multinational structure, and they become ingrained in the fabric of a local community. His top priority as chairman is to pass bipartisan legislation that will expand economic opportunities for entrepreneurs and support dignified work for the nearly 60 million Americans who are employed by small businesses.

The last time the **Small Business Act** was comprehensively reauthorized, only about 40 percent of households had Internet access. Now, small businesses face geopolitical threats from countries like China, and innovation is moving faster than the bureaucracy can respond. After holding a total of eight hearings featuring 53 different expert witnesses over six months, Rubio released a bipartisan bill to modernize and enhance the **Small Business Act**.

Following an extensive review of the SBA's antiquated approach and problems, this bill works to solve these issues and addresses the needs of the 21st-century entrepreneur. The bill expands access to capital and needed patient long-term investment for high-growth and advanced manufacturing firms. It also replaces outdated export financing to help small businesses trade and compete in our global economy.

With an original plan to increase access and coordination of entrepreneurial development programs, this bill is the first of its kind to broadly enhance resources for underserved communities. It also increases federal investment in research and development for small businesses at no cost to the taxpayer. Most importantly, it gives small businesses a voice in the regulatory process, allowing Washington to hear how bureaucratic rulemaking can impact small firms.

"It is in America's national interest to invest in policies that provide modern resources to our small businesses and entrepreneurs, and, after nearly two decades, it's long overdue for Congress to take action," Rubio said.

Dozens of small business-affiliated groups praised the reauthorization. "Encouraging entrepreneurship, the growth of small businesses, and the scaling of high-potential firms requires new thinking and approaches, and many elements within the Small Business Act reflect what is needed to make the SBA more relevant and effective in these areas," the president and CEO of the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council said.

## Disaster Assistance

*Florida is no stranger to catastrophic natural disasters that wreak havoc on homes and businesses across the state. The Small Business Administration plays an important role in recovery efforts by providing low interest loans to small businesses and homeowners. Senator Rubio has used his position as chairman to seek reforms to the SBA disaster program for disaster victims to successfully recover and rebuild – a commitment that will carry forward in 2020.*

### Rebuilding Small Businesses After Disasters Act (S. 862).

The legislation, which Chairman Rubio and Senator John Kennedy (R-LA) worked together to successfully pass in Congress and get signed into law, extends the increase in collateral requirements for unsecured SBA disaster loans from \$14,000 to \$25,000 for three additional years. As such, it will continue to allow disaster victims to obtain the capital desperately needed to carry out repairs without the worry of onerous collateral requirements.

### Hurricane Michael Recovery.

Rubio held a field hearing in Panama City to hear directly from small business owners that were hit hard by Hurricane Michael in 2018. “For us, the Small Business Committee, the recommendations that came out from today – how to improve the SBA processes for small businesses – we’ll try to implement that,” Rubio said.

### Florida’s Coastal Economy.

Rubio held a field hearing in Marathon to hear directly from small business owners and local officials in Monroe County on opportunities and challenges related to Florida’s coastal economy, including the impacts Hurricane Irma had on tourism and small business operations. “As Chairman, I am committed to ensuring that we have designed programs at the federal level that are also flexible enough to take into account unique places, such as this, and the unique challenges here,” Rubio said.

### Government Reforms.

The Chairman’s **SBA Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2019** seeks to reform and streamline the SBA’s disaster programs and increase certain funding allocations that will help resource partners to provide counseling, training, and related services to promote long-term resilience following disasters.

## Florida First

*Rubio is committed to advocating for Florida’s small businesses in Washington. He has held hearings around the state highlighting issues that impact Florida’s unique businesses.*

### Liberty City.

Rubio held a field hearing to discuss how small businesses, entrepreneurs, and community stakeholders can help distressed communities achieve economic growth and foster upward mobility for low-income families. “There are significant issues of upwards mobility in South Florida, and it is my hope that we can have the ability to provide a better life for themselves and their loved ones,” Rubio said.

### Premium Cigars.

Rubio held a field hearing to give small businesses in the premium cigar industry in Tampa a voice to discuss the cumbersome regulations held on this iconic industry. “I hope to make a difference for this industry and so many other small businesses across the country, who are currently under siege by job-killing regulations.”

### America’s Space Program.

Rubio held a field hearing in Cape Canaveral to examine the role of small business innovation in America’s Space Program in the past, present, and into the future. “We need to commit ourselves to catalyzing the kind of innovation that will maintain our technological edge and leading role in space exploration,” Rubio said.

## Small Business of the Week

*As chairman, Senator Rubio had the honor of naming 25 Florida-based small businesses as U.S. Senate Small Business of the Week. These businesses have received nearly 1,700 engagements on social media.*

- Oceana Coffee of Tequesta
- Indian Pass Raw Bar of Port St. Joe
- Bailey's General Store of Sanibel Island
- Carroll Bradford Incorporated of Orlando
- Haynes Security of Miami
- JL Marine Systems, Inc. of Tampa
- Magellan Transport Logistics of Jacksonville
- Hog Technologies of Stuart
- Miami Tour Company of Miami
- Southern Craft Creamery of Marianna
- Sunshine Peanut Company of Jacksonville
- The Big Cheese of Miami
- Rising Tide Car Wash of Parkland
- GT AirInject of Jacksonville
- Royal Furniture and Design of The Keys
- Two Peas Café of La Belle
- Capital Shoe Fixery of Tallahassee
- Levatas of Palm Beach Gardens
- Rethreaded of Jacksonville
- Melao Bakery of Kissimmee
- Mother Kombucha of St. Petersburg
- Amelia Island Kayak Excursions of Fernandina Beach
- Misha's Cupcakes of Coral Springs
- Tomato Express of Kissimmee
- Granny Cantrell's Restaurant of Panama City



## Project for Strong Labor Markets and National Development

*The Project for Strong Labor Markets and National Development is a project of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship under Chairman Rubio. It exists to build a hub for policy development oriented to the institutions of dignified work, strong families, thriving communities, and a unified nation. This includes strengthening small business and entrepreneurship, which are critical components to an agenda of national renewal.*

### Made in China 2025 and the Future of American Industry.

The Project released a report that outlines the challenges posed by China's whole-of-state industrial planning to America's prosperity and productivity, including the jobs and wages of American workers and small businesses. Called "one of the clearest and most coherent statements from either party of the need for a state strategy in an era of global supply chains" by the Roosevelt Institute, the report lays out policy recommendations to strengthen the American economy against its rivals by increasing high-value, high-labor production in the United States.

### American Investment in the 21st Century.

The Project released a report on how economic growth is now more driven by finance than innovation in the production of real assets, a fundamental shift in the U.S. economy that has occurred over the last four decades. The report argues that since the 1970s, changes made by American businesses and policymakers began prioritizing high returns to investors in the short-term, rather than investment in long-term capabilities, to the detriment of both American competitiveness and the well-being of American workers. This report received widespread attention, with even critics describing it as "remarkable" and "stunning" in its attention to structural challenges in the U.S. economy.

# Working Behind the Scenes

## Strong Florida: Putting Floridians First

*Representing the third most populous state in the nation is an honor that comes with incredible responsibility. When Senator Rubio decided to serve on the appropriations committee, he did so because it empowered him to fight for Florida, but fighting for Florida goes well beyond legislating.*

### School Safety.

In 2018, Rubio helped secure the passage of the **Student, Teachers and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act**. In addition to securing full funding for that program in 2019, as well as increased funding for fiscal year 2020, he also helped usher through the passage of **School Safety Clearinghouse and Mental Health Services for Students**, which will lead to improved and expanded access to mental health services for students. For FY21, STOP School Violence is funded at \$125 million.

### Algal Blooms.

"Senator Rubio has spearheaded a number of actions that have helped to limit the impacts of the state's algal bloom epidemic," the American Conservation Coalition wrote. "Throughout his entire tenure in the U.S. Senate, Rubio has been a fierce advocate for Everglades restoration and investment in water infrastructure projects ... [He] is leading the fight to reduce the impacts of algal blooms on Florida's citizens, wildlife, and economy." Rubio continues to use his position on the Appropriations Committee to secure critical funding for research into harmful algal blooms. His **South Florida Coastal Clean Waters Act (S. 10)** is moving through the legislative process and could become law in 2020.

### Veterans.

Rubio continued fighting for our nation's veterans by introducing the bipartisan **Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act (S. 153)**, which

would assist veterans re-entering the workforce by directing the National Science Foundation to encourage veterans to study and pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The bill passed the Senate in December of 2019, the House in January of 2020, and will be signed into law by the president.



### Coral Restoration.

In 2019, Rubio proposed a bold restoration program to actively assist the recovery of Florida's coral reef system, which is the third-largest living reef on the planet. His bipartisan **Restoring Resilient Reefs Act of 2019** would give state and federal agencies the tools and resources they need to ensure Florida's coral reef tract thrives for generations to come. Rubio also secured a significant funding increase in 2019 for NOAA's Coral Reef Program, which will result in about 115,000 native corals being planted on Keys reefs in 2020. Rubio's efforts to recover our reefs include additional funds to monitor the health of coral reef ecosystems in South Florida and respond to a new, deadly coral disease.

### Daylight Saving Time.

Although Florida passed a law in 2018 that the state would stop changing clocks, it needs federal sign-off. Enter **Rubio's Sunshine Protection Act (S. 670)**, which is rapidly gaining support in Washington across the aisle and country. "A stroke of political genius, the bill would make Daylight Saving Time permanent across the country," wrote the Tampa Bay Times. "We can only hope Rubio keeps the political momentum rolling."

### **Defending Domestic Producers.**

Florida fruit and vegetable growers are fighting for survival against Mexico's unfair trade practices. Rubio re-introduced the bipartisan ***Defending Domestic Produce Production Act (S.16)*** to make it easier for Florida farmers to petition the Department of Commerce and the U.S. International Trade Commission to investigate illegal subsidies and dumping of Mexican fruits and vegetables in the U.S. market. As that bill works its way through the legislative process, Rubio also pushed the administration to take action. In September, the Department of Commerce came to an agreement with Mexican tomato growers to increase monitoring, enforcement, and anti-circumvention provisions to defend American-grown produce that should serve as a model for helping to rebalance agricultural trade with Mexico.

### **Disaster Reimbursements.**

At an event in Panama City, Florida, the president announced his administration would increase the federal-cost share from 75 percent to 90 percent. According to Politico, the announcement - which could save the state more than \$500 million - came after Rubio discussed the issue with the president aboard Air Force One.

### **Everglades Restoration.**

Audubon Florida recognized Rubio as one of the "Champions of the Everglades" for his ongoing efforts to advance the largest ecosystem restoration project in the world. "Senator Rubio led the charge in the Senate's Appropriations Committee and managed to push the bill out of committee ensuring that \$200 million for Everglades restoration remained in the Senate's version," Audubon Florida said.

### **FCI Marianna.**

Panama City's WJHG reported, "Senator [Rubio] shines spotlight on Marianna prison, brings further attention to Jackson County employment." At issue is how fast the Federal Bureau of Prisons is moving to repair and reopen the Federal Correctional Institution in Marianna, which employs nearly 300 people.

### **Judiciary.**

Since 2017, the U.S. Senate confirmed nine Florida district court judges recommended by Rubio, including Bill Jung, Roy Altman, Rudy Ruiz, Rodney Smith, Wendy Berger, Tom Barber, Kent Wetherell, Allen Winsor, and Anuraag "Raag" Singhal. The Senate also confirmed two Florida Supreme Court Justices, Barbara Lagoa and Robert Luck, to serve on the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, which covers the entirety of Florida.

### **NASA.**

Florida's highly skilled workforce and historical role in space exploration makes it a logical hub of the ever-growing commercial space industry. To ensure that growth continues, Rubio introduced the ***Contracts and Obligations Modernization for Efficient Terms of Service (COMETS) Act***. NASA Space Centers, such as Florida's Kennedy Space Center, are experiencing remarkable growth but are currently unable to include the needs of commercial entities in their procurement contracts. This legislative fix, which is included in the NASA reauthorization passed by the Senate Commerce Committee, will allow NASA to appropriately size its contracts to fill both government and commercial needs and help facilitate informed business decisions.

### **Offshore Patrol Cutter.**

The catastrophic damage from Hurricane Michael led to severe labor shortages in Northwest Florida, the home of the shipbuilder building the Coast Guard's new Offshore Patrol Cutter.



The severe labor shortages that followed jeopardized the Panama City-based shipbuilders contract, threatening thousands

of local jobs and potentially undermining America's national security. Rubio pursued legislative solutions and even held a field hearing in his capacity as chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business, eventually securing a commitment from the administration to modify the contract. The *Panama City News Herald* wrote, "Senator Marco Rubio - who has worked all year to help the shipyard recover from Hurricane Michael - hailed the announcement."

### **Timber Grants.**

Hurricane Michael completely destroyed about 347,000 acres of productive forest and severely damaged another million acres, with total losses estimated at \$1.3 billion. Underneath those numbers are thousands of lives upended. Rubio successfully pushed for the administration to create a Timber Block Grant to aid Florida's forest restoration efforts. In November, the state received \$380.7 million in block grants to cover losses of timber and irrigation infrastructure from Hurricane Michael.

## **Strong America: Global Leadership**

*With two prized committee seats - the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations - Senator Marco Rubio is well positioned to shape America's foreign and national security policy. Over the past three years, Rubio has provided steady foreign policy leadership, working closely with the administration and pushing the administration when he must.*

### **Bahamas.**

After Hurricane Dorian wreaked havoc on the islands of the Bahamas, Rubio worked with the administration to secure critical aid. He also worked closely with Shevrin Jones, a Democratic member of the Florida House of Representatives, who has family on the islands. As Rubio stated in his op-ed for the *Miami Herald*, "Bahamians are our friends, neighbors, and family members."



## China.

As a prominent and leading voice against the malign activity of the Chinese Communist Party, this year Rubio led a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers in efforts to counter the threat posed by the Chinese government and rebalance the U.S. relationship with Beijing. In addition to authoring the new **Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act**, Rubio's work focused equally on national security, economic security, and the promotion of human rights. Rubio introduced bipartisan legislation to combat the economic and national security threat posed by ZTE and Huawei, malign state-run and state-directed Chinese telecom companies that undermine foreign competition by stealing trade secrets and intellectual property. In addition to his legislation that would help address the Uyghur crisis, Rubio also introduced new Tibet legislation to protect the fundamental rights of Tibetan people in the face of Chinese repression.

As the financial relationship between Beijing and the United States comes under further scrutiny, Rubio led a bipartisan group of senators in introducing the **EQUITABLE Act** to ban Chinese and other foreign firms that flout our transparency and disclosure laws from U.S. stock exchanges. Additionally, Rubio led a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers in introducing the **Taxpayers and Savers Protection Act** to prevent unelected government bureaucrats from funneling the federal retirement savings of U.S. service members and federal employees to the Chinese Communist Party.

As the Chinese government and Communist Party aggressively subsidize and invest in their own economy at our expense, Rubio has been at the forefront of ensuring our policies restore the competitiveness of critical American industries for the 21st century. Rubio's **RE-Coop 21st Century Manufacturing Act** would combat China's control over the global rare earth value chain and be a crucial ingredient for the resurgence of America's advanced manufacturing sector.

## Cuba and Nicaragua.

As the *Miami Herald* wrote, "Marco Rubio has the president's ear on Latin America." Over the last three years, that has led to significant changes and strong leadership in America's policy toward Cuba and Nicaragua. In 2019, the administration increased sanctions on various actors within the Cuban and Nicaraguan regimes who continue to violate human rights and undermine democratic order.

## Foreign Leaders.

Over the past year, Rubio met with dozens of senior foreign leaders, including Colombia's President Iván Duque, First Lady of Venezuela Fabiana Rosales, Vice President of Brazil Hamilton Mourão, Jordan's King Abdullah, Haiti's President Jovenel Moïse, Somalia's Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre, El Salvador's President-elect Nayib Bukele, Panama's Former President Juan Carlos Varela, Costa Rican President Carlo Alvarado, and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.



## Israel.

Writing in the *New York Times*, Rubio made clear that "[t]he goal of the [Boycott, Divest, Sanction] movement is to eliminate any Jewish state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea." His **Strengthening America's Security in the Middle East Act of 2019 (S. 1)**, which passed the Senate in an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 77 to 23, would reauthorize U.S. security

assistance to Israel and empower state and local governments in the United States to counter the anti-Israel BDS movement's discriminatory economic warfare against the Jewish state. In addition, Rubio worked as a co-sponsor on the **Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019 (S. 1102)**. Signed into law as part of the **Consolidated Domestic and International Assistance Bill (H.R. 1865)**, the bill strengthens U.S. security and energy relationships in the Eastern Mediterranean region, especially with Israel, Cyprus, and Greece.

### Human Rights.

As co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Rubio highlights the country's egregious human rights abuses, including the detention of as many as one million ethnic minority Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. He has called attention to political crackdowns in Russia, China, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, highlighted abuses like Saudi Arabia's sanctioned killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi as well as ongoing women's rights abuses in the country, and called out multinational companies that frequently help governments orchestrate crackdowns. He also works on individual cases. As *USA Today* reported, Rubio "directs his office to advocate for some [victims] using back-channel communications with the State Department." He also remains a champion for the fundamental rights of women and girls around the world, and in June of this year he chaired a subcommittee hearing on women's roles in peace and security to ensure women's meaningful participation in their societies.

### Russia.

Rubio continued his outspoken criticism of Russia's meddling in America's elections, just as he did in 2016. His bipartisan **Defending Elections from Threats by Establishing Redlines Act (DETER Act)** would send a clear and powerful message to Russia and any other foreign actors seeking to disrupt our elections. Some elements were included in the annual defense bill, but Rubio will continue pushing his larger bill, which the Washington Post calls

a "smart strategy" because it would force any foreign nation "that considers taking aggressive action against another [to weigh] the potential costs against the gains."

### Venezuela.

In perhaps no element of American foreign policy has Rubio's influence been more visible than Venezuela. McClatchy published a piece titled, "Trump says he listens to Marco Rubio's guidance on Venezuela." The *Miami Herald* ran a piece headlined, "The Rubio doctrine: U.S. recognition of new Venezuelan leader is Florida senator's work." And even the *New York Times* ran a piece headlined, "On Venezuela, Rubio Assumes U.S. Role of Ouster in Chief."

The international effort to restore democracy and stability in Venezuela is ongoing, but Rubio also served as a co-author on the **Venezuela Emergency Relief, Democracy Assistance, and Development (VERDAD) Act of 2019**, which provides \$400 million in humanitarian aid to support Venezuelan nationals fleeing their homeland, codifies crucial sanctions against the corrupt Maduro regime, and advances the coordinated international effort for a post-Maduro Venezuela. In addition, Rubio co-authored legislation that seeks to grant Temporary Protected Status for eligible Venezuelans fleeing their homeland's humanitarian crisis and to provide support for migration systems in nations surrounding Venezuela.



## Strong Future: New American Century

*Sweeping policy changes and landmark laws do not happen overnight, but are often years in the making. That is why Senator Rubio is laying the groundwork for the next wave of policy victories in a series of high-profile speeches, essays, and detailed reports. As the Washington Post noted, the emerging agenda comes “more from the perspective of a blue-collar worker than a white-collar consumer.”*

In 2019, Rubio laid out two key planks that will be essential to the success of a new American Century: **Common-Good Capitalism** and **American Industrial Policy**. Both are built on timeless principles recognizable to any American: the dignity of work, the family as the fundamental institution of society, the importance of strong local communities, and a love for and pride in the greatness of America and its ideals.

### Common-Good Capitalism.

In a widely covered speech at Catholic University of America, Rubio made the case for what he calls **common-good capitalism**. This speech, which *Forbes* described as “reveal[ing] a refreshing degree of independent thinking,” built off a 2018 essay reflecting on the importance of the dignity of work, noting the growing failure of our economy to invest its profits back in American workers and firms.



In the speech, Rubio argued for a system of free enterprise in which American workers fulfill their obligation to work and enjoy the benefits of their labor, and in which American businesses enjoy their right to make a profit and fulfill their obligation to reinvest enough of those profits back into their own firms and workers. In addition to doubling the per-child tax credit in the **2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act**, Rubio introduced the **New Parents Act** to create an option for new parents to pull forward a portion of their Social Security benefits to help pay for paid parental leave.

### American Industrial Policy.

In a speech at the National Defense University, Rubio called for a revitalization of **American Industrial Policy** to maintain the technological and industrial superiority necessary to defend our interests and ensure that working Americans have access to dignified and productive work. As China seeks to supplant America, Rubio made the case that American policymakers must pursue policies that make our economy more productive by identifying the critical value of specific industrial sectors and spurring investment in them.



Rubio proposed making permanent the immediate tax write-off for business' capital expenditures, known as full expensing, begun by the **Tax Cuts and Jobs Act** and reducing tax advantages for stock buybacks in order to encourage investment in our nation's physical capital stock. Rubio also received the 2019 American Trade Hero Award from the Coalition for a Prosperous America.