



# FIGHTING FOR FLORIDA

LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT  
2022



THE OFFICE OF  
U.S. SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

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This Past Year

# WELCOME LETTER

Dear friends:

Though the past year was extraordinarily difficult, Florida remains a beacon of hope for our nation.

The state that led America during the pandemic, by quickly reopening society and the economy, responded to disaster with the same resilience and common sense after the unimaginable damage inflicted by Hurricane Ian. Friends, neighbors, and complete strangers alike rallied to help those in need. This is the Florida I know and love, and it is why I am honored to represent you in the United States Senate.

As your senator, one of my highest priorities is ensuring my staff and I are available to provide Floridians with whatever federal assistance we can. Over the course of 2022, my federal casework team helped 20,000 Floridians. They helped seniors to work through bureaucracy, ensuring they received the Social Security and Medicare benefits they paid into for decades. They helped veterans secure the benefits they earned. They helped the unemployed and homeless. They continue to assist Floridians impacted by hurricanes, including thousands of residents who registered for FEMA aid after Hurricane Ian. The list goes on, because, ultimately, that is what public service is all about—helping constituents.

Despite a divided government and insanity in Washington, my staff and I also enacted new laws to help Floridians and the country as a whole.

After nearly 18 months of work, my legislation to provide health care benefits to veterans suffering from toxic burn pit exposure finally became law. Veterans can now access the resources they desperately need and selflessly earned.

We also made real progress on environmental protections when President Biden signed my South Florida Clean Coastal Waters Act into law.

In total, even with Democrats controlling the House, the Senate, and the White House, I wrote 13 new laws in 2022 alone. Such success requires setting aside the partisan nonsense that dominates the daily news cycle and focusing on what actually matters to the people of Florida and our nation.

I am humbled by the opportunity to serve the people of Florida, and I look forward to another term of service. As you read this report, and reflect on what has been accomplished on behalf of Floridians over the past six years, remember that my team and I work for you.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio

# GETTING THINGS DONE

*For the past six years, Senator Marco Rubio has been one of the most effective and impactful lawmakers in Congress. The Center for Effective Lawmaking (CEL), an initiative of the University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University, ranked Rubio as the most effective Republican senator. Rubio is a leader who achieves real results for the people of Florida and the nation.*







# In Depth: NEW LAWS

*Despite the partisanship and insanity in Washington this year, Senator Rubio continued to get things done for the people of Florida and the nation.*

## **Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act**

For decades, veterans have been suffering from exposure to toxic burn pits while serving overseas. In 2020, Rubio began working with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) to do what should have been done a long time ago—streamline the process for veterans to obtain benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Rubio was “a driving force” behind the legislation, which became law in 2022.

## **South Florida Clean Coastal Waters Act**

Algal blooms do serious harm to Florida's ecosystems and the communities that rely on them. In 2021, Rubio introduced a bill requiring the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science to assemble a report on the causes of those blooms and how to counteract them. This year, with the help of Representative Brian Mast (R-FL), Congress passed it, and President Biden signed Rubio's bill into law. It's proof that Rubio truly is the Everglades' “most vigorous champion in the Senate.”

## **Luke and Alex School Safety Act**

In 2018, Senator Rubio worked with Parkland families to establish a central clearinghouse repository for school safety. The clearinghouse became a reality 18 months later when the Trump Administration created a Federal Clearinghouse on School Safety Best Practices. In 2022, Congress permanently authorized the clearinghouse by passing Rubio's Luke and Alex School Safety Act. The new Federal Clearinghouse on School Safety will make a meaningful difference as schools continue to make improvements to protect America's children.

## **USCIRF Reauthorization**

Senator Rubio believes the freedom to worship God is a sacred right of all men and women, not just Americans. That's why he led the charge to reauthorize the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a bipartisan body that monitors and exposes religious freedom infringements across the globe. Thanks to Rubio's efforts, USCIRF will continue its mission for another two years.

## **Protecting Critical Ecosystems and Military Readiness in Florida Act**

Senator Rubio included language in the annual defense authorization bill to prohibit civil aviation operations at Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB) in Homestead, Florida. Without Rubio's intervention, military readiness could have been reduced, and efforts to conserve and restore critical habitat near HARB and Biscayne Bay would have been impeded. In this effort, Rubio worked closely with Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, who also opposed expanding the urban development boundary in southern Miami-Dade County.

## **Restoring Resilient Reefs Act**

In 2019, Senator Rubio toured the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to see the devastated condition of Florida's coral reefs. He promised a comprehensive response and introduced legislation to modernize and strengthen America's coral reef program. The new law will give innovative tools and resources to the non-federal partners who are closest to the crisis in American coral reefs—states, territories, and local communities.

## **Strengthening Supply Chains for Servicemembers and Security Act**

Following a report that America's military was over-reliant on foreign-made pharmaceuticals, Senator Rubio committed to rebuilding our medical manufacturing base. Unfortunately, the federal government did not even have a plan to address the vulnerability. Rubio's new law requires government agencies to develop a comprehensive plan to address the supply chain weaknesses that threaten to undermine military readiness and national security.

## **Non-Recognition of Russian Annexation of Ukrainian Territory Act**

Senator Rubio shaped U.S. foreign policy by passing a new law to ensure America would not recognize any Russian claim of sovereignty over any portion of the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. The law also prohibits any federal department or agency from extending any assistance that implies recognition of Russian claims over Ukraine.

## **SBA Cyber Awareness Act**

When he was chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Senator Rubio introduced legislation requiring officials at the Small Business Administration (SBA) to develop a cyber-defense strategy, examine their IT system components' country of origin, and report on breaches and threats. The pandemic soon derailed normal legislative activity, but Rubio continued to push, and that bill is now law.

## **Small Business Cyber Training Act**

The new law requires the SBA to establish a training program for small business development centers (SBDCs) to prepare counselors in cyber planning assistance. Specifically, the new law requires SBDCs to have employees certified in cyber strategy counseling for small businesses.

## **Cutting Rampant Access to Crack Kits (CRACK) Act**

In 2022, Senator Rubio identified a major problem with the Biden Administration's response to drug abuse. The administration was using taxpayer dollars to send crack pipes to people suffering from addiction. Thanks to Rubio's efforts, the year-end funding bill contained language prohibiting funds from directly or indirectly purchasing, supplying, or distributing crack pipes or similar drug paraphernalia. It is just common sense, but it only happened because Rubio saw a problem and took action.

### **Free Veterans from Fees Act**

Veterans should not have to pay fees to hold special events at memorials that are meant to honor them. That is why Senator Rubio led his colleagues in writing a new law to waive administrative fees associated with such events. Veterans have sacrificed so much to serve our country. This is the least we can do to thank them for their service.

### **Andrew K. Baker Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic**

In 2020, Senators Rubio and Rick Scott (R-FL) led an effort to name the new Clay County VA Clinic in Middleburg, Florida after U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Andrew Kenneth Baker. Chief Baker served his country honorably for 17 years before a tragic training accident that took his life. His legacy of bravery and service to our country is now etched in stone at the new VA clinic.

### **Judge Hatchett Courthouse**

In 2021, Senators Rubio and Scott began a bipartisan push to name a Tallahassee courthouse after Judge Joseph Woodrow Hatchett. Judge Hatchett, who died that year, was a veteran of the U.S. Army, the first African American Florida Supreme Court justice, and an all-around model of public service. This year, Rubio and Scott's bill passed both houses of Congress. Judge Hatchett's memory is now enshrined in federal law.



# LANDMARK LAWS

*While Senator Rubio has authored dozens of laws over the past six years, several stand out as truly transformative for Florida and the nation.*

### **Paycheck Protection Program**

When government lockdowns in mid-2020 shuttered the American economy, Senator Rubio sprang into action to save Main Street. With bipartisan colleagues, he developed the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), an unprecedented and historic forgivable loan program that kept small businesses alive and employees on payroll. PPP supported millions of jobs and pumped \$50 billion into Florida's economy alone. One expert called it "the single most effective fiscal policy ever undertaken" by the U.S. government.



## **VA Accountability Act**

In 2017, Senator Rubio's Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act cleared away years of corruption and neglect in the VA by empowering the VA Secretary to fire bad employees and protect whistleblowers. The Veterans of Foreign Wars "saluted" Rubio for sending "an unmistakable signal to all [VA] employees" that the old status quo is unacceptable. Now, Florida veterans are saying, "It's gotten a lot better...for all of us."

## **Child Tax Credit**

Senator Rubio believes families are the bedrock of society and should keep more of their hard-earned income. In 2017, he doubled the size of the federal child tax credit for working families, benefiting families in every tax bracket but the very top. This year, as part of his Providing for Life framework, Rubio proposed expanding the credit again. In his own words, "We need to adopt pro-life policies that support families, rather than destroy them."

## **Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act**

No one has done more to change America's relationship with Communist China than Senator Rubio, who has been sanctioned by Beijing not once, but twice. Last year, Rubio overcame opposition from the Biden Administration and corporate America to pass his Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. The law ensures goods made by slaves in China cannot be sold in the United States. With rigorous implementation, the law will force companies to move supply chains out of China.

## **Everglades Restoration**

Senator Rubio has long been the Everglades' "most vigorous champion in the Senate." When Rubio secured passage of the Central Everglades Planning Project, he greenlit new efforts to restore the national park's vital ecosystem. Last year, those efforts paid off with the completion of the C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area in Martin County. This year, Rubio's South Florida Clean Coastal Waters Act became law, marking yet another milestone in Everglades restoration.







# Snapshot: 117TH CONGRESS LAWS

*In his second term, Senator Rubio's leadership and ability to work across the aisle led dozens of his bills to become law, including 19 new laws over the past two years alone.*

1. Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (Public Law 117-78)
2. South Florida Clean Coastal Waters Act (Public Law 117-144)
3. Seminole Lands (Public Law 117-65)
4. COVID Federal Contractor extension (enacted in Public Law 117-2)
5. Secure Equipment Act (Public Law 117-55)
6. Extension of National Flood Insurance Program (enacted in Public Law 117-43)
7. Iron Dome Supplemental (enacted in Public law 117-103)
8. Judge Hatchett Courthouse renaming (enacted in Public Law 117-159)
9. United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act (Public Law 117-181)
10. Luke and Alex School Safety Act (enacted in Public Law 117-159)
11. Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-168)
12. Andrew K. Baker Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic naming (enacted in Public Law 117-220)
13. SBA Cyber Awareness Act (Public Law 117-259)
14. Protecting Critical Ecosystems and Military Readiness in Florida Act (enacted in Public Law 117-263)
15. Restoring Resilient Reefs Act (enacted in Public Law 117-263)
16. Strengthening Supply Chains for Servicemembers and Security Act (enacted in Public Law 117-263)
17. Non-Recognition of Russian Annexation of Ukrainian Territory Act (enacted in Public Law 117-263)
18. Small Business Cyber Training Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-319)
19. Cutting Rampant Access to Crack Kits (CRACK) Act (enacted in Public Law 117-328)
20. Free Veterans from Fees Act (enacted in Public Law 117-328)



# CONSTITUENT SERVICES

*Not a day goes by when Senator Marco Rubio's constituent services team members are not solving problems for the people of Florida. That is why the nonpartisan Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) recognized their tireless dedication and unparalleled compassion as a model for the rest of Congress. "As a Democracy Award winner," CMF said, "Sen. Rubio has made a significant commitment to being the best public servant for his constituents in Florida" and is "helping to restore trust and faith that our democratic institutions can work."*

## Hurricane Ian

When Hurricane Ian made landfall in Florida, it inflicted roughly \$50 billion in property damage and devastated entire communities across many counties.

Once the storm passed, Rubio's team went into action to help Floridians who had been affected. In partnership with federal and state agencies, charities, and businesses, staff distributed food, water, and other resources to people in need at events hosted in Fort Myers and Port Charlotte. Later, Rubio staff hosted "FEMA Registration Assistance Events" in counties across the state to help individual Floridians acquire appropriate aid from the federal government.

Altogether, Rubio's team has assisted thousands of people with issues related to Hurricane Ian.

## By the Numbers

Every year, Senator Rubio's team of caseworkers helps tens of thousands of Floridians with requests as mundane as finding the appropriate federal agency contact and cases as complicated as employment and travel authorizations.

During the past 6 years, the team has assisted 82,300 Floridians. In 2022, constituent services opened and closed more than 20,500 new cases. The case subjects ranged from Social Security and Medicare to veterans' affairs and passport services. Rubio's team members received a satisfaction rating of 87 percent from constituents, demonstrating their effectiveness and hard work.

## Constituent Voices

As impressive as the statistics 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. Here is what real people had to say about the Rubio team's constituent services:

"[T]hank you from the bottom of my heart for investing the time and energy to helping with this. I'm so appreciative! This kindness will not be forgotten...."

- Adrienne, who needed help getting a passport

"All the exams were quickly scheduled and completed after your office reached out to the VA. I sincerely appreciate your assistance, which clearly got things back on schedule!"

- Matthew, who needed compensation on a VA claim

"[I]t fills my heart with joy and happiness that you and your amazing team were able to help me and my family through our immigration process.... There are not enough words I can say to express how I feel...."

- Marisa

"Thank you very much...for all your efforts in assisting me with my tax return [and] thank you for serving all your constituents with honor and integrity."

- Neil

"[W]ithout you, I probably never would have received a response nor apology from the VA.... Thank you very much."

- Francetta

"[M]y wife's immigrant visa has been issued and she is now with me in the great state of Florida. I want to thank you tremendously for helping us. You have lessened the burden and removed hardship."

- Mohammad

"Thank you for tracking down this payment. We spent 1.5 years trying to ascertain where it was [and sent] countless calls, email, letters to the IRS all to no avail. You were able to track down this payment in just 3 short weeks!"

- Marie, who was searching for an outstanding stimulus check

"Thank you for all your efforts.... Haider's visa was finally approved and he is on his way to the US to finally hold his son before his first birthday...!"

- Madina, Haider's wife

"We have been in the United States since 2012 and never received so much care, help, assistance, common sense, and cooperation."

- Javid and Laman, who needed help with refugee status