

My positions:

Policy issue 1: Environmental regulations: I believe that environmental regulations and protections are critical, especially in Florida, which is so close to sea level. We need to invest in coastal infrastructure to combat sea level rise. We need to protect our waterways from pollution. And most importantly, we need to combat the carbon emissions of corporations and fossil fuel industries that are damaging our state and our world. Corporations and fossil fuel industries have an outsized effect on the environment both in terms of pollution and carbon emissions, and must be held accountable.

Our sewage systems also urgently need repair. Our canals are used for recreation and transport, and many people have backyards opening right onto them. As both a rower who spent four years on those canals through high school, and a former Waterkeeper Miami intern, I know intimately that sewage dumping into those canals is a real and pressing problem.

Policy issue 2: School gun safety: I believe that school shootings are an important problem because children should not go to school scared. The fear of being shot in your classroom, the idle thoughts in class about “what would I do if someone walked in with a gun” and thinking through scenarios and options (*Would I jump them? Would I hide? Where would I hide? What could I throw?*) are feelings that I know personally. And that fear is bad enough, but the deaths are worse.

However, putting police officers (or School Resource Officers) in schools creates more problems than it solves. It increases the school-to-prison pipeline and contributes to systemic racism in our schools, as Black students are more likely to have minor disciplinary infractions escalated to a police problem instead of a school one. We need to have background checks for guns, but we do not need to deliberately put guns in the hands of anyone at a school - including teachers and SROs. We also need to increase comprehensive mental health policies and train teachers and other students to recognize warning signs.

Candidate 1: Sayd Hussain, Republican for state representative

Policy issue 1: Environmental regulations: Hussain lists “Protect and Preserve our Environment & Wildlife” as the first of his top three priorities, according to the Sun Sentinel candidate questionnaire.¹ He then goes on to detail a 15-point plan of policies he believes should pass through state legislature, including converting to 100% renewable energy by 2050, banning hydraulic fracturing, making it easier for low-income families to invest in solar energy, and investing in water and sewer infrastructure. His website also lists expediting the Florida Everglades Restoration Project as a top priority.²

Policy issue 2: School gun safety: Hussain detailed his school safety policy in the Sun Sentinel questionnaire. He supports the use of School Resource officers, but not arming teachers. He also supports having universal background checks for both guns and ammo purchases, increasing educational training for firearms, and creating stricter laws about gun storage. He also wants to increase mental health funding for schools.

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<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-questionnaire-sayd-hussain-20200911-ho6lwwxwnffllhhu17zhetrq4-story.html>

² <https://www.saydforflorida.com/#platform>

Candidate 2: Emily Slosberg, Democrat for state representative

Policy issue 1: Environmental regulations: Slosberg does not list environmental regulations anywhere on her website's list of priorities or in her list of passed legislation.³ When directly asked about climate change in the Sun Sentinel candidate questionnaire, she suggested that we create a business-friendly environment by "leveraging capital into green-tech and clean energy."⁴ Her only other suggestion was to invest in infrastructure for electric vehicles, but while also saying that the government should eliminate revenue from toll roads and generate revenue from electric vehicles instead, which does not seem likely to promote their use.

Policy issue 2: School gun safety: Solsberg does not detail any school- or gun-related policies on her website. In the Sun Sentinel questionnaire, she advocates universal background checks, a ban on semi-automatic weapons, and increased penalties for improper gun storage. She also wants to increase school mental health education so children seek help if they have mental health problems. She is opposed to arming teachers, but makes no mention of School Resource Officers.

I took this time to research all of my down-ballot candidates. Therefore, bonus candidates with policy issues relevant to their positions are below!

³ <http://emilyslosbergforflorida.com/priorities/>

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<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-questionnaire-emily-slosberg-20200911-s74e6u4elrcnhgyhytxrwqwdju-story.html>

My positions:

Policy issue 1: Police unions: Police unions do too much to protect corrupt officers. Unions are critical to the workforce and to protecting employees, but they cannot do that at the expense of other citizens. At that point, they become a danger to more people than they help.

Policy issue 2: Civil citations for misdemeanors: Removing misdemeanors from the criminal courts would be invaluable. It would prevent many people from ending up with a permanent police record. With the current racial gap in policing, it would also help mitigate the systemic effects of racism.

Rick Bradshaw, incumbent Democrat for Sheriff

Policy issue 1: Police Unions: Bradshaw claims that police unions in Palm Beach County do not affect disciplinary proceedings.⁵

Policy issue 2: Civil citations for misdemeanors: Bradshaw's response to a question regarding this in the Sun Sentinel questionnaire is as follows: "Further discussion is warranted on this issue."

Lauro Diaz, Republican for Sheriff

Policy issue 1: Police Unions: Diaz believes that the current sheriff's office allows the union too much influence. He wants to work with unions, but not under them.⁶

Policy issue 2: Civil citations for misdemeanors: Diaz supports civil citations or other diversion programs (the language of the question is unclear and he could be referring to either), believing that criminal arrests can have too large of an effect on young people, and inhibit their ability to get a job later on. He also wants to reform cash bail for misdemeanors, saying that it can be useful but also discriminates against those who cannot pay it.

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<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-questionnaire-ric-bradshaw-palm-beach-she-riff-20200714-73sgkbrewregjpl2lp5jsf4ie-story.html>

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<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-questionnaire-lauro-diaz-palm-beach-sheriff-20201005-u5ktuah35jhszfke4bawsa2wjm-story.html>

Frank Ciatto, No Party for Tax Collector

Ciatto did not respond to the local news's questionnaire or interview request. He has four short paragraphs on his website detailing his goals.⁷ They are: inform veterans of their tax exemptions, and reduce wait times in the tax collector's office. As he did not detail any concrete policies I can comment on, I will simply insert a summary of his opponent's policies as well.

Anne Gannon, Incumbent Democrat for Tax Collector

Below follow a brief list of Gannon's policies that I most care about.

- Gannon supports automatic voter registration upon application for or renewal of a driver's license, and is in the process of rolling out a system to push this closer to reality. I strongly approve of this policy, as the easier voting is the higher turnout will be. Everyone deserves to be able to vote with a minimum of hassle.
 - *Note: the tax collector's office also serves as the DMV*
- She wants to continue to prioritize COVID safety and online access of services. I support this, as it will reduce risk to everyone involved.
- She supports decreasing bureaucratic inefficiencies (such as making people go to multiple offices to pay some DOT fees). This would help many people, especially working-class Floridians who cannot afford to waste a lot of time at the tax collector's and other offices.

As judges don't have policy positions per se, I will summarize other key beliefs or facts.

Jamie Goodman, incumbent 15th Judicial Circuit

- Jamie Goodman scored badly on a poll with lawyers of his district in almost all categories, including impartiality, applying common sense, and professionalism.⁸ It is critical to me that my judges be able to rule impartially.

Adam Myron, 15th Judicial Circuit

- Had a robust answer regarding the biggest challenges facing the justice system, including systemic bias, and safety.⁹

⁷ <https://frank4change.com/about>

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<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/endorsements/fl-op-edit-fl-op-edit-endorsment-adam-myron-20200618-3ri6ahfu5bgcpgdnfrgunbp7nm-story.html>

⁹

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-questionnaire-adam-myron-20200618-zrafs6jlmjfmrb4wmhh6a4qw4q-story.html>

The Soil and Water Conservation District is a 5-member elected board that cannot tax or enforce laws and relies on partnerships with other organizations.

Ann Marie Sorrell, Soil and Water Conservation District Group 2

- Has had a career running businesses.¹⁰ This is concerning to me, as often business and environmental interests do not align. Alternatively it could give her valuable connections and insight. Looking at her businesses, they are primarily marketing and a new cannabis venture. This seems likely to give her more valuable connections and insight to marketing than conflicts of interest.
- Proposals hinge around increasing marketing and outreach for the group.
- Wants to bring forward voices of minorities and women in STEM fields such as marine science and agriculture.

Audrey Friedrich, Soil and Water Conservation District Group 2

- Has a work history as a psychologist with significant experience working in community based programs.¹¹
- She has connections to the agricultural community through her husband (whose family has a tropical plant nursery). She seems focused on agriculture, and is looking to reduce water usage.
- She seems intimately familiar with some of the previous actions of the S&W Conservation District - like a very successful Nursery Overhead Efficiency Project that saved millions of gallons of water.

Candace A. Rojas, Soil and Water Conservation District Group 4

- Has odd expenses as campaign expenses - including hundreds of dollars to Republican Party events. That is odd for a nonpartisan board.¹²

Rob Long, Soil and Water Conservation District Group 4

- Current member.
- During his past term, Long contributed to programs that I believe are excellent - such as the Ambassador to Wetlands educational program.¹³

Has a detailed list of issues that he thinks the board can assist with, including environmental justice, assisting with agricultural supply chain breakdowns, and educating youth

¹⁰

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-questionnaire-ann-marie-sorrell-20201006-sgy3wspdhffjfnxtyuy2fmyklq-story.html>

¹¹

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-questionnaire-audrey-friedrich-20201006-7bpoak3fbbhelakzyy7vszkoxu-story.html>

¹²

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/endorsements/fl-op-general-endorse-sorrell-shaw-long-20201008-bxfuia4u4ve3xcnderd5aqenqi-story.html>

¹³

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-questionnaire-rob-long-20201006-i2hh4ci75vhk3bxlsbhiceayqi-story.html>

Nicholas O’Neal, Soil and Water Conservation District Group 3 - *Withdrawn from race*

Jon E Shaw, Soil and Water Conservation District Group 3

- Current board member
- Works as the chief hydrogeologist for the South Florida Water Management District and has been an environmental consultant specializing in the Everglades.¹⁴ His ability to understand environmental policy seems sound and excellent.

Chad Alvarez, Soil and Water Conservation District Group 3

- Has never attended a S&W Conservation District meeting.
- Has an incomplete understanding of the jurisdiction of this position - it does not cover much of the regulation and cleanup of Lake Okeechobee that he wants.
- Is an activist with democracy/voting movements.¹⁵

Adam Baer, Soil and Water Conservation District Group 3

- A lawyer by trade. He wants to balance protecting jobs with protecting the environment.¹⁶ I don’t think that a candidate who considers that the balance is seeing the right picture - we can create jobs while protecting the environment instead.

Below is research regarding retention of justices. One notable belief I hold is that justices and judges should attempt to be nonpartisan.

Shall Judge Alan O. Forst of the Fourth District Court of Appeal be retained in office?

- Ruled against both an environmentalist and free speech rights in a rock mining case.¹⁷
- Has relatively low lawyer approval ratings near 78%
- Proudly conservative.

Shall Judge Mark W. Klingensmith of the Fourth District Court of Appeal be retained in office?

- Has relatively low lawyer approval ratings near 79%¹⁸
- Outspoken Republican
- Wrote an opinion saying that sexually harassing posts were protected by the first amendment, thereby throwing out an injunction.¹⁹

¹⁴

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/endorsements/fl-op-general-endorse-sorrell-shaw-long-20201008-bxfuia4u4ve3xcnderd5aqenqi-story.html>

¹⁵

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-questionnaire-chad-alvarez-20201006-xefsyrgox5cx3plz5z5msyrix-story.html>

¹⁶ <https://gotowncrier.com/2020/09/eight-candidates-seek-three-seats-on-pbc-soil-water-conservation-district-board/>

¹⁷

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/endorsements/fl-op-general-endorse-muniz-forst-klingensmith-20201002-7izbai1lxzhcjpqxqvhwxhefm-story.html>

¹⁸

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/endorsements/fl-op-general-endorse-muniz-forst-klingensmith-20201002-7izbai1lxzhcjpqxqvhwxhefm-story.html>

¹⁹

<https://www.palmbeachpost.com/story/news/2020/09/21/3-appellate-judges-1-high-court-justice-november-ballot/3487280001/>

Shall Justice Carlos G. Muñiz of the Supreme Court be retained in office?

- Appointed by De Santis.²⁰ De Santis is one of my least favorite, most corrupt, most incompetent politicians.
- Was on Trump's list of potential Supreme Court nominees
- Involved in discussions that led to no action against Trump University.
- Was policy director for Republican Party. He seems very strongly Republican and I dislike that. While De Santis would get to appoint a new person, I honestly don't think he could find many worse than him.
- Has only 63% approval amongst lawyers with considerable experience with him.²¹
- Has ruled against sending an assault weapons ban to the voters, and against a lower court's ruling that ~100 death sentence hearings be reconsidered due to non-unanimous juries. I disagree with both.

Shall Judge Martha C. Warner of the Fourth District Court of Appeal be retained in office?

- Will reach mandatory retirement age 5 years into a 6 year term. I see no problems with that, as a successor can be appointed at that time.²²
- Has 89% lawyer approval ratings.²³
- Won the highest honor of the Florida Association of Women Lawyers.²⁴

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlos_G._Mu%C3%B1iz

²¹

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/endorsements/fl-op-general-endorse-muniz-forst-klingsmith-2020-1002-7izbaillxzhcjpqxqvhwjxhefm-story.html>

²²

<https://www.palmbeachpost.com/story/news/2020/09/21/3-appellate-judges-1-high-court-justice-november-ballot/3487280001/>

²³

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/endorsements/fl-op-general-endorse-muniz-forst-klingsmith-2020-1002-7izbaillxzhcjpqxqvhwjxhefm-story.html>

²⁴

<https://www.tcpalm.com/story/news/crime/2020/06/12/4th-district-court-appeal-judge-martha-warner-stuart-resident-gets-women-lawyers-groups-high-honor/3178177001/>

Ballot question research to follow.

Question 1: Citizenship Requirement to Vote in Florida

- “This amendment provides that only United States Citizens who are at least eighteen years of age, a permanent resident of Florida, and registered to vote, as provided by law, shall be qualified to vote in a Florida election.” (directly from ballot)
- As stated on my ballot, this constitutional amendment creates no material changes for Florida voters, as all of those things are already requirements. It is simply a clarification from the words “every citizen” to “only a citizen.”²⁵
- This initiative was sponsored by Citizen Voters, Inc - a group who is scandalized that 48 states don’t specifically exclude non-citizens from voting.
- While this doesn’t materially change anything, to me it seems like anti-immigrant rhetoric. It seems like it could cause issues if a citizen were denied voting rights, and the state constitution did not explicitly say that they *had* those rights. This wording would change from inclusion (every citizen has the right to vote) to exclusive (only citizens have the right to vote). The exclusive does not fundamentally bestow the right to vote on people.
- This could also make it more challenging for cities and localities to allow non-citizens to vote in local elections if they so choose. I would support all residents, regardless of citizenship, being allowed to vote at the local level.

Question 2: Raising Florida’s minimum wage:

- “Raises minimum wage to \$10.00 per hour effective September 30th, 2021. Each September 30th thereafter, minimum wage shall increase by \$1.00 per hour until the minimum wage reaches \$15.00 per hour on September 30th, 2026. From that point forward, future minimum wage increases shall revert to being adjusted annually for inflation starting September 30th, 2027.” (directly from ballot)
- I support a liveable wage. The current wage of 8.25 is woefully insufficient. While this might hurt some businesses and lose jobs in the immediate future, I believe that everyone who is working has a right to a liveable wage.

Question 3: All Voters Vote in Primary Elections for State Legislature, Governor, and Cabinet

- Would allow voters of any party registration to vote in primaries for both parties. The primary would be merged, and the two highest vote-getters would advance.
- One person donated 5.9 million dollars to this initiative.²⁶ It is opposed by both Democratic and Republican parties.

²⁵ [https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_1,_Citizen_Requirement_for_Voting_Initiative_\(2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_1,_Citizen_Requirement_for_Voting_Initiative_(2020))

²⁶

[https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_3,_Top-Two_Open_Primarys_for_State_Offices_Initiative_\(2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_3,_Top-Two_Open_Primarys_for_State_Offices_Initiative_(2020))

- It is opposed by the Legislative Black Caucus, who says such a primary makes it harder for minority candidates to get nominated.²⁷
- In the absence of ranked choice voting, I do not support this. A separate Democratic and Republican primary at least lets voters express their preferences for a candidate in the primary without fear that it allows the opposing party to win. If one party were too split in this system, they could lose entirely.

Question 4: Voter Approval of Constitutional Amendments:

- “Requires all proposed amendments or revisions to the State Constitution to be approved by the voters in two elections, instead of one, in order to take effect. The proposal applies the current thresholds for passage to each of the two elections.” (direct from ballot)
- This is designed to make it more difficult for voter initiatives to pass into the state Constitution. It would also make it slower for voter-driven changes to take effect, and significantly more costly for those initiatives.
- The nonprofit funding this (with 9 million dollars) is linked to lobbying groups for big businesses.²⁸

Question 5: Limitations on Homestead Property Tax Assessments; increased portability period to transfer accrued benefit

- This amendment was sent to the ballot unanimously by the state legislature.²⁹
- It would extend the period from two to three years in which people who move homes can transfer their Save Our Homes tax benefits.
- It is estimated to reduce local property taxes by up to 10 million annually.
- This is intended to address people who sell their home near the end of the year - because of the definition of “year” those people only really have one year to transfer those benefits.³⁰ By this reasoning, this seems like an excellent solution, as new homeowners have many demands on their time and necessary actions. Giving them more time to access this seems like a good idea. The SOH tax benefit also applies proportionately more to lower-value homes, so it benefits lower-income people (or, rather, people with lower home value) more, which I support. People in mansions don’t need as many tax breaks, and can also hire someone to file this for them instead of spending their own time on it.

²⁷

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/tthelections2020/2020/10/03/florida-voter-guide-six-constitutional-amendments-2020-ballot/5825534002/>

²⁸

<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/politics/2020-election/os-ne-2020-general-election-florida-amendments-20200930-tr2cjgerbjarfbl3sgrkyjuuq-story.html>

²⁹

[https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_5,_Extend_%22Save_Our_Homes%22_Portability_Period_Amendment_\(2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Florida_Amendment_5,_Extend_%22Save_Our_Homes%22_Portability_Period_Amendment_(2020))

³⁰ <https://reason.org/voters-guide/florida-ballot-initiative-analysis-amendment-5-2020/>

Question 6: Ad Valorem Tax Discount for Spouses of Certain Deceased Veterans Who Had Permanent, Combat-Related Disabilities

- Deceased veterans with combat-related disabilities could have property tax discounts carry over to their spouse.³¹
- This would reduce school tax revenues by 1.6 million annually, and non-school property tax revenues by 2.4 million annually.
- I do not think this is the most effective way to help either our veterans or people who need property tax discounts. We should have widespread tax reform favoring low-income households, not cherry-pick groups like this amendment does. Property taxes are critical to infrastructure.