



Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council – Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 14, 2022 10:00am -12:30pm EDT



Location:

*The Florida Capitol
Cabinet Meeting Room
Tallahassee, FL 32399*

Note: The following is a summary of the highlights of the proceedings and is not intended to be construed as a transcript.

ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council Members in attendance:

- Dr. Jerry Haag- Chair
- Calvin Martin- Vice-chair
- Lori Bontell
- Denise Harle
- Pastor Pam Olsen
- Mami Kisner
- Erik Dellenback
- Gerard Duncan
- Yosef Weinstock
- Mario Bramnick
- Scott George
- Jason Cullum
- Blaine Whitt
- Anthony Verdugo
- James Drake
- Jeff Ford
- Chad Garmon
- Michael Sheedy
- Chad Poppell
- Stephan Tchividjian
- Mel Ponder
- Gary Tester

Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council Members unable to attend:

- Reno Zunz
- Wallace Brown

PROCEEDINGS

Agenda Item	Summary
Call to Order and Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Haag called the meeting to order and welcomed members and participants to the first quarterly meeting of the Council. (10:00am) • Roll call—quorum present with 22 members in attendance (20 in-person, 2 via conference line).
Invocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice-Chair Calvin Martin provided the invocation.
Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Haag congratulated those new to the council on their appointments. • Members of the council introduced their selves, where they are located, and what organization they are with. • Dr. Haag had Dylan Fisher introduce his staff from the Governor’s Faith and Community Initiative Office.
Annual Report Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice-Chair Martin gave an overview of the 2020-2021 Annual Report and its content regarding the Office of Adoption and Child Protection.
Governor’s Faith and Community Initiative Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Haag invited Councilmember Dellenback to give a report on the Governor’s Faith and Community Initiative. • Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Governor’s Initiative was launched in August of 2019 with the directive to thank faith and community leaders, open healthy lines of communication, and find ways to better serve Florida’s foster care and adoption system with a faith and community focus ○ This charge resulted in the creation of over 20,000 letters to faith and community organizations—thank them, acknowledge their impact, and ask where they serve ○ Results of the survey concluded that foster care and adoption were woefully lower than expected in terms of where faith and community institutions serve. These results sparked several projects at DCF under the leadership of then-Secretary Poppell and now Secretary Harris. Project included the streamlining of the foster care licensure process, creation of the Florida Foster Information Center, and procurement of the CarePortal tool. ○ Florida Foster Information Center created a single point of entry for information on fostering in Florida—a change from 56 points of entry prior to the Center’s creation. The Center has already logged over 8,000 inquiries with more than 4,000 of those taking the next step towards foster care licensure.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CarePortal was procured by the state and introduced to connect real-time needs of those in or on the verge of entering the child welfare system with faith and community organizations ready and able to help. ○ Since its implementation, over 2,400 requests have been made serving over 3,700 children in Florida. ○ The future of the Initiative will include the expansion of agency special projects, collaborations, and functionality of CarePortal. ○ In support of the Initiative’s expansion, the Governor’s Faith and Community Initiative Office was established late last year. ○ Ultimately, the Office and the Initiative are focused on the substantive and meaningful involvement of faith and community partners to better serve Floridians, including recognizable impacts on data and statistics.
<p style="text-align: center;">Budget</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chair Haag introduced Chris Spencer, Director of The Governor’s Office of Policy and Budget to speak ● State budget process presentation by Mr. Chris Spencer, Governor DeSantis’s Policy and Budget Director <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Legislature has a Constitutional duty to pass a state budget before the close of the annual Legislative Session. ○ Prior to the start of Session, the Governor is required to submit a recommended budget to the Legislature. ○ The Governor’s recommended budget is not a legislative document, but represents the priorities and proposed budgeting of the state from the Governor’s perspective ○ The process for development of the Governor’s recommended budget begins approximately 6-7 months prior to the start of Session and includes several stages of collaborative input, refinement, and review. ○ Mr. Spencer recommended and encouraged faith and community based organizations to engage early in the process with the appropriate agencies with potential collaboration points. ○ During Session the House and Senate develop their respective budget proposals. When reconciled against each other, differences are sent to a budget conference process to negotiate identical budget positions. ○ Once the Legislature passes a proposed state budget, it is sent to the Governor for review. ○ The Governor’s review can include one of three options: 1) Signing the budget with no line-item vetoes, 2) signing the budget with line-item vetoes, 3) Vetoing the budget entirely. ○ Stay engaged year-round to leverage the value of state funds for a better delivery of services.

- Council questions of Mr. Spencer:
 - Erik Dellenback: How can the Council and faith and community leaders be supportive of you?
 - Answer: As the Governor’s Initiative builds, be a conduit of information and a resource to the state and our agencies for how we can work smarter and better together. The more communication and collaboration the better.

[Prayer offered for Mr. Spencer]

Pro-Life Advocacy in the State House and the Courthouse

Sen. Kelli Stargel Presentation

- Chair Haag introduction of Senator Kelli Stargel
- Senator Stargel presentation:
 - Sponsor of SB 146, bill proposing a ban on abortions after 15-weeks.
 - Current Florida law allows abortions up to 24 weeks
 - Involvement with pro-life issues has spanned a number of years in both the House and Senate and notes the complicated but purposeful work of pro-life advocacy.
 - Florida has made positive strides despite the personal interest and belief that life begins at conception.
 - There is a great appreciation for her support system and the encouragement she receives, especially from her home church and pastor.
 - There is a responsibility to ensure resources are available for mothers and children, and Florida has done a great job of ensuring resources throughout the course of a pregnancy in addition to access to contraceptives and birth control.

[Prayers offered for Se. Stargel and staff]

[Chair Haag calls a 5 minute recess]

[The meeting is called back to order to resume the agenda item]

Councilmember Denise Harle Presentation, Part I

- Presentation
 - Undergrad at FSU, Masters at Stanford, Law School at Duke
 - Senior Counsel and Director of Center for Life at the Alliance Defending Freedom
 - Current role is focused on defending pro-life legislation across the country and has extensive background litigating issues, including before career at ADF.
 - Unique challenge that Florida faces is a Constitutional “Right to Privacy”
 - Poor judicial rulings and faulty legal precedent have vastly expanded Florida’s Right to Privacy well beyond its intended

scope, which was originally created to address the advent of technologies and internet capability to prevent companies from unreasonably interfering with an expected level of privacy for a citizen.

[Councilmember Harle's presentation is paused in deference to the arrival of Rep. Erin Grall]

Rep. Erin Grall Presentation

- Presentation
 - HB 5 is the house's version of the 15-week abortion ban
 - Florida has become an abortion destination due to current law allowing abortions up to 24 weeks
 - 24 weeks is not only some of the most lenient in the country, but also in the world
 - Current projections suggest that the change from 24 weeks to 15 weeks would save approximately 5,000 unborn babies in the first year
 - Although the ultimate desire is to outlaw abortion entirely, the current legal framework requires incremental change
 - Stricter measures have been tried in other states, but would ultimately lead to an injunction and strike down, which would not save any lives.
 - Important to remember the lives at stake and the difference that is being made.
 - Proudest, most uplifting part of her legislative career.
- Council Questions of Rep. Grall
 - Councilmember Whitt: Not a question, but a statement— encourages Rep. Grall noting she can be assured that her work has positive, meaningful, inexplicable impacts on the lives of the unborn. Thanks her for standing for life.
 - Questions asked about whether Rep. Grall has staff present
 - Response: Rep. Grall introduces legislative aide and longtime family friend, Ed Barenborg. Describes Mr. Barenborg as her guardian angel in the legislative process amongst other praises.

[Prayer offered for Rep. Grall and Mr. Barenborg]

[Chair Haag recognizes Councilmember Harle to return to her presentation]

Councilmember Denise Harle Presentation, Part II

- Presentation
 - Getting pro-life legislation right is a must. Poor policy that neglects the current legal challenges threatens future policy changes by further entrenching legal precedent against more restrictive abortion laws.

- A key court decision framing the pro-life policy discussion in *Planned Parenthood vs. Casey*, which established the “undue burden” concept.
- Emphasis was placed on the vagueness surrounding “undue burden” and the negative effects it has had on the ability for states to effectively craft pro-life policy given the standard’s open-ended and somewhat arbitrary nature.
- The current question in front of the Court is *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*. The State of Mississippi passed the “Gestational Age Act” prohibiting abortions after 15-weeks, noting that 15 weeks was a new line of viability.
- There is potential for *Roe* to be amended or overturned entirely, but unlikely.
- A favorable result in the *Dobbs* case could send the issue of state determination of viability, opening the door for a new 15-week ban being contemplated by HB 5 and SB 146.

Council Statement on Pro-Life Legislation

- Dr. Haag invites the Council to consider the drafting of a statement signifying the Council’s belief that the right to life begins at conception and should be embraced at every stage.
- Councilmember Pam Olsen makes a motion to approve a statement signifying the Council’s support of life at all stages and support of both House and Senate pro-life bills.
- Councilmember Sheedy suggests an amendment to the language for clarity.
- Staff prepared a draft statement based on Council feedback that read as follows: *“The Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council supports the right to life at all stages. As an extension of this commitment to life, the Council also supports House Bill 5 and Senate Bill 146 in the 2022 Florida Legislative Session.”*
- Councilmember Olsen’s motion was amended to be for the approval of the draft statement”
- Motion was seconded from Councilmember Kisner
- Approved without objection

Council Vision

- Expectations
 - The Council will convene once every quarter
 - Each meeting should have a high degree of engagement and content which we want to share with regional and local partners when we meet. It is encouraged to invite local leaders and organizations to attend our meetings
 - Use your appointment and role as a Councilmember as a platform to engage, learn, and collaborate
 - The Council has a charge and responsibility to advise on issues and successful models that can support the vulnerable people of Florida. This includes the introduction of best practices and successful models for state integration or collaboration.
- Meeting Content

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Members should be thinking about what policy areas should be explored, what areas they are excited to learn more about, and what should be addressed in state government? • Future Meeting Dates and Locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Q2 meeting needs to be in June ○ Future meeting locations will include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Florida • Lakeland/Central Florida • Jacksonville
Benediction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Mario Bramnick provided the benediction
Recess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Haag announced a 15 minute recess
Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Haag called the meeting back to order • No public comment
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councilmember Drake moves to adjourn • Motion seconded by Councilmember Ford • Meeting adjourned (1:35pm)

- END -