

# 2021 POLICY PRIORITIES



The James Madison Institute exists because economic freedom, free-enterprise systems and free-market principles possess the best hope for Florida and its citizens to succeed, thrive and prosper.

These principles deserve a champion.

*We take up that mantle.*



# Back On Track

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to suggest that "nobody saw 2020 coming." In a year in which the impeachment of the President of the United States (in an election year) was not even in the top five of current events, we have collectively been through the ring. And while it isn't realistic to think that on January 1, 2021, we will all wake up and things will be like they were before, it's fair to say we'll all be glad when 2020 is over. The political season, mired by a global pandemic, has shaped all of us in ways that we'll be dissecting for generations to come.

Florida was on a roller coaster for much of the year. A surgical approach to pandemic response by Governor DeSantis, followed by a summer spike in cases (but not deaths), followed by a typical (i.e. crazy) political season made for an even wilder than usual election year. And then on November 3, more than 11 million Floridians' ballots were tabulated, and the result was clear – Florida will continue to pursue a fiscally conservative legislative governing path.

As we begin to look toward both beating back the pandemic and the long journey of economic rebuilding, it's imperative that Florida reprise her role as the model for how a commitment to fiscal integrity, low taxes, minimal regulation, and visionary leadership can serve to provide opportunity for all.

We have often said at JMI that "the Florida story" is one that needs to be exported. We could not be more certain of that fact than we are right now.

While the process of engagement may look different in 2021, our commitment to engaging with policymakers and the public will remain steadfast. There is much to be done on this journey.

We are heartened by a fact of Florida's political environment. That, with almost no exception, our part-time legislators possess a genuine and deep commitment to their constituents and their state. Whether republican or democrat, conservative or liberal, young or old, they all hold their roles in esteem and seek to make the right policy decisions for the people they represent and the greater good of Florida. That doesn't mean that they agree on the methods or issues – in fact, that is often not the case. They campaign vigorously and yes politics isn't for the faint of heart. But at the end of the day, when they gather in the Capitol each session, the robust debates, substantive coalition building, and honest brokering

creates a state we can all be proud of.

We will continue to press for common sense, practical policy ideas that place Florida on an economic path of renewed opportunity and prosperity. To that end, we have compiled a robust and visionary set of policy priorities for 2021 that press the cause of liberty and our principles of limited government and individual freedom. We hold firm to the belief that free market capitalism, private property rights, and the rule of law is the single biggest prosperity engine in human history.

It is our pleasure to provide our policy priorities for 2021.

- 1 Expand patient-centered, market-based healthcare policies**
  - a. Promote innovation in Florida's Medicaid program to ensure that it serves our most needy appropriately, while providing opportunities and incentives for individuals to become self-sufficient
  - b. Advance reforms to pharmacy benefit manager policies that can address inequities in drug pricing and supplies patients
  - c. Address remaining Florida's reform of Certificate of Need Laws to ambulance services as well as hospices and nursing homes, protecting access to care for our most vulnerable
  
- 2 Increase educational opportunity, choice, and intellectual diversity**
  - a. Expand the availability of all existing K-12 scholarship programs to serve greater numbers of Floridians
  - b. Offer student-based funding to parents with safety-related concerns whose children are being educated outside the traditional public school classroom
  - c. Strengthen civics education by requiring Florida students to take the U.S. Citizenship test (given to immigrants seeking to become naturalized citizens) at the end of their middle school civics course
  - d. Continue to push for higher education reforms that protect free speech and encourage greater intellectual diversity at Florida's state universities

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### 3 Advance Florida's innovation economy through market-oriented policy

- a. Adopt a vision statement outlining the commitment to “permissionless innovation”
- b. Continue to oppose government-owned broadband networks in favor of private market solutions to connectivity
- c. Expand use of regulatory sandboxes to promote new industry development and further diversify Florida's economy
- d. Promote the expansion of cryptocurrency by aligning money transmission rules for users
- e. Identify sources and limit regulatory friction in industries that would create new economic paths for entrepreneurs and opportunity for job seekers.
- f. Encourage legal certainty via defining limited liabilities for commercial drone operators

### 4 Support sensible criminal justice reforms

- a. Restore judicial discretion in sentencing policies to ensure that individuals are provided with appropriate due process protections
- b. Expand transparency and data collection/reporting on children charged as adults
- c. Modernize policies governing the suspensions of drivers' licenses for failure to pay court-ordered fines and fees
- d. Promote expunction of juvenile records for children who successfully participate in and show progress from diversion programs.

### 5 Advance market-centered insurance policies

- a. Modernize Florida's Personal Injury Protection (PIP) rules to encourage greater transparency and consistency
- b. Promote further reforms in tort laws to address assignment of benefits abuse and frivolous litigation

### 6 Expand public workforce opportunity

- a. Enforce recertification requirements to ensure public sector unions are truly representing workers
- b. End the abuse of public sector union “release time” rules via transparency and greater disclosure
- c. Protect Florida's public retirement system through market-centered reforms that transition from the “defined benefit” system

### 7 Promote the values of free markets, choice, and liberty in federal policy dialogues

- a. Oppose federal attempts to further socialize health insurance and healthcare provision
- b. Promote an increase in the child tax credit to \$5,000 per child, beginning with newborns, and proceeding thereafter with a yearly increase in eligibility until all dependent children are covered at the higher level
- c. Educate lawmakers and the public on the negative effects of proposed “5G nationalization”
- d. Export the Florida model of election integrity and transparency that can serve as a national benchmark for best practices in other states

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The team at The James Madison Institute affirms our commitment to working both with those who share our philosophy and those who believe differently. It will be through effective vigorous debate and productive civil discourse that we will all reap the rewards of a better Florida.

We invite you to join us on the journey ahead as we get “back on track” in 2021.



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