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*All About Florida*

**20  
26**

**LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS**

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# COUNTY POPULATION INFORMATION



**9 URBAN COUNTIES**  
With a total population of 13,208,401



**29 FISCALLY CONSTRAINED COUNTIES**  
With a total population of 934,323



**LARGEST COUNTY MIAMI-DADE**  
2,814,927 residents



**29 MEDIUM COUNTIES**  
With a total population of 9,236,537



**35 COASTAL COUNTIES**  
With 825 miles of beaches



**SMALLEST COUNTY LIBERTY**  
8,140 Residents



## WHY FLORIDA COUNTIES MATTER

**MAINTAINING SAFE & SECURE COMMUNITIES**  
Annual county criminal filings down 19.43% over the past 10 years



**MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE JUSTICE SYSTEM**  
Counties invest more than \$4 billion into local courts

**CONDUCTING ELECTIONS**  
13,468,885 registered voters as of 11/30/25



**CONSTRUCTING/MAINTAINING/PROTECTING COURTS**  
Around \$909 million annually invested to maintain and protect court facilities

**TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**  
143 million visitors in 2024



**DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN ROADS**  
Counties maintain 70,770.450 miles of public roads

**SUPPORTING VETERANS**  
Counties invest over \$26 million annually in economic and workforce development for veterans



**PROTECTING FLORIDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES**  
\$561 million to conservation and resource management

**IMPLEMENTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & AFFORDABLE HOUSING**  
Over \$1 billion annually



**RECYCLE**  
Nearly 23.3 million tons annually

**FUNDING COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES**  
Over \$5.5 billion annually



**ENSURING ADEQUATE WATER SUPPLY**  
More than \$286.5 million in flood and storm water control annually

**FUNDING SHERIFFS & THEIR DEPUTIES**  
Approx \$6.3 billion annually

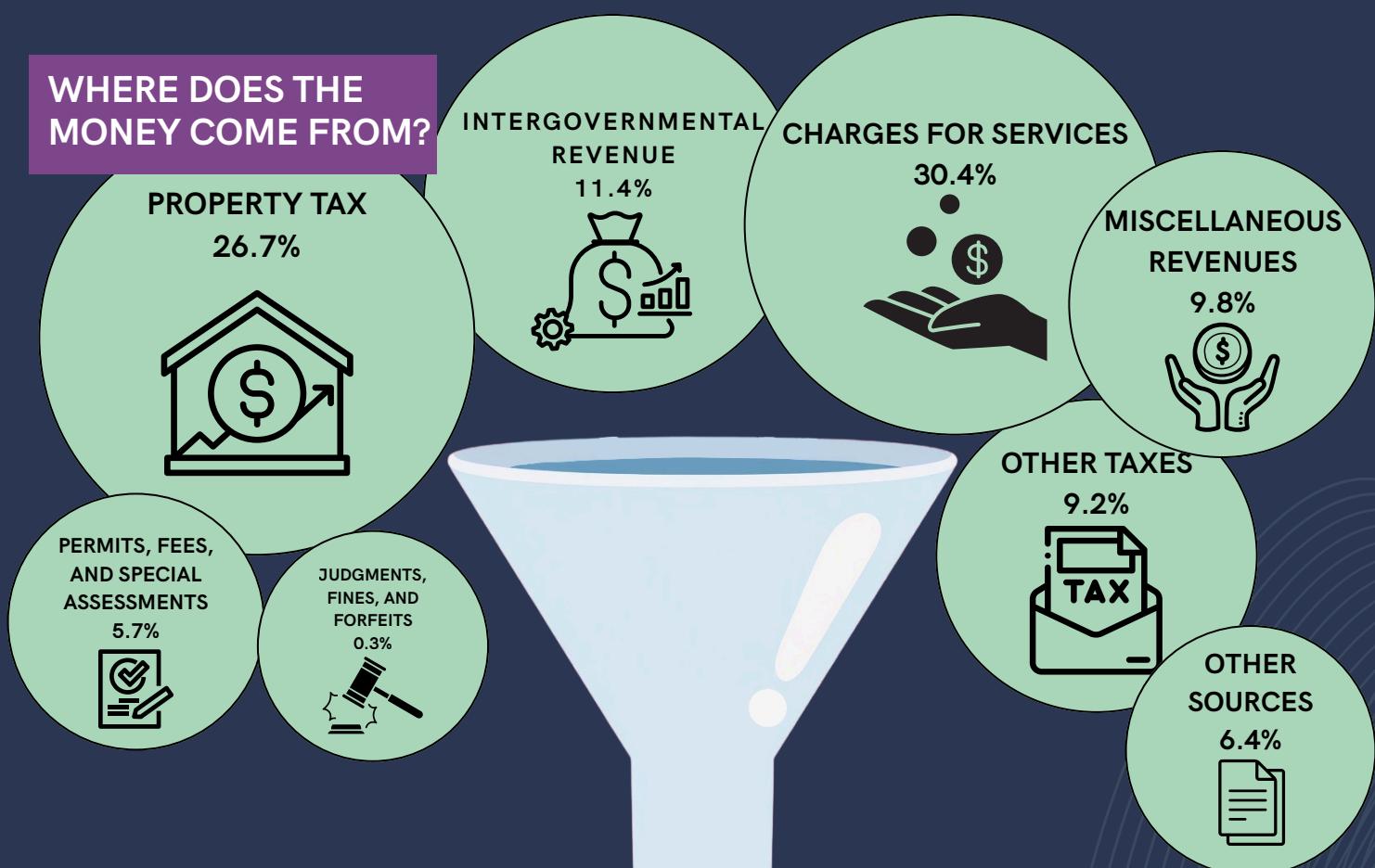


**IMPLEMENTING JUVENILE JUSTICE**  
Youth arrests down 24% the past 7 years

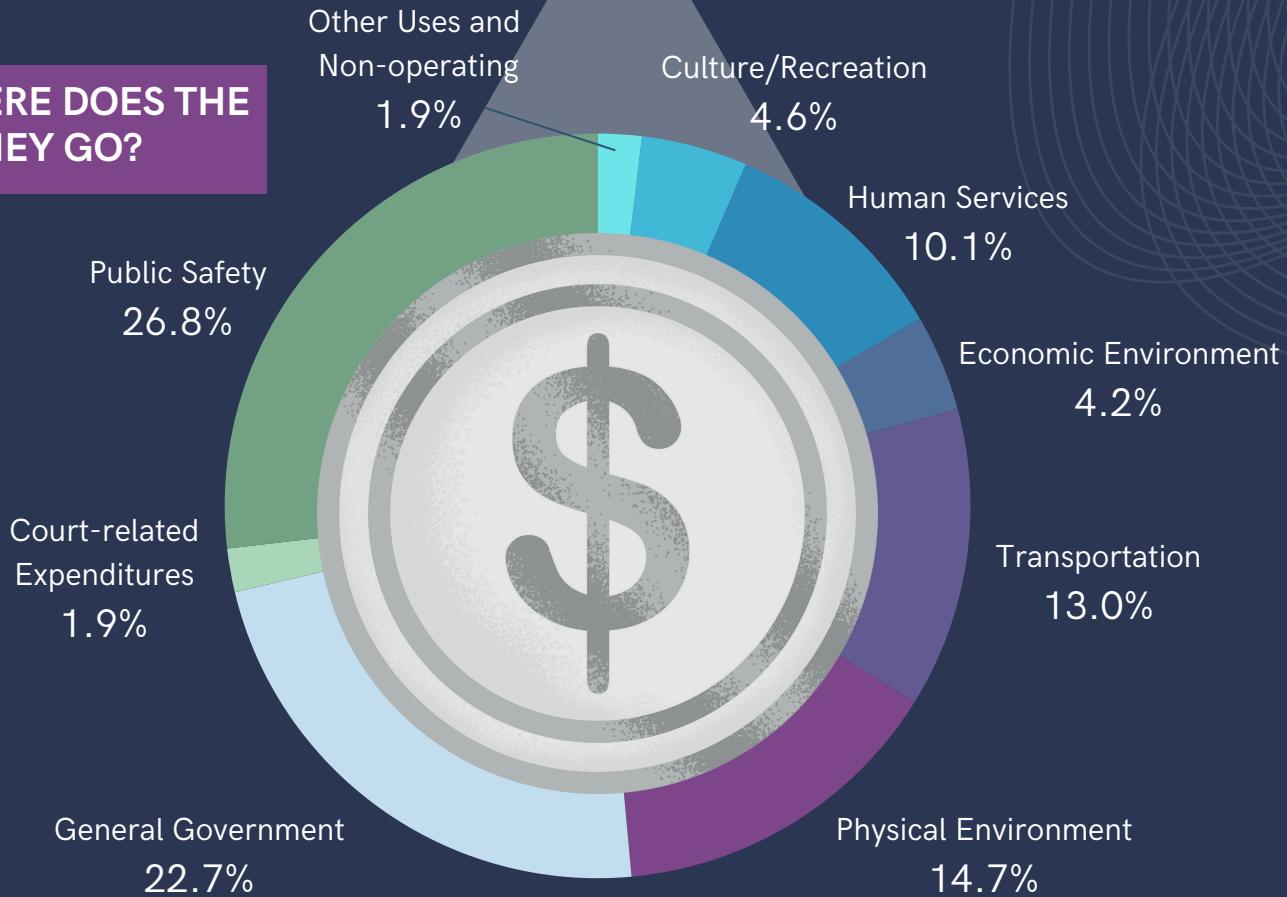
**FUNDING PUBLIC LIBRARIES**  
79 regional library systems with 558 library service outlets, with more than 28 million visits annually



## WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



## WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?



# PREEMPTIONS PERSIST

As Florida's population continues to grow and change, it is important that our communities continue to reflect local values. This is best accomplished by empowering local voters and their representatives rather than by one-size-fits-all regulations from Tallahassee.



UTILITY AND  
TECHNOLOGY



PLANNING AND  
ZONING



LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
REVENUES

Recent measures have stripped local residents of a voice in basic community decisions—from licensing local specialty contractors to regulating businesses in residential neighborhoods. State leaders have increasingly advanced proposals that limit local authority over utilities, technology policy, planning and zoning, and local revenue decisions. In recent years, some efforts have even sought to require explicit legislative approval for routine local actions.

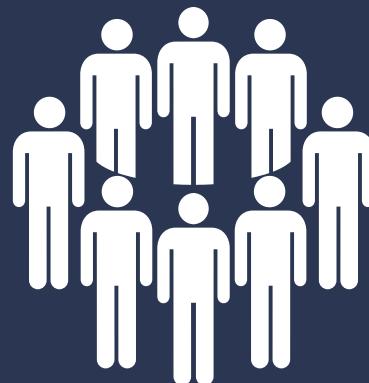
These actions expand Tallahassee bureaucracies, forcing residents to navigate layers of approvals for everyday matters, while leaving communities with fewer protections and less recourse. By shifting reasonable local authority to the state without meaningful avenues for relief, these policies will alter neighborhood character and expose consumers to real financial harm.



# PREEMPTIONS PERSIST

## LOCALISM PRESERVES THE RIGHTS OF OUR COMMUNITIES

The attack on home rule threatens to undermine the rights of Floridians to have an accessible and efficient government that reflects their values. Tallahassee overregulations are bad for communities and local business.



### PASSED PREEMPTIONS DURING 2025 SESSION



Utility Relocation



Impact Fees



Post-Storm Land  
Development (SB 180)



Development  
Approvals



Building  
Standards



Live Local 3.0  
(Affordable Housing)



Business Rent  
Tax Repeal



### PASSED PREEMPTIONS DURING 2024 SESSION



Local Preferences  
in Public Works  
Projects



Workplace Heat  
Protection



EV Charger  
Regulation



Prohibits Growth  
Management  
and Annexation-  
Related Charter  
Amendments by  
Charter Review  
Commission



Business Impact  
Statement  
Expansions



Local Procurement  
(HB 433)



Energy Siting



### FAILED PREEMPTIONS DURING 2025 SESSION



Sovereign  
Immunity



Agricultural  
Enclaves



Tourist Development  
Tax Offsets



Homestead  
Exemptions for  
Rental Properties



County  
Commissioner  
Term Limits



Local Option  
Taxes  
(Reauthorization)



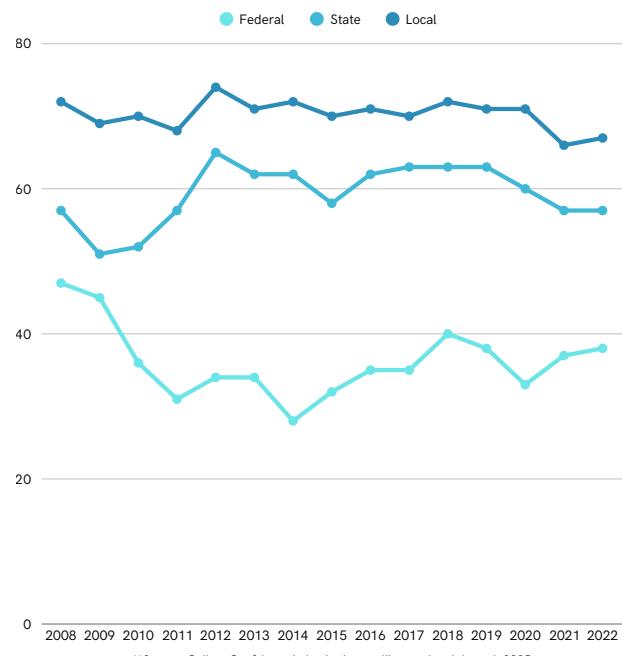
Waste  
Incineration

# WHY LOCALISM MATTERS

## LOCALISM ALLOWS BUSINESSES TO BE ACCESSIBLE AND NIMBLE

Businesses should not be forced to navigate the state legislative process for minor matters that are easily addressed at the local level. This is particularly problematic for small businesses, which may lack the resources to pursue matters through the state legislative process. Local governments are the most accessible venue to resolve business concerns because they are closest to the people and most familiar with their communities. Tallahassee is not equipped to address every problem in every community.

CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS SURVEY

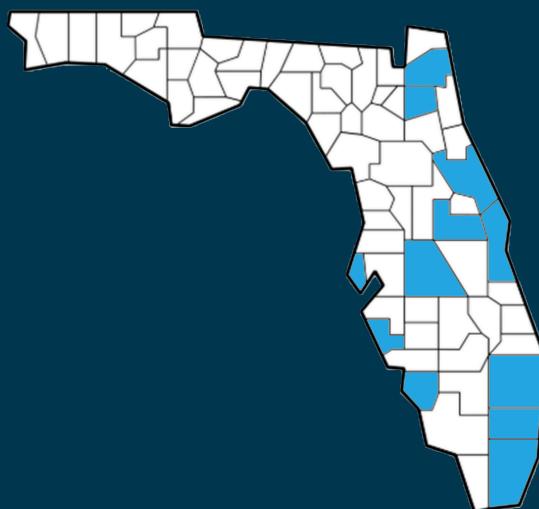


\*\*Source: Gallup, Confidence in Institutions polling, updated through 2025

## LOCALISM ALLOWS FOR REGULATORY CERTAINTY

Florida's statutory and case law has evolved under the home rule system. Upending that body of law will have far-reaching, unintended consequences. Businesses are conservative by nature, and economic uncertainty discourages investment and innovation. Even specific preemptions often have unintended consequences and frequently result in litigation. **When Tallahassee picks the winners, Floridians lose.**

### COUNTIES WITH TERM LIMITS



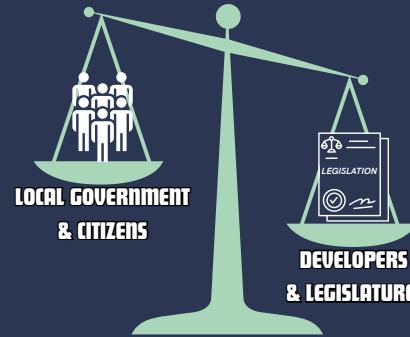
### TERM LIMITS

The Florida Constitution provides that 5-7 members will be elected to four-year staggered terms. A charter county has the authority to set their own term limits; 12 counties in Florida impose term limits within their county charter. Legislation that requires term limits could result in an imbalance of power within the executive functions at the local level. Placing term limits on just part of the executive structure creates limited institutional knowledge and experience in governance. This dynamic is particularly strong in fiscally constrained counties.

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Florida's Legislature is steadily stripping counties of their traditional control over planning and zoning through incremental state laws that override local decisions and weaken public oversight. The result is faster approvals for developers, fewer public hearings and local votes, and less accountability to the communities affected.

**HB 299** **SB 208** **HB 399**  
**HB 479** **SB 180** **SB 675**  
**SB 102** **HB 267** **SB 968**



## Blue Ribbon Project:

This bill upends local government review by creating automatic administrative approvals for "blue-ribbon" projects over 10,000 acres, reserving 60% of the land while allowing 40% or 4,000 acres for development. The bill overrides local plans, removes public hearings, and shifts land-use decisions from elected officials to large landowners with limited enforcement.

- HB 299/SB 354 – Blue Ribbon

## Affordable Housing:

Further limits local government review in Florida's affordable housing landscape, replacing community-based decision-making with a faster, state-driven approval pipeline.

- SB 1548/HB 1389 – Live Local 4.0
- SB 48/HB 3131 - Accessory Dwelling Units
- SB 948/HB 1143- Starter Home Act

## Local Planning & Permitting:

Taken together, these bills chip away at the core of local growth management—tightening state control over permitting, imposing shot clocks and uniform permitting standards, weakening development orders, and restricting local fee authority, leaving communities with fewer tools to manage growth effectively.

- HB 405/SB 526 – Commercial Construction Projects
- SB 750 – Alternative Plans Review and Building Inspections
- HB 803/SB 1234 – Building Permits and Inspection
- HB 1093/SB 1362 – Advanced Air Mobility
- HB 927/SB 1138 – Qualified Contractors
- SB 968/HB 1049 – Home Backup Power Systems

## CURRENT FILED 2026 LEGISLATION

### Land Development

- HB 299/SB 354 – Blue Ribbon Project
- SB 208/HB 399 – Compatibility & Infill
- HB 979/SB 1434 – Infill Redevelopment
- SB 548/HB 1139 – Impact fees
- SB 686/HB 691 – Agriculture Enclaves
- SB 706/HB 919 – Commercial Service Airports

### Housing

- SB 48/HB 313 – Accessory Dwelling Units
- HB 675/SB 756 & SB 752 – Affordable Housing
- SB 948/HB 1143 – Starter Homes
- SB 1548/HB 1389 – Live Local 4.0

### Uniform Permitting, Building Permits, Development Orders & Fee Reductions

- HB 405/SB 526 – Commercial Construction Projects
- SB 750 – Alternative Plans Review and Building Inspections
- HB 803/SB 1234 – Building Permits and Inspection
- HB 929/SB 1020 – Local Government Regulation of Chickees
- HB 1093/SB 1362 – Advanced Air Mobility
- HB 927/SB 1138 – Qualified Contractors
- SB 968/HB 1049 – Home Backup Power Systems

# FLORIDA'S PROPERTY TAX EQUATION

## DON'T BREAK WHAT WORKS

Florida is growing fast and costs have risen considerably. That's put pressure on essential services. Counties are stretching every dollar as far as possible to continue delivering the quality of life Floridians expect. For now, both sides of the "property tax equation" remain in balance.

**TAX BASE × TAX RATE = PROPERTY TAX REVENUES → FUNDS LOCAL SERVICES**

But this legislative session, proposed changes to our property tax system would significantly narrow the tax base, **leaving fewer people to pay more money:**



Each of these proposals makes the current system less efficient and jeopardizes essential services, including:



LAW ENFORCEMENT



FIRE FIGHTERS & EMS



ROADS & INFRASTRUCTURE



WATER QUALITY



SECURE ELECTIONS



HURRICANE RECOVERY

These services are essential. Mandated by Florida's constitution and statutes, they cannot be eliminated even if their funding sources are. If property taxes are eliminated, the conservative Tax Foundation says sales taxes would have to more than double (and quadruple for rural counties) to fill the gap:

7.05%  
CURRENT STATE  
SALES TAX RATE

↑15.34%  
NEW STATE  
SALES TAX RATE

↑32%  
RURAL COUNTIES  
STATE SALES TAX

(SOURCE: REASON, OCTOBER 2025)

### The math doesn't work.

Bad for taxpayers and neighborhoods, eliminating homestead property tax creates an avoidable fiscal crisis.



### THE RESULT:

- A system that is less efficient and less accountable
- Higher sales taxes and burden on renters and small businesses
- Shifts priorities away from first responders and local services
- Empowers distant politicians and special interests

### THE FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES IS:

- Committed to protecting the integrity, functionality, and fairness of Florida's property tax system;
- Recognizes the growing disconnect between market values and taxable values and works to prevent disproportionate tax shifts that threaten counties' ability to fund essential services.
- Advocates for local fiscal capacity and provide taxpayers and policymakers with transparent accounting of the true cost of delivering those services.

# PROPERTY TAX TRUTHS VS. MYTHS

## MYTH

**MYTH**  
Eliminating property taxes will lower costs for everyday Floridians.



**MYTH**  
Scrapping property taxes won't impact essential services.



**MYTH**  
This plan gives communities more control over their future.



## FACT

**FACT**  
It's not a tax cut—it's a tax shift. Wealthy landowners and out-of-state property owners benefit most, while working families pay more through higher sales taxes and hidden fees.



**FACT**  
Services like public safety, parks, and clean water depend on stable, local funding. Eliminating property taxes threatens the things that make Florida a great place to live.



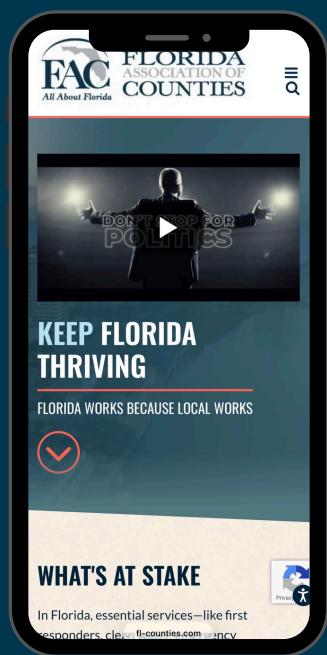
**FACT**  
It does the opposite. It centralizes power in Tallahassee, giving special interests more say while everyday residents lose their voice.



## REPORT ON FLORIDA COUNTY PROPERTY TAXES

[KEEPFLORIDATHRIVING.COM](http://KEEPFLORIDATHRIVING.COM)

FAC's Report, located on [KeepFloridaThriving.com](http://KEEPFLORIDATHRIVING.COM), provides statewide context for all counties and the individual county property tax snapshots, using locally sourced, audited, and state reported data. Information in this report and the county snapshots is intended to inform state officials and the public on factors impacting Florida's property tax system and county budgets. Each county in Florida has a unique property tax base depending on the county's composition of real property. Each county snapshot, found following the link for that county, contains easily accessible and helpful links to individual county budgets and audit reports.



[KeepFloridaThriving.com](http://KeepFloridaThriving.com)

# 2025-26 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**Michelle Lincoln**  
President  
Monroe County



**René Flowers**  
President-Elect  
Pinellas County



**Susan Adams**  
First Vice President  
Indian River County



**Larry Harvey**  
Second Vice President  
Putnam County



**Terry Burroughs**  
Immediate Past President  
Okeechobee County

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