

PINELLAS HAS 7 STATE LEGISLATORS UP FOR RE-ELECTION¹

HOW DO THEY VOTE ON GUN SAFETY?

REPUBLICANS

JAMIE GRANT (R) House D. 64, Elected 2010
CHRIS LATVALA (R) House D. 67, Elected 2014
CHRIS SPROWLS (R) House D. 65, Elected 2014
NICK DICEGLIE (R) House D. 66, Elected in 2018

DEMOCRATS

BEN DIAMOND (D) House D. 68, Elected 2016
DARRYL ROUSON (D) Senate D. 19, Elected 2016
(Previously in House D.70, 2008-2016)
JENNIFER WEBB (D) House D. 69, Elected 2018

*Note that Republicans control the Senate, the House, and the Governorship
and have done so for the last 20 years.*

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

In 2018, six days after the Parkland shooting, House Republicans rejected a motion by Democrats to debate an assault weapons ban.² The legislation would have banned weapons like the one used in Parkland.

VOTED NO - James Grant (R), Chris Latvala (R), and Chris Sprowls (R)

VOTED YES - Ben Diamond (D)³

An assault weapons ban failed again during the 2019 session (no votes recorded).

UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS, BANS ON LARGE CAPACITY MAGAZINES, AND OTHER MEASURES TO ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE

In August of 2019, after the mass shootings in El Paso, TX and Dayton, OH, James Grant (R), Nick DiCeglie (R), Chris Latvala (R), and Chris Sprowls (R) **VOTED NO** on Democrats' motion to convene a special session so the legislature could consider background checks for all firearm sales, bans on large-capacity magazines, and other mechanisms to address gun violence.⁴

VOTED YES - Ben Diamond (D) Darryl Rouson (D) Jennifer Webb (D)

¹Wengay Newton announced in January 2020 that he will run for County Commissioners, District 7

² <https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2018/02/21/how-they-voted-the-roll-call-on-assault-weapons-ban/>

³ Nick DiCeglie (R) and Jennifer Webb (D) were not in office at the time of this vote. Darryl Rouson (D) is in the Senate.

⁴ <https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2019/08/22/florida-legislature-special-session-on-gun-reform-heres-how-your-lawmakers-are-voting/>

In the past, Democrats have filed other gun safety bills, including for universal background checks, but with the Republicans in control, these bills have been sidelined without the legislators having to vote on the record.

In February 2019, however, Republican James Grant, Chair of the Criminal Justice Subcommittee, said that “a background check is ‘effectively a gun registry,’ and he won’t support it.”⁵

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN PETITION

A bipartisan coalition of Floridians is gathering signatures for a proposed amendment to Florida’s constitution that would ban the sale of assault weapons. Organizers were not able to get enough signatures by the deadline to have it on the ballot in 2020, so they are now working to get it on the ballot in 2022. To sign the petition, go to <https://bawnfl.org/amendment.html>

In 2019, Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis created a possible roadblock to the amendment when he approved legislation [HB 56] that makes it harder for citizens to petition to put amendments on the ballot.

All Pinellas Republicans voted YES to make it harder to get amendments on the ballot, while Pinellas Democrats voted NO.

VOTED YES - James Grant (R), Nick DiCeglie (R), Chris Latvala (R), Chris Sprowls (R)

VOTED NO - Jennifer Webb (D) Ben Diamond (D) Darryl Rouson (D)

GUNS IN SCHOOLS

In 2018, the Florida legislature passed a bill allowing school personnel to be armed (SB 7026⁷), but teachers who exclusively performed classroom duties were excluded. Then in 2019, with the passage of SB 7030⁸, the legislature allowed classroom teachers to be armed. All Democrats in the House and Senate voted against arming teachers. All Pinellas Republicans voted to allow teachers to be armed.

⁵ <https://www.floridaphoenix.com/2019/02/12/heres-whats-happening-on-gun-laws-a-year-after-south-florida-high-school-mass-shooting-shattered-a-community/>

⁶ <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/5>

⁷ <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2018/07026>

⁸ <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/07030>; <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/arming-teachers-bad-idea/>

2019
SB 7030
Arming Teachers

VOTED YES - James Grant (R), Nick DiCeglie (R), Chris Latvala (R), Chris Sprowls (R)

VOTED NO - Jennifer Webb (D) Ben Diamond (D) Darryl Rouson (D)

2018
SB 7026
Arming School Personnel
Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School
Public Safety Act

Created a “guardian” program that **allows school personnel to be armed**, but teachers who exclusively perform classroom duties were excluded. (This exclusion was removed in 2019 by the bill referenced above, SB 7030.) SB 7026 also provided for some gun restrictions and funding for safety measures and mental health services.

VOTED YES Chris Latvala (R), Chris Sprowls (R)

VOTED NO Ben Diamond (D) Darryl Rouson (D) James Grant (R)⁹

Firearms on College Campuses and School Grounds

In 2016, Republicans, Chris Sprowls (R), James Grant (R), and Chris Latvala (R), voted to allow firearms to be carried on **college and university campuses**. Darryl Rouson (D) voted against this bill. The bill failed.¹⁰

In 2019, Republicans, Chris Sprowls (R), James Grant (R), Chris Latvala (R), and Nick DiCeglie (R), voted to allow firearms to be carried **in churches operating on the same grounds as schools**.¹¹ Ben Diamond (D) and Jennifer Webb (D) voted against this bill.¹² The bill failed.

Also in 2019, Republican, James Grant (R), voted in committee for a bill which provided that “a school district can prohibit a student from storing a firearm inside a vehicle on school property, but can no longer prohibit anyone else who may be on

⁹ Nick DiCeglie (R) and Jennifer Webb (D) were not in office at the time of this vote.

¹⁰<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/4001>, Nick DiCeglie (R), Jennifer Webb (D), and Ben Diamond (D) were not in office at the time of this vote.

¹¹ <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2019/403/BillText/e1/PDF>; <https://www.tampabay.com/blogs/gradebook/2019/03/12/florida-house-committee-eases-gun-restrictions-at-schools-churches/>

¹² Darryl Rouson (D) did not vote.

school property, such as employees or parents, from storing **firearms inside their vehicles.**¹³ This bill died in committee.

OPEN CARRY

2016
HB 163

In 2016, **Chris Sprowls (R)** and **James Grant (R)** voted in favor of open-carry of firearms.¹⁴ Darryl Rouson (D) and Chris Latvala (R) voted against this bill.¹⁵ The bill failed.

STAND YOUR GROUND

2017
SB 128

Shifts burden of proof in “stand your ground” cases from shooter to party trying to overcome immunity defense.¹⁶

VOTED YES Chris Sprowls (R), James Grant (R), Chris Latvala (R)

VOTED NO Ben Diamond (D) Darryl Rouson (D)¹⁷

To see how your representative voted on additional legislation, go to <https://www.floridareportcard.com>.

Did you know?

“[S]tates with stricter gun laws and laws requiring universal background checks for firearm purchase had lower firearm-related pediatric mortality rates.”
<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/144/2/e20183283#ref-9>,

“Half as many US Children Die from Firearm Injuries Where Gun Laws are Strictest.” <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/Half-as-many-U-S-Children-Die-from-Firearm-Injuries-Where-Gun-Laws-are->

¹³<https://myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName=h6005a.CRJ.DOCX&DocumentType=Analysis&BillNumber=6005&Session=2019>

¹⁴<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/163/BillText/e1/PDF>; Nick DiCeglie (R), Jennifer Webb (D), Ben Diamond (D), and Wengay Newton, Sr. (D) were not in office at the time of this vote.

¹⁵ Nick DiCeglie (R), Jennifer Webb (D), Ben Diamond (D), and Wengay Newton, Sr. (D) were not in office at the time of this vote.

¹⁶ <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2017/0128>

¹⁷ Nick DiCeglie (R) and Jennifer Webb (D) were not in office at the time of this vote.

[Stricest.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2FFj3mroprK3n8Eg67R_piuBdqrlYrUankxBnr0RMndfDEwdfKhnrV6fA](https://www.fbi.gov/stricest.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2FFj3mroprK3n8Eg67R_piuBdqrlYrUankxBnr0RMndfDEwdfKhnrV6fA)

A 2017 study “found that violent crime rates increased with each additional year a right-to-carry law was in place, presumably as more people were carrying guns on their person and in their vehicles. By years seven through 10 following the adoption of a RTC law, violent crime rates were 11 percent to 14 percent higher than predicted had such laws not been in place. Weaker concealed carry laws were associated with a 10 percent higher murder rate 10 years following the adoption of RTC laws. A separate study by Boston University researchers also found that state laws greatly expanding legal gun carrying were linked to increased homicides with handguns.” <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/365543-gun-owners-and-republicans-dont-really-want-concealed-carry>

Florida “lead[s] the nation with the highest number of concealed weapon permits.” <https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/2019/04/11/florida-nears-milestone-2-million-concealed-weapon-permit-holders/>

“Nationally, the number of people hurt in firearms accidents is flat. In Florida, it’s soaring.” <https://www.tampabay.com/florida/2019/05/17/nationally-number-of-people-hurt-in-firearms-accidents-is-flat-in-florida-its-soaring/>

“Case-control studies, ecological time-series and cross-sectional studies indicate that in homes, cities, states and regions in the U.S., where there are more guns, both men and women are at a higher risk for homicide, particularly firearm homicide.” <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hicrc/firearms-research/guns-and-death/>

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