

## SOUTH FLORIDA 100

# South Florida 100: Bills are being filed for the March legislative session



### **Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** One of the most important roles of government is to protect public health, safety and welfare. Gov. Ron DeSantis this week announced an initiative to permanently prevent local governments, schools and employers from implementing potentially necessary COVID-19 protective measures. COVID-19 is not over — even now, a new sub-variant has appeared and many Floridians are suffering. The future is uncertain. This proposal ignores medical science, disregards the 84,000 Floridians who have died from COVID-19, infringes upon the freedom of individuals and businesses to safely reengage in normal activities, and leaves local government and schools unable to address future localized outbreaks.

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** In a democracy, government derives its power from the consent of the governed. That fundamental tenet of American government is now being tested in Washington. A candidate

for Congress in New York blatantly lied to the voters, falsifying his education, work history and even his family background. He succeeded and tricked voters into electing him. The Speaker of the House has said that he should not be removed from office because his election was the will of the voters. The will of the voters should be followed, but only when they are fully and truthfully informed.

December 23, 2022

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** When I was in the fourth grade at Nova Blanche Forman Elementary School, another student (who was twice my size and later would become a competitive wrestler) hit me. We were both called to the principal's office. The principal was highly

intelligent with a great, calming demeanor. He listened to us with great respect and diffused the situation. The principal would go on to lead several other schools and serve 12 years on the Broward County School Board. Last week, that principal, Benjamin Williams, passed away. He was a role model and touched my life. He truly made a difference.

November 18, 2022

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** This week, Donald Trump announced that he would again run for president of the United States. To date, Grover Cleveland was the only person who has ever served

as president, lost re-election and then successfully ran again. By the end of his second term, Cleveland was very unpopular, the nation was in the midst of a severe national depression, and he chose not to seek another term as president. Unlike Trump, Cleveland won the popular vote in all three of his presidential elections. Interesting times await.

# SOUTH FLORIDA SunSentinel

## South Florida 100: Early voting has started, and Election Day is almost here

South Florida Sun-Sentinel  
Oct 28, 2022 at 8:00 am



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** Throughout American history, candidates for elected office publicly and repeatedly debated the key issues of the time to enable voters to make an informed decision. In the 1800s, those debates often lasted many hours. This week, the candidates for Florida governor engaged in the one and only debate, which lasted only one hour and was conducted after 1.9 million voters had already voted. The format of the debate, limiting responses to 60 and 90 seconds, made it impossible for either candidate to do anything but repeat sound bites and talking points without delving deeply into any issue. Voters deserve more.

October 21, 2022

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** This week, I was privileged to exercise my right to vote, which I did by mail ballot.

Throughout the world, far too many people lack a meaningful ability to vote

for their leaders. Nevertheless, a large percentage of Floridians ignore that right. Fortunately, the trend for voter participation in Florida's November general elections in non-presidential years is improving, from 47% in 2006, to 49% in 2010, 51% in 2014 and 63% in 2018, but it still greatly lags behind turnout in presidential election years. Everyone who can vote, should vote and have their voice be heard.

September 30, 2022

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** As we were all focused on Hurricane Ian, you may not have noticed that there was a large spike in COVID-19 cases reported in the United Kingdom. During the past two years, spikes in

the United Kingdom have usually been followed by similar spikes in the United States. Hopefully, this is not a new variant and is merely the result of large social gatherings following the death of the queen. However, we are very fortunate to have available to us an omicron specific booster. Anyone who has not received the most recent booster should do so.

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## OPINION

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# South Florida 100

*Our panel of 100 influential leaders discusses the most important issues affecting you.*



**Jamie Cole**, *municipal attorney, various Broward County cities.* A fundamental pillar of democracy is the right of the people to choose their elected officials. Recently, a duly elected state attorney was removed from office because he made a political statement that he would not prosecute people who violated a certain law. Last week, four duly elected

School Board members were removed from office primarily because of their political decision not to support the removal of a school superintendent after the 2017 Stoneman Douglas mass shooting, despite intervening elections. Elected officials chosen by the people should only be removed from office in the most extreme situations, not for political disagreements.



## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole,**  
**municipal attorney,**  
**various Broward**  
**County cities**

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# SunSentinel

August 7, 2022

## South Florida 100 Our panel of 100 influential leaders discusses the most important issues affecting you.



**Jamie Cole**, *municipal attorney, various Broward County cities*. Our political discourse has reached dangerously low levels. The governor repeatedly disrespects the office of the President of the United States by engaging in childish name calling (referring to the president as “Brandon,” which is known to be code for an expletive), taking a page from the Trump playbook. As a resident of Senate District 35, I have been inundated with blistering attack mailers from both candidates, so bad that they have resulted in litigation. This lack of professionalism and civility undermines confidence in our government and must be remedied.

# SunSentinel

August 6, 2022

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** Our political discourse has reached dangerously low levels. The governor repeatedly disrespects the office of the President of the United States by engaging in childish name calling

(referring to the president as “Brandon,” which is known to be code for an expletive), taking a page from the Trump playbook. As a resident of Senate District 35, I have been inundated with blistering attack mailers from both candidates, so bad that they have resulted in litigation. This lack of professionalism and civility undermines confidence in our government and must be remedied.

# SunSentinel

July 3, 2022

## OPINION

South Florida **100**  Our panel of 100 influential leaders discusses the most important issues affecting you.

### TOP STORIES FROM LAST WEEK



**Jamie Cole**, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities. Dr. Lisa Gwynn, a South Florida pediatrician who serves as president of the Florida chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, was removed from the Florida Healthy Kids Board by Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis. Her infraction: speaking the truth about COVID vaccines for children and chal-

lenging the decision to block county health departments from obtaining vaccines for young children, which Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo conceded would prevent 30,000 disadvantaged kids from accessing vaccines. But her statements, while consistent with mainstream medical opinion and CDC recommendations, are at odds with those of the governor and surgeon general. Dissent in Florida is not tolerated.

# SunSentinel

July 1, 2022

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole,**  
**municipal attorney,**  
**various Broward**  
**County cities**

**Last week:** Dr. Lisa Gwynn, a South Florida pediatrician who serves as President of the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, was

removed from the Florida Healthy Kids Board by Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis. Her infraction: speaking the truth about COVID vaccines for children and challenging the decision to block county health departments from obtaining vaccines for young children, which Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo conceded would prevent 30,000 disadvantaged kids from accessing vaccines. But her statements, while consistent with mainstream medical opinion and CDC recommendations, are at odds with those of the governor and surgeon general. Dissent in Florida is not tolerated.

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** Florida is officially reporting about 10,000 daily COVID cases. After more than two years of successfully avoiding COVID, I became part of the statistic this week. Or did I? I will

not be included in the official count because, like many others, my positive result was only from a home test. Based upon my unscientific survey and contrary to official counts, more people are getting COVID now than during any of the prior surges. Possibly because I am vaccinated and double boosted, my symptoms have fortunately been extremely mild. But now is not the time to put down the guard.

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** After years of litigation, this week Judge Jack Tuter rejected Ron Bergeron's claim that he was betrayed by his former business partners when they agreed to sell the Sun-

Bergeron joint venture to Waste Management. Regardless of the outcome, the residents of Broward owe a debt of gratitude to Ron Bergeron and his partners for injecting competition into the solid waste disposal market. This competition resulted in substantially lower disposal costs over the past ten years. Now, municipal and county leaders are working to create a solid waste authority to find a long-term solution to solid waste disposal and recycling.

# SunSentinel

May 20, 2022

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** This week, the country passed the million-person death mark for COVID-19 and the Biden administration extended the federal health emergency declaration. COVID-19 has become the deadliest disease in American history, far surpassing the 675,000 Americans that died from the 1918 Spanish Flu. In South Florida, the daily number of cases and the positivity rates are again rising to dangerous levels. The pandemic is not over, but we

are fortunate that modern medicine has provided us with far better tools (vaccinations, boosters, masks, testing, treatment, etc.) than existed in 1918 to protect ourselves, if we choose to use them.



# SOUTH FLORIDA SunSentinel

Apr 15, 2022



## **Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** Many residents are demanding that their local governments consider rent controls similar to those in New York City to address skyrocketing rents. Although the propriety of rent control is subject to debate based upon local conditions, local officials are unable to even effectively engage in such a debate because of a Florida state law that requires voter approval of rent controls, and, even then, limits them to one year and exempts “luxury apartments.” Accordingly, some local governments have instead passed laws requiring 60-day notice prior to any rent increase over 5%. Local governments should have local control on this issue.

APRIL 1, 2022



## **Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** During a pandemic or other emergency, each level of government – federal, state and local – has an important role to play. This week, Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody filed a lawsuit challenging the federal rule requiring that passengers wear masks on airplanes. Previously, local governments (including school boards) objected when the state stopped them from implementing measures that they deemed necessary within their jurisdictions. Each government should respect the important role played by the others: The federal government should deal with interstate issues, state government should address statewide matters, and local governments should be able to address the specific conditions within their communities.

# SunSentinel

March 27, 2022

## South Florida 100 Our panel of 100 influential leaders discusses the most important issues affecting you.

### TOP STORIES FROM LAST WEEK



**Jamie Cole**, *municipal attorney, various Broward County cities*. This week, the Florida Supreme Court set oral argument in a lawsuit brought by 33 local governments and 70 local officials challenging a statute that deters them from enacting local firearm regulations for fear that they could be removed from office, be personally fined and expose their local government to damage claims. The local officials prevailed at the trial court on all three penalties, but an appellate court reversed as to the latter two. Now the Supreme Court will decide whether basic tenets of democracy — legislative and governmental function immunity — continue to exist at the local level in Florida.

MARCH 25, 2022



**Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

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March 4, 2022

## South Florida 100



**Jamie Cole,  
municipal attorney,  
various Broward  
County cities**

**Last week:** After more than 13 years of serving Broward County as its county administrator, this week,

Bertha Henry retired. As counsel to many municipalities in Broward, I have had many dealings with Henry, both on the same and opposite sides. She has always been the consummate professional and showed a true love for our county. Her public service should be applauded, and I wish her the best of luck in her retirement. She has made Broward County a better place to live and will be greatly missed.

**Looking ahead:** The Florida Legislature has continued to consider imposing \$200 million in penalties to school districts that followed CDC guidelines last year by imposing mask mandates during the COVID surge. Article IX, section 1 of the Florida Constitution states that it is a “paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children living within its

border.” The Florida Education Finance Program established a state policy of equalized funding for all students in the public education system, regardless of county. Hopefully, calmer minds will prevail and students will not be penalized.

# SunSentinel

February 18, 2022

## South Florida 100:



**Jamie Cole,  
municipal  
attorney,  
various  
Broward  
County cities**

**Looking ahead:** There was a time when companies understood that “good service is good business.” Possibly because of the COVID pandemic, customer service has recently deteriorated to the point it is unbearable. We have all heard the recording: “due to high call volume, wait times are extremely high.” If there are high call volumes, the company should hire more customer service representatives. Even worse, how often have we been repeatedly told to press 1 or press 2 only to ultimately get disconnected? Technology should enable companies to improve the customer service experience, but it has somehow made it even worse.

# SunSentinel

February 4, 2022

## South Florida 100



### **Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Looking ahead:** Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer announced that he is retiring after 28 years of distinguished service. Justice Breyer was nominated by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate in an 87-9 bipartisan vote, with 33 Republicans crossing party lines. In contrast, the four Supreme Court nominations in the past 10 years have been highly partisan, three being approved by slight majorities with nearly all senators voting along party lines. The fourth nominee was not even considered by the Senate. President Biden has announced that he will be nominating the first Black woman to the Court – a partisan battle is expected.





## **Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** The Florida Legislature is in session, and taxpayers need to watch their wallets. Bills are progressing that would significantly increase expenses for local governments. One bill would increase sovereign immunity caps for tort claims from \$200,000 to \$1 million per person and eliminate the cap on total liability per incident. This will result in higher insurance premiums and claims expenses. Another would expose local governments to lawsuits by businesses that claim they have lost money because of newly enacted local laws. The money to pay for these bills has to come from somewhere – either reduced services or higher taxes.

# SunSentinel

January 2, 2022

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## OPINION

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# South Florida 100

Our panel of 100 influential leaders discusses the most important issues affecting you.

### LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT WEEK



**Jamie Cole**, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities. The assault on local home rule and local officials will continue in 2022. Local officials are the closest and most-responsive to the people, and they're best-suited to enact laws that are appropriate and desirable in their communities. The Florida Constitution recognizes the importance of

local home rule. Nevertheless, the state continues to preempt local governments from acting on a panoply of issues of local importance and pass laws to financially penalize local officials for doing their jobs. (e.g., school board members protecting students by mandating face masks and city officials enacting reasonable firearm regulations requested by their local residents.)



## **Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Last week:** When asked whether the Founding Fathers gave us a republic or a monarchy, Benjamin Franklin replied: “A republic, if you can keep it.” The story of 2021 was that our democracy was challenged, but persevered. On Jan. 6, thousands of insurrectionists stormed the U.S. Capitol trying to stop the certification and peaceful transfer of power to our legally elected new president. They failed, and over 700 were arrested. Our democracy is a fragile experiment that must be cherished and nurtured, and not taken for granted. As John Adams wrote, “there never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide.”

**Looking ahead:** The assault on local home rule and local officials will continue in 2022. Local officials are the closest and most-responsive to the people, and they’re best-suited to enact laws that are appropriate and desirable in their communities. The Florida Constitution recognizes the importance of local home rule. Nevertheless, the state continues to preempt local governments from acting on a panoply of issues of local importance and pass laws to financially penalize local officials for doing their jobs. (e.g., school

board members protecting students by mandating face masks and city officials enacting reasonable firearm regulations requested by their local residents.)

December 3, 2021

## South Florida 100:

SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL |  
volrDEC 03, 2021 AT 12:00 PM



### **Jamie Cole, municipal attorney, various Broward County cities**

**Looking ahead:** On Tuesday, the Broward County Commission will be choosing the new boundaries for county commission districts. Although there has been little talk about the new districts outside of political circles, the

changes in boundaries will impact residents throughout the county. The districts are redrawn every ten years to reflect changes in population. The redistricting this year is even more significant because of a 2018 Charter Amendment that reinforced the prohibition on racial or partisan gerrymandering. More information, including the four proposed maps, is available at [www.broward.org/redistricting](http://www.broward.org/redistricting).

November 19, 2021



**Jamie Cole,  
municipal  
attorney, various  
Broward County  
cities**

**Last week:** Special sessions of the Florida Legislature are expensive and should only be held

when there are major issues that cannot wait until a regular session. A session to enact measures to mitigate against the COVID-19 pandemic and reduce the probability of another surge would certainly qualify. Unfortunately, the purpose of this week's special session was the exact opposite – to enact laws that interfere with efforts to increase vaccination rates and remove mask mandates as a tool for school districts to use if there is another surge. These laws ignore science and make a resurgence more likely.