

Sunburn – The Morning Read Of What’s Hot In Florida Politics – 5.10.21



By Peter Schorsch

Good Monday morning.

Here’s a quick scoop: **Cody McCloud**, press secretary to Gov. **Ron DeSantis**, is exiting the comms shop to become Legislative Affairs Director at the Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

—

State Rep. **Ben Diamond** is entering the race for Florida’s 13th Congressional District — a seat being vacated by incumbent **Charlie Crist**, who **jumped into** the 2022 gubernatorial contest Tuesday.

The St. Petersburg Democrat is set to make the announcement today at USF St. Pete, where he will be joined by several local politicians, including Pinellas County Commissioners **Pat Gerard** and **Janet Long**. St. Pete City Councilmembers **Gina Driscoll**, **Amy Foster** and **Brandi Gabbard** will also be joining Diamond for the announcement.

Diamond, who was **slated to become House Democratic Leader from 2022 to 2024**, is the second Democrat to enter the race for CD 13. Diamond will race against President **Barack Obama’s** former national security adviser **Eric Lynn**, who **announced his campaign Wednesday**.

The race also includes **Anna Paulina Luna**, who also **joined the race last week**. The GOP firebrand — who gave Crist a run for his money last year — ran, among other things, as a pro-cop candidate who took every available opportunity to bash Crist as socialist and anti-law enforcement.

The candidates will face off for CD 13, which is currently a fairly purple district. Heading into last year's presidential election, Republicans, through a massive voter registration effort that will continue into the 2022 midterms, **chipped away** at the Democratic advantage in the Pinellas County district from 5.2 percentage points to just 4.6.

And with redistricting on the horizon, Republicans leading the process could narrow that even more by shifting district boundaries northward. However, they may be reluctant to get too creative with redistricting after the Florida Supreme Court foiled their last attempts to draw a map favorable to the GOP.

Offering yet another sign that Florida is emerging from the yearlong crisis precipitated by COVID-19, the Florida Chamber kicks off its first in-person conference since the beginning of the pandemic May 10-12 at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort.

Fittingly, the event they are hosting — the inaugural Southeastern Leadership Conference on Safety Health and Sustainability — has arranged several safeguards to keep its 330 attendees safe. They are required to wear face coverings. There also will be on-site temperature screenings and COVID-19 rapid tests, as well as social distancing and hand sanitizer stations. A blood drive is part of the gathering with COVID-19 antibody testing.

"All of that has been put in place to make sure ... we can be live, but we can do that in a really, really safe way," said **Ivette Faulkner**, the Florida Chamber's Executive vice president for Strategic Communication & Marketing. The conference also offers a virtual option to attend the conference's professional development training and 31 educational sessions. In addition, there will be an exhibition hall on-site featuring 25 vendors.

The conference is attracting EHS — Environment, Health and Safety — professionals from across the south. While the COVID-19 crisis has been front-and-center over the past year, its practitioners can face a wide range of workplace situations — everything from slip-and-falls, protective equipment and disaster preparedness to OSHA regulations and workplace violence — all of which and more will be covered in the three-day meeting.

Other speakers include Florida Surgeon General Dr. **Scott Rivkees** and Florida CFO **Jimmy Patronis**.

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, The Florida Chamber had created a safety group to help propel the state to become one of the safest, healthiest and most sustainable in the nation. The pandemic and its impact on every business in Florida have highlighted the critical importance of EHS's purpose.

"Safety is Job 1 to Florida's business leaders, which is why the **Florida Chamber Safety Council** is working to unite Florida's business community for a movement to create a culture of safety," said Florida Chamber

Safety Council President **Katie Yeutter**.

FloridaPolitics, excerpt posted on **SouthFloridaReporter.com**, May 10, 2021

Reprinted with permission