

The Delray Democrat

Let's Make Progress^{1,2}

Senator Lori Berman

I rise with deep gratitude, a strong sense of responsibility, and profound hope. It is the greatest honor of my professional life to stand before you as the newly elected Leader of the Florida Senate Democratic Caucus. I thank my colleagues for their trust, and I appreciate the people of Palm Beach County for the incredible privilege of representing them in this chamber.

Let me begin with this: Florida stands at a crossroads. This moment demands clarity and courage. Yes, we face serious challenges, from a changing climate to rising costs, but within every challenge lies a chance to lead with purpose and heart. And this session has shown us what's possible when we choose progress over partisanship.

This session in Tallahassee, we are standing firm against bills that would roll back child labor protection. We are fighting against efforts to ban books and censor ideas in our schools. We oppose efforts to roll back the important gun safety measures passed in a bipartisan manner in the wake of the horrific Parkland school shooting. We must honor the memories of those we lost by continuing to prioritize public safety, not by moving backward.

Floridians are watching. They are watching this chamber not for theatrics or soundbites, but for leadership. Leadership that puts people first. Leadership that rises above the noise and moves us toward a shared vision for our state's future.

We come from different parts of Florida. We hold diverse perspectives, life experiences, and political philosophies. But we were all elected for the same reason: because the people of this state entrusted us to do the work. The real work. Our diversity is our strength, and our unity is our power.

Our caucus is not just here to oppose; we are here to propose. To advance real solutions that address the needs of everyday Floridians. We will listen, legislate, and lead with empathy and resolve. My approach to leadership will not be one of division. It will be one of inclusion.

We will not trade in fear. We will lead with facts. We will not engage in personal attacks. We will focus on policy. And we will not allow the loudest voices to drown out the needs of everyday Floridians.

To my colleagues across the aisle: I extend my hand in partnership. Some issues should never be partisan, such as ensuring our children's safety in school, protecting clean water, caring for our

¹This is a transcript of the speech given by Senator Berman after she was elected Senate Democratic Leader. Congratulations, Lori! The speech was previously published in The Palm Beach Post and is reprinted here with permission.

² [*The Delray Democrat*](#), June 2025, page 1.

and growing our economy in a way that uplifts all Floridians, not just the few at the top. Let's work together where we can. Let's disagree with respect where we must. And let's remember we were not elected to be comfortable. We were elected to be courageous.

To my fellow Democrats: I am proud to serve you, and I am prouder of what we are building. We are alive and kicking, passing bills, fighting bad policy and getting appropriations for projects that impact our districts. We may not hold the majority, but we have something just as powerful: a vision rooted in fairness, in justice, in equality, and in care.