



David O'Keefe

LEON COUNTY COMMISSIONER, DISTRICT 5

Dear Neighbor,

We're coming to the end of my first term serving you as District Five County Commissioner. I'm thinking back over the things we've won for our neighbors and the things we stopped from harming them. Sometimes I had little hope that we could succeed. When I emailed you about an issue, many of you emailed or called your other Commissioners at both the County and Blueprint. Your effort made the difference!

We stopped a major sprawl attempt to expand the Urban Services Area along Old St. Augustine Road, which would have permitted more sprawl along a protected canopy road.

We won \$500,000 in annual GAP Financing for affordable rental housing for families with very-low and extremely low incomes! And the first project under the program has already been approved! We also brought in \$250,000 for the program, from Blueprint. The Capital Area Justice Ministry campaigned for this for years, and we got this win because of them and because hundreds of you emailed County Commissioners to demand it.

We prohibited the retail sale of dogs and cats in unincorporated Leon County to stop "puppy mills," protect animals, protect consumers, and prevent pet overpopulation.

We forced the developer of the stalled Washington Square project to restore our downtown streets and sidewalks to normal after half a decade of being in a "construction zone."

We built miles of new sidewalks where they've been needed for decades and we have miles more in the planning and design phase to continue improving safety for everyone.

We stopped a policy change that would make it harder for some teenagers to get Library Cards. If that change went through, 16- and 17-year-olds

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who want a library card shouldn't be held responsible for their parents' finances. Teens should get to use our library whether their parent owes fines or not.

These are just some of the votes I am so proud of. Thank you for being engaged, and for working to make County government better for everyone

Sincerely,
David O'Keefe, CPA
Leon County Commissioner, District 5

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month



September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month—a time to break the stigma surrounding mental health, remind one another that it's okay to ask for help, and make sure people know that support is available.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, **you are not alone, and help is available 24/7/365.** These free and confidential resources connect you with trained, caring counselors:

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text **988** to connect with support in English or Spanish.

211 Big Bend: Dial **211** or **(850) 617-6333** for local crisis counseling, suicide prevention support, and help connecting with community resources throughout the Tallahassee and Leon County area.

Veterans Crisis Line: Call **988**, then press **1**, or text **838255**.

Crisis Text Line: Text **HOME** to **741741** to connect with a crisis counselor 24/7

Most importantly, **asking for help is an act of courage and strength—not weakness.** Life can sometimes feel overwhelming, and no one should feel that they have to carry those burdens alone. Reaching out, listening, and supporting one another can make a difference.

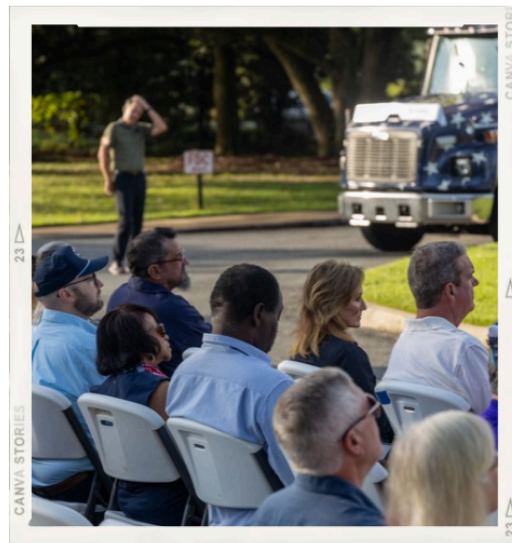
Please take a moment to check in on someone you care about—and remember to take care of yourself, too.

9/11 Ceremony at Florida's Capital City Memorial

Earlier this month, I had the honor of attending Tallahassee's 9/11 remembrance ceremony at Florida's Capital City Memorial, outside the American Red Cross headquarters.

Twenty-five years later, we continue to remember the nearly 3,000 people who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, and the countless first responders, military members, families, and communities forever changed by that day.

It was a meaningful opportunity to pause, reflect, and honor the courage and sacrifice of so many. We will never forget.



Leon County's 2026 Annual Report

Every year, we publish an Annual Report that serves as a report card for Leon County's government. It's designed to easily see how your local government is working for you. It breaks down information focusing on a few main areas:

- Where Your Tax Money Went
- Local Improvements
- Community Support
- Local Success Stories

You can download or read the Annual Report [here](#). I am also including a YouTube video of the report below.



Recent votes at the County Commission

To keep you informed on decisions we make at the County Commission, I am providing a summary of the key votes we took at our September 15th Commission meeting.



9/15/2026 Votes

Approve changes to our Housing Assistance Plan to make manufactured homes eligible for existing assistance programs, including relocation assistance if a mobile home park closes. Direct staff to proactively pursue development partners for affordable tax credit applications, including manufactured homes, and bring back an item on making residents eligible for relocation assistance if a mobile home park is sold and rent increases significantly.

Pass

YES

Cummings, Caban,
Maddox, Minor,
O'Keefe, Proctor,
Welch

NO

Note from David: I added this request of staff to address what we've seen here and elsewhere - a mobile home park is sold to an investor - who then raises lot rent significantly, sometimes double.



9/15/2026 Votes

Direct staff to develop the IMPACT Program to attract major events hosted by local colleges and universities, with clear requirements for eligible venues, attendance, out-of-town visitors, repeat events, and marketing support. The proposal would set aside up to \$50,000 per event, up to \$250,000 annually in Tourist Development Tax (TDT) funds to attract these events once the County's Tourist Development Plan is updated.

Pass

YES

Cummings, Caban,
Maddox, Minor,
O'Keefe, Proctor,
Welch

NO

Note from David: After receiving additional information from staff and getting answers to my questions about the program, I felt comfortable voting to approve it. While promoting Leon County with these big-venue events, we can't forget to support our local arts and culture organizations, which make Leon County such a special place to live and visit.



9/15/2026 Votes

Reject all prior vendor bids and responses, and do not proceed with the School Zone Speed Detection and Enforcement Program in school zones, within the county's unincorporated areas.

Pass

YES

Cummings, Caban,
Maddox, Minor,
O'Keefe, Proctor,
Welch

NO

Not Present:

Abstained:



9/15/2026 Votes

Require all license plate reader cameras, including Flock cameras, currently on County property or in the County right-of-way to be removed within 30 days. Require that any proposed license plate readers on County property obtain approval from the County Commission before installation.

Pass

YES

Cummings, Caban,
Maddox, Minor,
O'Keefe, Proctor,
Welch

NO

Not Present:

Abstained:



9/15/2026 Votes

Adopt an 18-month moratorium on large-scale data centers in the unincorporated areas of Leon County.

Pass

YES

Cummings, Caban,
Maddox, Minor,
O'Keefe, Proctor,
Welch

NO

Not Present:

Abstained:

2026 Election Information

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Mark S. Earley

Supervisor of Elections
Leon County



Here is a summary of key election information for the 2026 General Election here in Leon County. If you have any questions about your voter status, call the Leon County Supervisor of Elections Office at **850-606-8683**.

Use this [website](#) to check on your voter status.

2026 Election Dates

General Election: November 3, 2026

Voter Registration Deadlines

General Election deadline: October 5, 2026

Vote-by-Mail Information

Recent changes to Florida law now require Vote-by-Mail requests to be renewed after each general election cycle rather than remaining active indefinitely. You can use this [link](#) to request or check the status of a Vote-by-Mail ballot.

Deadlines to Request Vote-by-Mail Ballots

General Election deadline: October 22, 2026

Early Voting

All registered voters in Leon County may vote early at designated sites throughout the county. Find the early voting sites [here](#).

Early Voting Periods

General: October 19–November 1, 2026

[Vote411](#)

Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund, VOTE411.org is a "one-stop shop" for election-related information. It provides nonpartisan information to the public, including both general and state-specific information about the election process.

Pet of the Month - 🐕 Hawks 🐕



Meet Hawks!

I'm a neutered male, and I look like an American Bulldog mix - the shelter staff says I'm about 4 years old.

Being at the shelter makes me a little nervous, but I'm gaining confidence each day. I love playtime with my plush toys, other pups, or humans. I'm looking for an active, affectionate family who can show me what love and loyalty really look like.

I made my television debut when I was featured in a *Furry Friday* segment on WCTV. You can see it [here](#).

Animal Shelter Location and Hours:

Address: [1125 Easterwood Drive](#)

By Appointment: Daily from 10:00 am -6:00 pm

Walk-in Kennel Viewings: Tuesdays through Sundays from 1:00 - 5:00 pm
Phone: 850-891-2950



Animal Shelter Adoption Information

Hispanic Heritage Month
September 15 - October 15



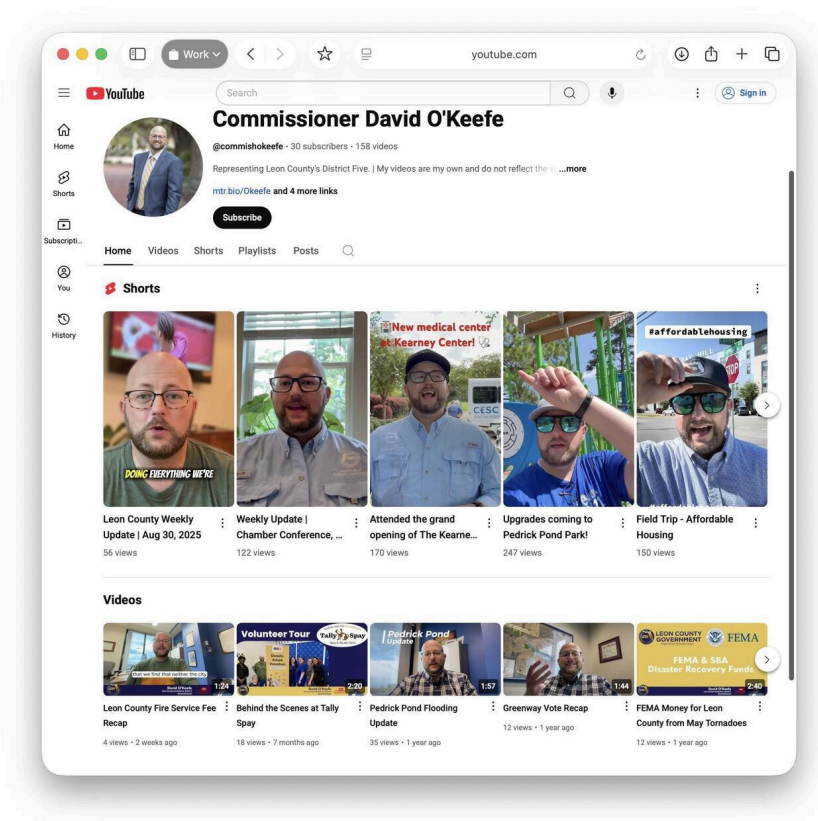
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Hispanic Heritage Month began as Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968, but the observance was expanded into a month-long celebration in 1988 by the U.S. Congress.

Throughout the month and all year long, learn something new about the achievements of Hispanic Americans and the events that shaped history through our library resources.

Right now at Leon County's Main Library, you can experience the exhibit "*Cultura Tallahassee: Together, We Are More.*" The exhibit features original artwork by local artists and will be on display through October 15.

Watch our Community Updates on YouTube



Stay connected between newsletters by subscribing to our YouTube channel. Each week we share updates on County projects, local events, and issues that matter to the community.

 [Subscribe on YouTube](#)

Upcoming Meetings

[Leon County Commission](#)

October 13 at 3:00 p.m. - County Commission Meeting

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October 13 at 6:00 p.m. - Public Hearings
October 20 at 1:00 p.m. - Workshop on Fire Services



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