

Which 2026 Florida candidates are raising the most money?



In the third quarter of 2025, U.S. Rep. Byron Donalds, the gubernatorial frontrunner, raised more than \$9 million.

(LUIS SANTANA | Times)

Byron Donalds had another fine quarter. Democrats? Not so much.

BY KIRBY WILSON
Times Staff Writer

With every campaign finance report, the 2026 midterm field comes into clearer focus. More than a year from the general election, candidates up and down the ballot are already raising millions of dollars. The quarterly filings, which appeared on a state database late Friday, show who's got momen-

tum in key statewide races — and which powerful interests will likely have a seat at the table during the next administration. Gov. Ron DeSantis is term limited, meaning he can't run for reelection in 2026. As would be expected in what is now a solid red state, Republicans dominated the fundraising. The Republican Party of Florida raised more than \$6.2 million,

while the Florida Democratic Party raised about \$540,000. The frontrunner for the Democratic nomination for governor, David Jolly, garnered a fraction of the financial support of his Republican rivals. The same was true in races down the ballot. Here's a rundown of the key fundraising figures in major races. Candidates can raise unlimited sums from individuals and corporations in their political committees. Campaign committees have \$3,000 contribution limits for individuals and corporations. **See FUNDING, 3A**

BUCCANEERS 30, 49ERS 19



As usual, there's no quit in quarterback Baker Mayfield, who stretches for a first down on a running play during the third quarter Sunday against the 49ers at Raymond James Stadium. (Photos by LUIS SANTANA | Times)

Season's motto: Next man up

Is this what it's like to win “comfortably?” Entering Sunday, the Bucs had five consecutive weeks of close calls, winning four of five games in the final minute. Against the 49ers, a team dealing with its own share of injuries to key players, Tampa Bay got two vital stops in the fourth quarter. Quarterback Baker Mayfield keeps finding new targets when his receivers go down — rookie sensation Emeka Egbuka didn't finish the game — with touchdown passes to Kam Johnson and Tez Johnson, whose celebratory backflip was a highlight of the 30-19 victory. The Bucs defense didn't mess around Sunday either. Kindle Vildor and Jamel Dean both intercepted San Francisco's Mac Jones, who also was sacked six times. **More in Sports**



Bucs running back Rachaad White leaps over 49ers cornerback Upton Stout for a first down during the second quarter.

Death reignites theme park debate

Florida allows major attractions to operate rides with minimal regulations and state oversight.

BY SKYLER SWISHER AND MARTIN E. COMAS
Orlando Sentinel (TNS)

A man is dead after riding one of Orlando's newest and fastest roller coasters, and now his family is asking: How many safeguards stand between thrill and tragedy at Florida's theme parks? Florida allows Universal Orlando and other major attractions to operate rides with minimal state oversight. It's a system the family's attorneys and some industry critics say leaves too much for the companies to police themselves and puts others at risk. Universal Orlando reopened the Stardust Racers roller coaster Oct. 4, less than three weeks after 32-year-old Kevin Rodriguez Zavala was found unresponsive on it and died. That decision, apparently made by park management itself, overrode the family's wishes that it remain closed until all investigations are completed. “Stardust Racers is evidence in an active death investigation,” family attorney Ben Crump said in a statement on Oct. 3. “Reopening the ride before our experts can examine every component is unadulterated spoliation of evidence, a grave risk to public safety, and puts profit over people's lives.” The Orange County Sheriff's Office is also still probing the death, but a spokesperson said it's not the agency's role to decide when the coaster should reopen. Universal company officials said their review found the ride functioned properly, and employees followed procedures correctly. State officials observed and reviewed testing, and the ride's manufacturer and a third-party roller coaster engineering expert validated the findings, according to a company memo. But critics say the company drove that process, as is typical in Florida's regulatory scheme. “It's the fox guarding the henhouse. That's the best way to describe it,” said Ken Martin, a **See DEBATE, 2A**

Citrus Park Jewish Community Center to close, sell property



After 33 years, The Maureen and Douglas Cohn Jewish Community Campus, located at 13009 Community Campus Drive off Gunn Highway, will close its doors, including the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Assisted Living Residences, the Jewish Community Center and a preschool. (MIKE CAMUNAS | Beacon Media)

Nearly 100 employees will be laid off as assisted living residents scramble for new housing.

BY MIKE CAMUNAS
Beacon Media

CITRUS PARK — Members and nearby residents said they were blindsided by the early September announcement that the Jewish Community Center on the Maureen and Douglas Cohn Campus off Gunn Highway would close after more than three decades. In an open letter that was also published in the Jewish Press of Tampa just before High Holidays began Sept. 22, CEO Gary Gould said that after 33 years on the cam-

pus, financial strain was the main reason for the closure and ultimate impending sale of the property, which will be to an unnamed developer that is expected to build homes on site. The Cohn Campus includes the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Assisted Living Residences, the Jewish Community Center on the site and a preschool, all of which will close, with the latter being able to finish out the school year. The closing will also see nearly 100 **See CENTER, 3A**