Catalyst Miami State Policy Priorities

Catalyst Miami is an economic justice non-profit that works with thousands of families annually to navigate social services, build grassroots community leadership, and advocate for policy change. Our mission is to identify and collectively solve issues adversely affecting low-wealth communities throughout Miami-Dade County.

1. Our Health is Our Wealth

Catalyst Miami supports the expansion of healthcare access to achieve health justice. If anything, the pandemic has taught us that access to affordable healthcare is key to a thriving local economy. If Florida adopted Medicaid Expansion, over 400,000 Floridians would gain coverage while saving the state $200M annually (Health Insurance, 2021). A healthy Florida is a prosperous Florida for both governments and its constituents.

During the 2022 legislative session, Catalyst Miami supported the following bills for Health Justice:

- HB27/SB1504: Eligibility for Medical Assistance and Related Services
- HJR239/SJR412: State Medicaid Plan
- HB1181 (HB 419)/SB1422 (SB 640): Florida Kidcare Program Eligibility
- HB6079/SB762: Eligibility for Assistance Programs
- HB1074/813: Sexually Transmissible Diseases
- HB855/SB1258: Managed Care Plan Performance

2. Address our Housing Crisis

We believe that housing is a human right and that creating housing stability can improve economic stability across the state. Almost 60% of Miami-Dade County households are cost-burdened by housing, meaning they pay over 30% of their income on shelter (Shimberg Center for Housing Studies 2022). Eviction & foreclosure filings fell sharply in the spring of 2020 during the state moratorium. Filings remained below historic levels in 2021 but increased in 2022 (SCHS2022). Floridians deserve healthy and safe housing that they can afford, as well as a fairer court system. In 2023, we will be opposing the preemption of local protections that have been passed to improve fair notice and rent stabilization across the state. Such as the 60-day notice before a rent increase or a no-cause lease termination that has been passed and adopted by the Miami-Dade County Commission.

During the 2022 legislative session, Catalyst Miami supported the following bills for Housing Justice:

- HB819/HB1485/SB1134: Landlord’s Obligation to Maintain Premises
- HB1131/SB1322: Court Records of Eviction Proceedings
- HB511/SB648: COVID-19 Eviction Information
- HB6005/SB582: Payments Made into the Registry of the Court

Catalyst Miami opposed:

- HB855/SB884: Fees in Lieu of Security Deposit
3. Guarantee Florida’s Future

Given the considerable population and assets at 4ft or less above sea level, Florida is known as “ground zero” for the climate crisis. The very existence of our economy and livelihoods are at risk in the face of climate change. Furthermore, Florida’s low-wealth communities are impacted first and worst by extreme heat, skyrocketing electric bills, stronger hurricanes, and flooding. We must act now to prevent the worst impacts of the climate crisis and to take advantage of the opportunity to improve health outcomes and prosperity through ambitious climate action. In 2023, we will be supporting legislation that improves access among low-wealth Floridians to a cleaner, more just, and affordable energy system.

During the 2022 legislative session, Catalyst Miami supported the following bills for Climate Justice:
- HB887/SB732: Heat Illness Prevention
- HB1285/SB1678: Energy Equity Task Force

Catalyst Miami opposed:
- HB741/SB1024: Renewable Energy Generation
- HB463/SB380: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

4. Achieve Economic Justice

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, over half of Miami-Dade County households were considered in poverty or the working poor (United for Alice 2021). Our region has a staggering racial wealth gap, where the median net worth is $107K for White-Americans, $22K for Cuban-Americans, and $3,700 for American-born Blacks (OSU, 2019). It is essential to build community wealth and address this disparity head-on through policies like an Earned Income Tax Credit. Small businesses, the lifeblood of our local economies, must be prioritized. In addition, we must lower barriers to workforce participation, especially for returning citizens.

During the 2022 legislative session, Catalyst Miami supported the following bills for Economic Justice:
- HB613/SB234: Working Floridians Tax Rebate Program
- HB257/HB11/SB428/SB870: Driver License Suspensions

Catalyst Miami opposed:
- HB943/SB1124: Preemption of Local Government Wage Mandates

5. Preserve Local Governments

Restore local freedoms by reinstating and preserving local governments’ ability to legislate around critical issues. Local governments are more likely to be influenced by their constituents and therefore create policies that align with their needs. By removing preemption laws, our local governments can build grassroots leadership; and lay the groundwork for long-term, positive change.

During the 2022 legislative session, Catalyst Miami supported the following bills for Democracy:
- HB6113/SB1900: Preemption to the State

Catalyst Miami opposed:
- HB569/SB620: Local Business Protection Act
- HB403/SB280: Local Ordinances

6. Invest in our Future

Providing a quality education to all of Florida’s students is a core constitutional responsibility of the state government and critical to economic growth (FPI, 2022). Yet, school districts in Florida are dealing with a crushing teacher shortage, bus driver shortage, and overall operating cost growth that has outpaced revenue. Florida’s average teacher pay ranked 49th in the nation in 2020. All these issues are directly tied to Florida’s ongoing underinvestment in K-12 public schools (FPI, 2022). Public education allows parents to invest in their children’s future without paying exorbitant amounts for schooling. To better our public schools, we must continue to invest in teachers and our students who will be upcoming leaders.

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