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# Zing!

**READERS' OPINIONS  
STATED SUCCINCTLY**

**We're not going back. Greatness is in moving forward!**

**If JetBlue flew to somewhere Tallahasseeans want to go they would have done well.**

**Let this be a lesson Tallahassee. You don't use it, you lose it.**

**Senator Vance thinks childless woman are useless to society. I had some wonderful nuns who taught me in school all childless, so was Mother Teresa.**

**The governor is a resident of Leon County with school age children; it's his school board too.**

**Move over, Cocaine Bear! Cocaine Sharks are circling!**

**The Canopy development will never be mistaken for Southwood; it's more like Deadwood!**

**Tallahassee is a one party rule city. Therein lies the rub.**

**Superintendent race is over in the wake of LCS's amazing state report card numbers. Rocky ftw!**

**JetBlue lands a big egg on the face of Tallahassee "International" Airport!**

**Nothing should be named after a politician. Ever.**

**Dot Inman-Johnson gave the key to the city to Rosa Parks!**

**To purposely mispronounce Kamala's name is so childish. It demeans you, not her.**

**Remember city commissioners you are elected to represent all of Tallahassee not just one area!**

**Some folks are about to learn just how strong the childless cat women contingent is. Meow.**

**Trump and the GOP's smear campaign is not resonating with people.**

**JetBlue giveth and JetBlue taketh away. International, indeed!**

**Besides Tallahassee, JetBlue announced the termination of all service at six other cities.**

**Does anyone really care what John Morgan thinks about Kamala Harris?**

**Once again, Tallahassee air travelers are singing the Jet Blues.**

*A common refrain? Visit Tallahassee.com/zing to submit your Zing!*

# Proud to be a Floridian



**Your Turn**  
JR Harding  
USA TODAY NETWORK

As the nation celebrates the 34th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we Floridians have much to be proud of. The ADA's equal-opportunity principles do not discriminate regarding ethnicity, religion, identity, and/or gender.

Disabling conditions will most likely be a part of you or someone in your family's journey. Research examining ADA's impact has found some mixed findings. There have been measurable and visible improvements in our architectural infrastructure and programs. These include accessible curb cuts, buses, hospitality, entertainment, education, voting systems, and improved public services that support independent living.

Despite these improvements, others argue that the courts and employers were biased. Persons with Disabilities (PWD) are now more able to live independently, self-sufficiently, and contribute to society than in the past.

Florida has been a leader in advancing employment, transportation, outdoor access, and financial independence for the disability community. These successes directly relate to bi-partisan elected leadership from the governor's office, all the way to our local leaders. The late Gov. Lawton Chiles started the disability blueprint for inclusion. Governors Bush, Crist, Scott, and DeSantis have all made enhancements for greater independence and self-sufficiency for the PWD community.

With their executive leadership, our other state elected officials were empowered to do the heavy lifting within their chambers. Some notable achievements that come to mind include but are not limited to; vertical accessibility (access to the second floor of businesses), the creation of the Agency for Persons with Disability (APD), recognizing and funding post-secondary students with disabilities (about 12.5%), Employment First Initiative, the James Patrick Workforce Memorial Program, K-12 education options, the McKay Scholarship Program, and the Florida Able Act.

Our local elected officials deserve credit for advancing independence. They have spearheaded accessible recreational programs, property tax initiatives, gas station access, enforcement of building code standards, and support group homes to enable PWDs to live in our communities rather than institutions.

This has been a family affair led by our leaders. Our communities have been enriched and made more economically competitive because of our commitment to



**JR Harding with a hole-in-one.** PROVIDED BY JR HARDING

our overlooked and vulnerable populations. By leveling the field for all Floridians, we have also made our state more competitive, innovative, and economically stronger because we are inclusive.

As our country celebrates the 34th Anniversary of the ADA, I am proud to call myself a Floridian. Florida has served as a positive change agent. As Florida maps out its future goals, we hope that access, independence, and economic opportunities continue to play an integrated role involving public policy and evolution as a state.

Basic ADA compliance needs reforming into a more universal design when approaching our goods, services, and infrastructures. Let's build inclusion into the fabric of our workforce and communities, rather than making accommodations. Access, independence, and economic freedom are good for everyone, not just people without disabilities.

One of the hard lessons I and others living with disabilities learned has been through exposure to hurricanes, tornados, and other natural disasters. We often cannot relocate due to transportation, accessibility, and economic restraints. We do not have access to on-demand transportation. We are also "handicapped" by our disabilities from independently recovering from disasters.

The need for community is essential. We are most fortunate that faith-based organizations and other volunteers frequently help those who are disadvantaged during uncertain times. I hope each of you will continue to be a part of the solution, rather than man-made barriers. The one truism that I have discovered throughout the past 34 years of disability advocacy is that access and independence are a win-win for everyone.

It is good to be a Floridian.  
*JR Harding is an advocate, author, speaker, and Florida State University faculty member. He can be reached at jr@jrharding.com*

# Congress must protect small businesses like mine



**Your Turn**  
Brittney Jones  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Succeeding as a Florida small business owner in today's economy is an uphill battle. In recent years, small business owners have faced both a pandemic and record-high inflation, while also competing against large corporations with limitless resources. Unfortunately, moreover, Congress is now pursuing legislation that will make it more difficult for small businesses to find new customers by limiting targeted digital advertising.

As an entrepreneur and event planner based in North Florida, I created my company, Touched by a Rose Events, 10 years ago out of a passion for curating special moments for special people. While passion fuels my business, having a strong customer base helps it thrive. I know firsthand how important it is for small businesses to stand out and reach customers most interested in their services.

One of the most difficult aspects of owning a small business is simultaneously operating your business while finding new customers. This is where targeted digital advertising on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram have helped the most. Using these digital tools, I'm able to reach those interested in my services without having to spend copious amounts of time or money. As a result, my business continues to thrive over the last three years and I have been able to hire five employees to help me with my growth.

However, policymakers in Washington are trying to pass legislation, like the American Privacy Rights Act (APRA), that would diminish the effectiveness of digital tools like targeted digital advertising. If passed, this legislation would make it much harder to find new customers via social media effectively.

Small business owners can't compete with larger companies' budgets to advertise on television or billboards. We don't want to spend thousands of dollars



**Event decor provided by Touched by a Rose Events in Tallahassee.** PROVIDED BY TOUCHED BY A ROSE EVENTS IN TALLAHASSEE

marketing and advertising to anyone and everyone, just like most people don't want to get inundated with ads that don't interest or apply to them. Targeted ads help me reach audiences who have shown an interest in what I do and sell.

Two months ago, I was in Washington D.C. and had the opportunity to meet with U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio's office about this issue. Joined by a dozen other Florida small business owners representing various fields and markets, we shared how detrimental APRA will be for small business growth and sustainability. Without access to this tool, I would have to scale back my business to focus more time on finding new customers using less effective and more costly methods.

Digital advertising helps small business owners maintain and build our businesses, protect our employees, and continue to contribute to Florida communities. By restricting advertising tools, Congress is crippling a resource that so many small business owners depend on for success.

I encourage our legislators to recognize how legislation like APRA would detrimentally impact small business owners. We need a thoughtful approach that empowers Tallahassee's small business owners.

*Brittney Jones is owner of Touched by a Rose Events in Tallahassee.*