

Pine Ridge Questions

2026 Re-election campaign JJ Grow Florida House District 23

I am seeking re-election to continue serving the people of Citrus County because this community is not just where I serve, it is home. I attended Inverness Primary School, Inverness Middle School, and Citrus High School. I learned to fish and ski on Lake Henderson, learned the value of hard work through agriculture and FFA, learned to hunt in the Withlacoochee Forest, and built lifelong connections with the people who make Citrus County such a special place.

I have been fortunate to build businesses, raise a family, and serve this community in many ways. Those experiences have shaped how I approach public service: with a strong work ethic, a commitment to accountability, and a belief that government should work for the people it represents.

When I ran for the Florida House, I did so because I believed Citrus County deserved a strong voice in Tallahassee, someone who understands our values, our challenges, and our opportunities. Since being elected, I have worked to bring that voice forward by focusing on issues that directly impact our families: protecting our natural resources, improving healthcare access, supporting our first responders, strengthening agriculture, standing up for taxpayers, and creating opportunities for the next generation.

Serving as your Representative has given me the opportunity to be directly involved in issues that matter deeply to our community, especially as we address healthcare access, workforce needs, and services for our growing senior population. I have also worked to advocate for investments that improve our infrastructure, protect our environment, and support the quality of life that makes Citrus County unique.

I believe public service is about listening. The best ideas do not always come from Tallahassee; they come from conversations with the people who live here every day. I have made it a priority to stay connected with residents, business owners, community leaders, farmers, veterans, seniors, and families across our district because their experiences guide the work I do.

As Citrus County grows, we face important challenges: protecting our water and springs, managing responsible growth, strengthening our schools, improving roads and infrastructure, addressing insurance costs, supporting public safety, and ensuring future generations have the same opportunities we were blessed to have. These challenges require leadership that understands both where we came from and where we need to go.

I am seeking re-election because I believe my work is not finished. I want to continue being a strong advocate for Citrus County, bringing our concerns to Tallahassee, protecting the values that define our community, and making sure our future is built on opportunity, responsibility, and respect for the people who call this place home.

It has been the honor of my life to serve as your state representative, and I would be grateful for the opportunity to continue that service.

Question 1

How much effect do/should campaign contributions have, considering regular everyday citizens don't have the wherewithal to make significant contributions and how have you balanced those interest?

"Campaign contributions should never determine how a legislator votes. In Florida, campaign contributions are heavily regulated and publicly disclosed, so voters can see exactly who supports a candidate. While it's true that some individuals, businesses, and organizations can contribute more than the average citizen, every constituent has an equal voice when it comes to representing their interests.

In my experience, the most influential people in my decision-making process are not necessarily campaign donors, they are the citizens I meet at community events, local businesses, churches, civic organizations, and one on one meetings. I was elected to represent everyone in House District 23, not just those who contribute to campaigns.

The way I balance those interests is simple: I evaluate every issue based on what is best for Citrus County and the State of Florida. Sometimes that aligns with the position of a supporter, and sometimes it doesn't. My voting record reflects my commitment to principles, facts, and the needs of my constituents rather than the preferences of any donor. Ultimately, voters expect integrity and independent judgment, and that's what I strive to provide every day in the Legislature."

Question 2

How have you worked to ensure our ground water and springs meet our needs while maintaining healthy natural systems essential to quality of life?

"Water is one of Florida's most precious natural resources, and in Citrus County we understand that better than most. Our springs, rivers, lakes, and aquifer are not only vital to our quality of life, but they are also essential to our economy, our environment, and our future growth.

My approach has been to support policies that balance responsible growth with responsible stewardship. That means investing in water quality projects, expanding wastewater infrastructure to reduce nutrient pollution, supporting springs restoration efforts, and encouraging water conservation practices that protect our aquifer. It also means making sure state agencies have the resources and accountability necessary to protect our groundwater while using sound science to guide decisions.

I've worked to secure funding for environmental and infrastructure projects that improve water quality and protect our natural resources. I also support efforts to reduce septic system impacts where appropriate, strengthen water supply planning, and ensure local governments have the tools they need to address water challenges before they become crises.

As our population continues to grow, we must recognize that clean water and healthy springs are not guaranteed. We have a responsibility to leave these resources in better condition for the next generation. My goal is to ensure that Florida's water policies protect both our environment and our economy so that future generations can enjoy the same springs, rivers, and waterways that have made Citrus County such a special place to live, work, and raise a family."

Question 3

Have you/will you work with Pine Ridge residents to modify Florida State Statue, Chapter 316 to provide focus regarding equestrian safety on major roadways?

My commitment would be to listen first to the residents who live with these challenges every day and then advocate for practical legislative solutions that improve safety while preserving the equestrian character that makes Pine Ridge such a special community. The goal is simple: protect riders, protect motorists, and ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy Pine Ridge's equestrian heritage safely and responsibly."

Question 4

Property Owners insurance has increased 102% from 2022-2025. If reelected, how will you/have you represented Citrus County Citizens regarding ongoing matters of homeowners insurance? What is your plan?

"Homeowners insurance is one of the biggest challenges facing Florida families, and I hear about it constantly from homeowners, retirees, and working families across Citrus County. A 100%+ increase in premiums over a few years is simply not sustainable, and we must continue working to bring stability back to the market.

As your representative, I have supported efforts to address the root causes of Florida's insurance crisis: reducing fraud and unnecessary litigation, improving the reinsurance market, strengthening the solvency of insurance companies, and making sure consumers are protected. We must remember that every dollar spent on avoidable costs eventually shows up in a homeowner's premium.

Going forward, my focus will be on making sure reforms are working for policyholders, not just insurance companies. I will continue to advocate for transparency in rate increases, accountability in the insurance market, and policies that encourage competition, so Floridians have more choices.

We also need to continue investing in mitigation. Florida faces unique challenges with hurricanes and severe weather and helping homeowners strengthen their properties through mitigation programs can reduce risk and lower costs over time.

At the end of the day, owning a home should not become unaffordable because of insurance. I will continue fighting for Citrus County homeowners by pushing for a balanced approach: one that protects consumers, keeps a stable insurance market, and makes sure Florida remains a place where families can afford to live, work, and retire."

Question 5

Please explain your understanding of both the positive and negative impact of the proposed November constitutional amendment generated by HJR1 at the behest of Gov. Desantis (and impact to Citrus County Government). If voters approve, how will you help Citrus County transition?

"Property taxes are a major concern for Citrus County families, especially with rising insurance costs, inflation, and the overall increase in the cost of living. I believe Floridians deserve meaningful property tax relief, and I support giving homeowners relief from excessive tax burdens. HJR 1-F would provide additional homestead exemptions and create a pathway for future reductions in property taxes.

At the same time, we must recognize that property taxes are a primary funding source for local governments. They help pay for essential services our citizens depend on every day, law enforcement, fire protection, EMS, roads, stormwater, and other core services. Any transition must be done responsibly so we provide tax relief without creating an unintended impact on public safety or the quality of services our residents expect.

For Citrus County specifically, we need to be proactive. If voters approve this amendment, I will work with our county commissioners, constitutional officers, and local leaders to help identify efficiencies, prioritize essential services, and make sure Citrus County has a responsible transition plan. We need to look at every dollar spent, eliminate waste, and make government more efficient while protecting the services that matter most.

I also believe the state has a responsibility to be a partner with local governments during a major policy change. Rural counties like Citrus often have different challenges than larger urban areas, and we need to make sure the transition recognizes those differences.

My goal has always been to put more money back in the pockets of working families while making sure we maintain the safe, strong, and vibrant community that makes Citrus County such a great place to live. Property tax relief and responsible government are not competing goals—they are both goals we should pursue."

Question 6

How will you assist Citrus County in meeting obligations in support of police, fire, trash collection, water management and education?

"Emergency and essential services are the foundation of a strong community. Whether it is law enforcement responding to a call, firefighters protecting families and property, solid waste

collection, water management, or supporting a quality education system, these are services our citizens depend on every single day.

If HJR 1 is approved by voters, my responsibility as your state representative will be to help Citrus County navigate that transition responsibly. Property tax relief is important, but we also must make sure we do not create an unintended situation where local governments are forced to cut critical services or shift the burden elsewhere.

I will work with Citrus County leaders, our constitutional officers, school officials, and community stakeholders to identify solutions that protect essential services while respecting taxpayers. That includes looking for efficiencies, reducing unnecessary costs, improving coordination between state and local governments, and making sure available state resources are being used effectively.

Public safety must remain a priority. We cannot compromise the ability of our sheriff's office, fire departments, emergency medical services, and other first responders to protect our citizens. Likewise, we need responsible planning for water resources, infrastructure, and education because those are investments in our future.

My approach has always been that government should be accountable and make the most of every taxpayer dollar. We can provide tax relief and still maintain a high quality of life, but it requires thoughtful planning, transparency, and a strong partnership between the state and Citrus County.

My commitment is simple: I will continue fighting to reduce unnecessary burdens on our citizens while ensuring Citrus County remains a safe, healthy, and thriving community."

Question 7

As our District 23 State Representative, how have you energized medical infrastructure investments to ensure aging population (current and future) of Citrus County has the health care they need going forward?

"Serving as your District 23 state representative, I understand that access to quality healthcare is one of the most important issues facing Citrus County, especially as we continue to see our senior population grow. Our seniors deserve access to high-quality care close to home.

One of the ways I have been able to advocate for this issue is through my service on the Florida Legislature's Health Professions and Health & Human Services committees, where I can be directly involved in discussions impacting healthcare delivery, workforce needs, and services for Florida's most vulnerable populations.

A major challenge we face is making sure we have enough healthcare professionals, doctors, nurses, specialists, and support staff, to serve our growing population. That means supporting efforts to strengthen our healthcare workforce pipeline, expand training opportunities, and remove barriers that prevent qualified professionals from practicing in Florida.

I have also worked to support investments in medical infrastructure and programs that improve access to care. For communities like Citrus County, it is important that our residents do not have to travel hours away for basic or specialized healthcare needs. We need strong hospitals, quality outpatient services, emergency care, and senior-focused resources right here in our community.

Going forward, I will continue advocating for smart healthcare investments, supporting our healthcare providers, and making sure state resources are reaching communities like ours. Senior care is not just a healthcare issue, it is about dignity, independence, and making sure the people who helped build Citrus County can age here with confidence.

My goal is to continue being a strong voice in Tallahassee for expanding access to quality care while protecting the values and quality of life that make Citrus County such a special place to call home."

Question 8

As our District 23 State Representative what conservation efforts have you championed inside population areas to ensure the rush to integrate new residents doesn't damage or destroy what we already enjoy? Please respond for Citrus County and Pine Ridge

"One of the reasons so many of us choose to call Citrus County home is because of what we have worked so hard to protect, our springs, our rivers, our forests, our wildlife, and the natural character that makes the Nature Coast unique. I grew up here, and I understand that growth is coming, but we have a responsibility to make sure we do not sacrifice the very things that make this place special.

As your District 23 representative, I have worked to support conservation efforts that protect our natural resources while recognizing the need for responsible growth. That includes supporting investments in water quality, springs protection, land conservation programs, and efforts that preserve environmentally sensitive lands. Programs like Florida Forever and the Rural and Family Lands Program are important tools to help protect working lands, wildlife habitat, and our quality of life.

In communities like Pine Ridge, where residents have a strong connection to the land and equestrian lifestyle, we need to be thoughtful about development patterns. Conservation is not about stopping growth, it is about making sure growth happens the right way. That means supporting smart planning, protecting critical areas, preserving open spaces, and ensuring new development has the infrastructure necessary to protect our water and environment.

I believe we can welcome new families while still protecting the Citrus County we love. The Nature Coast is not just a place on a map; it is our identity. My commitment is to make sure future generations can enjoy the same springs, trails, forests, and natural beauty that we have been blessed with.

The challenge is finding the right balance: protecting our environment, respecting private property rights, and allowing responsible economic growth. That is the approach I will continue to take as your representative."

Question 9

When elected how will you lead discussions with the FDOT for the creation of roundabouts at Pine Ridge intersections to be determined?

"Traffic safety is one of the most important quality-of-life issues facing growing communities like Pine Ridge. As more people move to Citrus County and traffic volumes increase, we have to be proactive, not wait until there is a serious accident before addressing safety concerns.

As your District 23 state representative, I would work directly with Pine Ridge residents, Citrus County officials, and the Florida Department of Transportation to evaluate the intersections that present the greatest safety challenges. The first step is listening to the community and making sure we have the data, traffic counts, crash history, sight distance issues, pedestrian and equestrian concerns, and future growth patterns, to identify the right solutions.

Roundabouts can be an effective tool when properly designed. They can reduce serious crashes, improve traffic flow, and slow vehicles in areas where safety is a concern. However, they must be the right fit for the location. My role would be to help bring FDOT to the table, advocate for the necessary traffic studies, and work to secure funding if a roundabout or other safety improvements are determined to be the best solution.

I also believe transportation planning must consider the character of the community. In Pine Ridge, that means recognizing not only vehicle traffic, but also the equestrian lifestyle, emergency response needs, and maintaining the quality of life that residents value.

My commitment is to be a strong advocate between the community and FDOT, to make sure Pine Ridge residents have a voice, safety concerns are addressed, and infrastructure keeps pace with responsible growth."

Question 10

As residents continue to raise concerns regarding groundwater impacts, hydrologic modeling, wetland function and community impacts, how have you provided oversight engagement to both FDOT and SFWMD?

"Sand mining is an issue where we have to balance multiple priorities: protecting our groundwater, wetlands, and quality of life, while also recognizing the importance of construction materials for infrastructure and economic needs. In Citrus County, our natural resources are one of our greatest assets, and any activity that could impact our aquifer or surrounding ecosystems deserves careful review and strong oversight.

As your District 23 representative, I have worked to ensure that state agencies involved in these decisions are hearing the concerns of Citrus County residents. That means engaging with agencies like the Florida Department of Transportation and the water management districts, asking the right questions, and making sure decisions are based on sound science, not simply on short-term needs.

With sand mining, the details matter, groundwater modeling, wetland impacts, stormwater management, and long-term environmental monitoring all need to be carefully evaluated. I believe communities deserve transparency and confidence that these projects are being reviewed appropriately and that environmental protections are being followed.

Moving forward, I will continue advocating for a process that includes meaningful local input, strong agency oversight, and accountability. We can support responsible economic activity, and infrastructure needs while also protecting the natural systems that make Citrus County the Nature Coast.

My responsibility is to make sure Citrus County has a strong voice in Tallahassee and that state agencies understand that protecting our water, wetlands, and communities must remain a priority."

Bonus Question

Once elected to office do you see yourself as an extension of the government you choose to oversee or an extension of your constituency? Explain your approach.

"I believe the title says it all, I am a representative. I do not see myself as an extension of government; I see myself as an extension of the people who elected me to serve them.

Government exists because citizens entrust us with the responsibility to make decisions on their behalf. My job in Tallahassee is to listen first, understand the needs and concerns of the people of District 23, and then take their voice to the Capitol. That means sometimes supporting policies that improve government, sometimes challenging government when it overreaches, and always keeping the interests of the people I represent at the center of every decision.

My approach has always been accessibility and accountability. Whether it is a homeowner concerned about insurance, a small business owner dealing with regulations, a farmer protecting their livelihood, a senior concerned about healthcare, or a family worried about the future of our community, I believe every citizen deserves to be heard.

I also believe leadership requires judgment. Being a representative does not mean simply agreeing with every opinion; it means taking the concerns of your constituents, studying the facts, listening to experts, and making decisions that I believe are in the best long-term interest of Citrus County and the State of Florida.

At the end of the day, I work for the people, not the bureaucracy. My responsibility is to protect their interests, preserve their voice in government, and make sure Citrus County continues to have a strong advocate in Tallahassee."