



A Short History of the LeRoy Collins Institute

In 1988, the Collins Center for Public Policy was established; in January 1989, former Senator Lawton Chiles became its first executive director. In its early years, the Center researched issues including hurricane protection (following Hurricane Andrew in 1992), criminal justice, and civic education. In 2000, two entities were created: The Collins Center for Public Policy and the LeRoy Collins Institute (official name adopted in 2002). The Collins Center's home office was in Miami; the Institute was (and still is) housed in the Cawthon House at Florida State University.

In 2005, the Collins Institute released Tough Choices: Shaping Florida's Future, funded by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund (The widely circulated executive summary was Tough Choices: Facing Florida's Revenue Shortfall). In recent years, the Institute has focused on state-local issues, especially on municipal pensions (again with support from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund). Recent reports include:

- *Looking at Florida's Municipal Pensions* – February 2013 (with Florida TaxWatch)
- *Florida Counties Bridge the Ethics Policy Gap* - November 2012
- *Years in the Making: Florida's Underfunded Municipal Pension Plans* - September 2012
- *Report Card: Florida Municipal Pension Plans* - November 2011
- *The Double Whammy Facing Florida's Counties* - August 2011
- *Trouble Ahead: Florida Local Governments and Retirement Benefits – Full Report* February 2011
- *Tough Choices: Facing Florida's Revenue Shortfall – Updates in 2008 and 2009*

White papers published on the Institute's website have dealt with measuring high school graduation rates, efforts of localities to encourage sustainability, and examining an early TABOR proposal.

The Collins Institute is funded by the interest revenue on an endowment of nearly \$4 million housed at the FSU Foundation and by project-specific support from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and the Florida League of Cities.

It has an active board whose chairs have included Jim Smith, Curt Kiser, Allison DeFoor and (currently) Lester Abberger. Jim Apthorp was executive director from 2000-2007; Professor Carol Weissert has been the executive director since November 2007.



Board members, past and present:

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