

RE-2 Employee Post Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

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2025 MAY 12 PM 5:37

Post Travel Filing Instructions: Complete this form within **30 days** of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the Office of Public Records in 144 Hart Building. **This form is a public disclosure. The form and all attachments will be made publicly available.**

Certification: In compliance with the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel, Senate Rule 35, and the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, I certify that I accepted the following gift of privately sponsored travel:

Private Sponsor(s):
South Florida Agricultural Foundation

Travel Dates:
04/22/2025 to 04/25/2025

Name of accompanying family member (if any):

Relationship to Traveler:

Expenses

Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meals Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
\$579.45	\$488.00	\$73.00	\$0.00

I also certify that attached to this form are all required documents for post travel disclosure, including:

- The final **Employee Pre-Travel Authorization** (Form RE-1)
- The final **Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form** with all attachments
- The final invitation
- The final approved itinerary

Finally, I certify that all trip information reflected in the attachments above accurately reflects the travel that I accepted. If there were any changes to the trip after I received approval from the Committee, the changes are described in ATTACHMENT 1.

Date

Benjamin Easter

Printed Name of Traveler

Benjamin Easter
Signature of Traveler

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the Employee Pre-Travel Authorization form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

5/12/2025

Date



Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

ATTACHMENT 1 – CHANGES FROM APPROVED PRE-TRAVEL

Note: Material changes to a trip that occur after the Committee has issued an approval letter may invalidate the Committee's approval. Please contact the Committee with any questions regarding changes to an approved trip.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved travel expenses? (Transportation, Meals, Lodging, Other)?

Yes No

Expense Change	Revised Amount	Explanation
Transportation	\$579.45	The charter bus was less expensive than previously planned.
Meals	\$73.00	Less than planned. Day 1: lunch \$12, Dinner \$24; Day 2: Breakfast- free at hotel, lunch \$10, dinner \$17; Day 3: breakfast- free at hotel, lunch \$10

Were there any changes to the pre-approved itinerary?

Yes No

Explanation: There were no changes to the pre-approved itinerary.

Were there any additional changes to the pre-approved trip?

Yes No

Explanation: There were no additional changes to the pre-approved trip.

South Florida Agricultural Foundation
Senate Invite List
April 22-24, 2025

Archev	Bailey
Barclay	Kate
Bardot	Ryan
Beninga	Ashlynn
Delaney	Josh
Easter	Benjamin
Foltz	Jonathan
Harberts	Eli
Hoekstra	Trenton
Humphrey	Patrick
Johnston	Emma
Karlins	Cydney
Pitts	Lacy
Tonsager	Josh
Wickenhauser	Calla

Reason for invite: Most are referrals from previous tour (staff) attendees or listed as working on ag policy or related communications issues.

RE-1 Employee Pre-Travel Authorization

Date/Time Stamp

Pre-Travel Filing Instructions: Complete and submit this form at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date to the **Select Committee on Ethics in SH-220**. Incomplete and late travel submissions will not be considered or approved.

Name of Traveler:

Benjamin Easter

Employing Office/Committee

BUDD, TED

Private Sponsor(s):

South Florida Agricultural Foundation

Destination(s):

Clewiston, Florida

Travel Dates:

04/22/2025 to 04/25/2025

NOTE: If you plan to extend the trip for any reason you **must** notify the Committee.

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties.

This trip will inform me on agricultural policy and teach me the critical importance of passage of the upcoming Farm Bill. This trip will also show me how farmers use USDA programs.

Do you have an accompanying family member or spouse on this trip?

No

Name and Relationship to Traveler

N/A

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

3/11/2025

Date

Benjamin Easter

Signature of Employee

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

(President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms,
Secretary for the Majority, Secretary for the Minority, and Chaplain)

Ted Budd

(Print Senator's/Officer's Name)

hereby authorize

Benjamin Easter

(Print Traveler's Name)

an employee under my direct supervision, to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses for travel to the event described above. I have determined that this travel is in connection with his or her duties as a Senate employee or an officeholder, and will not create the appearance that he or she is using public office for private gain.

I have also determined that the attendance of the employee's spouse or child is appropriate to assist in the representation of the Senate.



(signify "yes" by checking box)

3/11/2025

Date

Ted Budd

Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

South Florida Agricultural Foundation: Ag-Venture

Benjamin Easter

Title:

Legislative Assistant

Employing Office/Committee:

BUDD, TED

Duty Station:

WASHINGTON, DC

Destination(s):

Clewiston, Florida

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties:

This trip will inform me on agricultural policy and teach me the critical importance of passage of the upcoming Farm Bill. This trip will also show me how farmers use USDA programs.

Name of accompanying family member (if any):

Not Entered

Name and Relationship to Traveler:

None

Organization Information

Organization Name

South Florida Agricultural Foundation

Is your organization classified as a §501(c)(3)?

Yes No

§501(c)(3) Organization Type

N/A

Address

P. O. Box 942

Address 2 (Optional)

None

City, State Zip

Loxahatchee, Florida 33470 United States

Phone Number

2024319763

Organization URL

<https://www.southfloridaagfoundation.org>

History of Congressional Travel

The South Florida Agricultural Foundation has been sponsoring congressional staff trips since 2017. We host 2 trips each year, with the exceptions being in 2020 and 2023 (due to gov't shutdown).

Educational Activities

The Foundation provides agricultural information to local school and civic groups and awards scholarships to students pursuing agricultural studies at local schools.

Lobbyist and Foreign Agent Registration Information

Lobbyist Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not a federally registered lobbyist and do not retain or employ a federally registered lobbyist.*

Foreign Agent Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not an agent of a foreign principal and do not retain or employ an agent of a foreign principal.*

Foreign Government Involvement

Foreign Agent Registration Status:

I certify that the sponsor is not a foreign government.

I certify that the sponsor is not an entity that is owned or operated by a foreign government.

I certify that the sponsor does not receive funding from a foreign government.

Comments

None Entered

Signature Page

The signature page is below.

Purpose and Details

Provide a brief description of the trip.

The trip provides congressional staffers a chance to see the operations of farms that produce sugarcane, sweet corn, green beans, rice and many other crops for up to 180 million Americans during the winter and spring months every year. Staffers will spend their days touring farms, talking to local farmers, seeing sugarcane throughout the the entire cycle- crop, harvesting, refining and all the behind the scenes work that goes into manufacturing and packaging. They see celery and other in-season crops being harvested and packaged in the fields. They will also see how the byproducts of sugarcane are used to produce eco-friendly food storage containers.

Explain how the purpose of the trip relates to your organization's mission.

The mission of the South Florida Agricultural Foundation is to provide educational and stewardship opportunities within the South Florida agricultural industry, including sugarcane, citrus, sweet corn, celery, rice and other local crops in an area which ranks in the top 10 in the nation for agricultural revenue. Staffers will learn about water issues, farm bill issues and are able to talk to and see how it impacts our part of the country.

Is your organization the only sponsor for this trip?

Yes No

Grantmaking Organizations (Optional)

There are no grantmaking organizations.

With or Without Regard for Congressional Participation

The trip is arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Involvement in Planning, Organizing, Requesting or Arranging

The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, other than de minimis involvement.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Financing

The trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.

No funds or in-kind contributions were earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Accompaniment

Complete if all sponsors are §501(c)(3) organizations

The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip

The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Complete if any of the sponsors is not a §501(c)(3) organizations.

The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip

The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Certification of No Recreational Activity and No Alcohol

Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for recreational activities.

Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for alcohol, except as permitted by the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel.

Invitees

Members and staff from the House of Representatives **will** receive invitations.

The list of invitees is below.

Travel Details

Trip Start Date/Time:
04/22/2025 @ 07:59 AM

Trip End Date/Time:
04/24/2025 @ 09:07 PM

Will the traveler be accompanied by a family member for whom the sponsor will pay travel expenses?

Yes No

Itinerary

The itinerary is below.

Transportation (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$666.45 | Accompanying Family Member: \$0.00)

Transportation Type	Class	Amount
Airfare	Coach	\$329.45

Note

Roundtrip airfare from to Washington, DC to Palm Beach International

Ground Transportation	Coach	\$312.00
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Note

Daily bus transportation for the duration of the tour.

Other	N/A	\$25.00
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Note

Airboat transportation on Lake Okeechobee

Lodging (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$488.00)

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
04/22/2025	04/24/2025	Hampton Inn	Clewiston	Florida	United States	2	\$244.00	No

Meals (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$156.00)

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Total	City	State	Country	Cost Exceeds Per Diem
04/22/2025	\$0.00	\$23.00	\$36.00	\$5.00	\$64.00	Clewiston	Florida	United States	No

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Total	City	State	Country	Cost Exceeds Per Diem
04/23/2025	\$0.00	\$23.00	\$36.00	\$5.00	\$64.00	Clewiston	Florida	United States	No
04/24/2025	\$0.00	\$23.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$28.00	Clewiston	Florida	United States	No

Reasonable Miscellaneous Expenses (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$0.00)

Expense Type	Amount	Notes
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There are no miscellaneous expenses.

Additional Attachments

Document Name

There are no additional attachments.

PRIVATELY SPONSORED TRAVEL

SPONSOR SIGNATURE PAGE

I hereby certify that the information submitted in connection with the trip listed below is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Trip Name: _____

Travel Date(s): _____

Travel Destination(s): _____

Sponsor: _____

(printed name of sponsor representative)

(title)



(signature of sponsor representative)

(date)

South Florida Agricultural Foundation
Senate Invite List
April 22-24, 2025

Archev	Bailey
Barcley	Kate
Bardot	Ryan
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Heekin	Jack
Hoekstra	Trenton
Humphrey	Patrick
Johnston	Emma
Karlins	Cydne
Mohamed	Litton
Pitts	Lacy
Sekine	Emilie
Thomas	Katherine
Tonsager	Josh
Wickenhauser	Calla

Reason for invite: Most are referrals from previous tour (staff) attendees or listed as working on ag policy or related communications issues.

South Florida Agricultural Foundation (SFAF)

ITINERARY

2025 Congressional Staff Tour

April 22 – 25, 2025

***Note: All food/catering/transportation/lodging is paid for
by the South Florida Agricultural Foundation**

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

7:59 – 10:33 AM	Depart Washington-Reagan National Airport on American Airlines Flight # 2349
10:33 – 11:15 AM	Arrive Palm Beach International Airport. SFAF group leaders will meet guests at the West Palm Beach airport, locate luggage, board bus. Guests will be transported by bus for the rest of the trip.
11:55—12:45 PM	Travel to Belle Glade. As bus drives through the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), a presentation of points of interest along the way include the Sem-Chi Rice Plant, Florida Crystals sugarcane fields, the Sugarcane Growers Cooperative Mill and lettuce, sweet corn and sugarcane fields at various stages of growth. Also, a video presentation about water issues pertaining to the lake and how sugarcane is grown and harvested will be shown during the ride. Boxed lunches will be provided and eaten en route.
12:45 – 2:15 PM	Tour of DUDA Farms led by Sam Jones, General Manager, showcasing the farming operations where leafy greens, lettuce and other produce is grown. The group will go out into the field and observe the harvesting of lettuce while discussing food safety and workforce issues.
2:15 – 2:30 PM	Travel to TKM, also in Belle Glade.
2:30 – 3:15 PM	Tour of TKM Bengard Farm led by Ethan Basore, Farm Manager, showcasing the farming operations where leafy greens, lettuce and other produce is grown. The group will go out into the field and observe the harvesting of lettuce while discussing food safety and workforce issues.
3:15 – 3:30 PM	Board bus.
3:30 – 4:00 PM	Depart TKM to travel to Hampton Inn in Clewiston.
4:00 – 5:45 PM	Check into the Hampton Inn, prepare for dinner presentation.
5:45 – 6:00 PM	Depart hotel, drive to Hilliard Brothers
6:00—6:45 PM	Tour Hillard Brothers to learn about the Cattle industry in Florida and the challenges they face presented by Lindsey Wiggins and Tripp Whidden. Then head to Swindle Farm for dinner.
6:45 – 9:00 PM	Working dinner at Swindle Farm. This is an actual working sugarcane farm owned by an independent grower. Meet local city and county elected officials during working reception and dinner. The mayor of Clewiston, James Pittman, will speak on how important agriculture is to the financial prosperity of the city. The county and city commissioners present: Ramon Iglesias, Mali Gardner, Hillary Hyslope and Jason Williams, will discuss the effects of Covid on the agricultural community and other issues rural areas are facing. Short presentation of dairy farming in the area by Sutton Rucks of Milking R Dairy and how the recent laws have affected their business. Approximately one and a half hours will be spent on the listed activities and presentations.
9:00 PM	Return to the Hampton Inn.

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

8:00 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast in the lobby and board bus.
8:30 – 9:00 AM	Depart the Hampton Inn to travel to sugarcane fields.
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Tour Sugarcane Field operations and harvesting, Scott Berden, Precision Ag Manager with U. S. Sugar, will discuss compliance of worker protection standards, burning regulations, pesticide and herbicide issues and other Federal regulations that have an impact on the cost and procedures of farming sugarcane. Jarad Plair, Asst. Director of Farm Operations, will explain how drones are used in the agricultural fields. A stop will be made at a pump station where Richard Sanchez, Director of Farm Operations and Land Mgt, will present and discuss water quality standards.
12:00 – 12:45 PM	Lunch at Clewiston Youth Center provided by SFAF. Ardis Hammock, with Frierson Farms, will give a presentation on the American Farm Policy & Trade, discussing the farm bill, NAFTA and other trade issues.
12:45 – 1:00 PM	Travel to U. S. Sugar Mill and Refinery, Clewiston.
1:00 – 3:00 PM	Arrive at U. S. Sugar Corp. Mill and Refinery for tour of sugarcane processing procedures led by Brannan Thomas, Dir. of Community Relations. Discussion will include compliance with OSHA and federal air quality standards, while the refinery will focus on FDA food safety and labeling issues. Tour of packaging facilities.
3:00 – 3:15 PM	Depart mill, travel to the Hampton Inn.
3:15 – 4:30 PM	Arrive at hotel, prepare for citrus tour and dinner presentation.
4:30 – 4:45 PM	Depart hotel, drive to Southern Gardens Citrus in Clewiston.
4:45 – 5:45 PM	Southern Gardens Citrus grove stop, Jim Snively, Vice President of Citrus Groves, will discuss citrus greening, hurricanes and other issues destructive to citrus crops, and how they work with the USDA's APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) to develop new citrus varieties and combat citrus diseases.
5:45 – 6:00 PM	Travel to Dunwody Lodge
6:00 – 6:30 PM	Arrive at Dunwody Lodge in Clewiston for welcome reception and opportunity to speak one-on-one with local farmers who grow sugarcane, corn, green beans, kale and broccoli.
6:30 – 9:00 PM	Working dinner where SFAF Board President Ardis Hammock will introduce the independent farmers present (Nicky Perez, Donnie Lundy, Carl Perry, Luigi Trotta, Justin Sobie, and Alan Hammock) and each will speak 5-10 minutes on the history of their farm and the produce they grow, showcasing the diversity of crops produced in the area. Staffers will be formally introduced to all the farmers. SFAF will purchase steaks cooked by Hendry County Cattlemen's Association who will discuss the importance of the cattle industry in Florida. Approximately two hours will be spent on the listed activities and presentations.
9:00 PM	Return to the Hampton Inn.

Thursday, April 24, 2025

8:00 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast in the lobby and board bus.
8:30 – 9:00 AM	Depart the Hampton Inn to travel to Belle Glade to Slim's Fish Camp.
9:00 – 11:30 AM	Depart from dock on airboat for tour of Lake Okeechobee; Boats will stop out on the lake where Terrie Bates, a water resource specialist that assists the agriculture industry in the Lake Okeechobee and Everglades watershed in matters related to Flood Protection, Water Supply and Stormwater Management, will explain the relationship between the lake and agriculture, discuss water quality and quantity issues and how EAA farmers must comply with federal water regulations. She will address questions from staffers. Airboats will return back to the dock.
11:30 – 12:00 PM	Drive to the EREC in Belle Glade.
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Arrive at EREC. Working lunch provided by SFAF purchased from local farms. Introduction of panel of farmer members of Florida Farm Bureau moderated by Alleigh Reitz from Everglades Farm Equipment and a Western Palm Beach County Farm Bureau board member, and Sam Phares, District 8 Director, Florida Farm Bureau Federation. Each farm member on the panel will explain an item of importance in their farming process. Farm members participating are Matt Hoffman (Sugar Cane Growers Co-Op, Chuck Obern (C&B Farms), Keith Wedgworth (Wedgworth), Brad Phares (Lazy JP Ranch), Jamie Fussell (FFVA), Buddy McKinstry (JEM Farms), Mike Schlechter (Everglades Farm Equipment) and Olivia Pope (Pope Farms).
1:00 – 2:45 PM	One-on-one roundtable discussion with the farmers representing sweet corn, green beans, peppers, tomatoes and other vegetables, nursery operations and agricultural research. Discussion will include issues with federal pest management regulations, H2A worker programs, wage and labor compliance, NAFTA and how farming is impacted by state and federal issues.
2:45 – 3:00 PM	Board bus to depart.
3:00 – 3:45 PM	Travel to Bedner's Farm Fresh Market, downtown West Palm Beach.
3:45 – 4:15 PM	Marie Bedner will lead the tour of Bedner's Farm Fresh Market, one of the few remaining family owned and operated farmer's markets in South Florida, bringing fresh produce from the farm, grown right outside their back door. Also, watch a brief presentation of the new facility the Bedner's provide for their H2A workers.
4:15 – 5:00 PM	Board bus and travel to Palm Beach International Airport.
6:44 PM	Depart Palm Beach International Airport for Washington-Reagan National Airport on American Airlines nonstop Flight #2297
9:07 PM	Arrive Washington, DC.
6:45 – 7:00 PM	Depart for dinner.