Who’s Running for Florida Attorney General in the 2026 General Election

By Sandy Parker | Sparker's Soapbox | Published 2026-08-30; Updated 2026-10-27

James Uthmeier (R), the incumbent, and Jose Javier Rodriguez (D) are running for Florida attorney general in the Nov. 3, 2026 general election. Uthmeier was appointed to the office by Gov. Ron DeSantis in early 2025 and is now seeking his first full term; Rodriguez is a former Florida House and Senate member and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor. The winner will serve a four-year term as Florida’s chief legal officer, overseeing the state’s Department of Legal Affairs and representing Florida
in litigation, criminal appeals, and consumer protection matters. For background, please visit The Executive Branch of Florida’s Government: A Primer on Sparker’s Soapbox.

In this post, I summarize the backgrounds and stated priorities of the two candidates, along with their endorsements, recent news coverage, and campaign finance data, to help voters prepare to vote. I also include links where you can research each candidate further.

- James Uthmeier (Republican)
- Jose Javier Rodriguez (Democrat)
- Campaign Finances

James Uthmeier

Republican incumbent James William Uthmeier was born Nov. 25, 1987, and is a native of Destin, Florida. He graduated from the University of Florida and earned his law degree from Georgetown University Law Center in 2014. He worked as an associate at Jones Day, a large international law firm, before joining the Trump administration. (Wikipedia; Campaign website)

Uthmeier served as counsel to Donald Trump’s 2016 campaign for President and was appointed by the President to serve as a senior advisor and counsel to U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, working in the Commerce Department from 2017 to 2019. He joined Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis’ office in 2019 as deputy general counsel, was promoted to general counsel in 2020, and became DeSantis’ chief of staff in October 2021, a role he held until his appointment as attorney general. From 2023 to 2024, he served as campaign manager for DeSantis’ unsuccessful 2024 presidential campaign. (Wikipedia)

Gov. DeSantis appointed Uthmeier as attorney general to succeed Ashley Moody, who was appointed to the U.S. Senate. He was sworn in as Florida's 39th attorney general on Feb. 17, 2025, at age 37, becoming one of the youngest state attorneys general in the country, and is now running to seek a full term. (Wikipedia; AP News)

Uthmeier and his wife, Jean, have three young children. (Campaign website)

Platform

Uthmeier's campaign website does not have a dedicated Issues or Priorities page; his platform is drawn from the campaign site's framing and his record as sitting attorney general. The campaign describes him as "a dedicated public servant who has devoted his career to fighting for freedom." It says he helped Gov. DeSantis "deliver widespread victories on education freedom, parental rights, election integrity, tax relief, and public safety," that he "fought to keep Florida open during the COVID pandemic," and that he "led Florida's legal battles to immediately reopen businesses and schools and prohibit mask and vaccine requirements." (Campaign website)

As attorney general, Uthmeier has directed state law enforcement to continue enforcing a Florida immigration law after a federal judge blocked it, proposed and helped open the "Alligator Alcatraz" immigration detention facility in the Everglades, opened an investigation into JPMorgan Chase over alleged "de-banking" of Trump Media, reopened a state investigation into Raul Castro's role in the 1996 Brothers to the Rescue shootdown, argued publicly that surrogacy is "modern day slavery," issued a multi-state subpoena to Dr. Anthony Fauci over alleged COVID-era "self-dealing," and sent a letter demanding six years of internal records from The New York Times Co. These actions are detailed further in In the News below.

Endorsements

- **President Donald Trump** (Florida Phoenix; CBS News Miami)
- **Republican Attorneys General Association**, which committed seven figures to the race (RAGA)
- **Associated Industries of Florida** (AIF)
- **Florida Sheriffs Association**, backed by Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods, Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd, Duval County Sheriff T.K. Waters, and Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey (Florida Voice News)

Legal Matters

A Florida grand jury report, sealed since January 2026 and made public in August through litigation and news reporting, found that $10 million from a 2024 Medicaid settlement with Centene Corp. was "misappropriated" and funneled through the Hope Florida Foundation, a charity associated with First Lady Casey DeSantis, into political committees that spent it campaigning against a 2024 ballot

measure to legalize recreational marijuana. The report found Uthmeier, then Gov. Ron DeSantis's chief of staff, personally directed a recipient organization to apply for a Hope Florida grant and held "a position of authority" over how the funds were used once they reached the committees, but the grand jury found insufficient evidence to charge Uthmeier or anyone else criminally. Uthmeier has said he was never a target or suspect in the matter and has called it a "nothingburger"; DeSantis has called the investigation a hoax. (Florida Trident via WGCU; CBS News Miami)

In June 2025, U.S. District Judge Kathleen M. Williams held Uthmeier in contempt of court for continuing to direct state law enforcement to enforce a Florida immigration law after she had blocked it in a prior ruling. Uthmeier said he would not tell law enforcement agencies not party to the case to stand down, and that if the judge chose to jail him over it, "I'm willing to take that." (The Guardian; Florida Politics)

In the News

- Gov. Ron DeSantis' former chief of staff James Uthmeier sworn in as Florida's attorney general. (AP News, 2/17/25)
- 'Sweetener': James Uthmeier defends legality of $10M of Medicaid money sent to Hope Florida. (Florida Politics, 4/22/25)
- James Uthmeier says he had a 'duty' to use Hope Florida Foundation cash to snuff out pot amendment. (Florida Politics, 5/28/25)
- James Uthmeier ready to go to jail to protect Florida immigration law. (Florida Politics, 6/5/26)
- Florida attorney general held in contempt after enforcing blocked immigration law. (The Guardian, 6/18/25)
- Florida AG launches investigation into JPMorgan Chase over Trump Media de-banking. (WPEC, 11/10/25)
- Surrogacy is akin to slavery, Florida AG says, with big implications for families. (Tampa Bay Times, 5/8/26)
- Florida AG subpoenas Dr. Fauci over 'apparent self-dealing' during COVID pandemic. (ClickOrlando, 8/6/26)
- Uthmeier demands 6 years' worth of New York Times records, documents. (Tampa Bay Times, 8/10/26)
- Sealed for seven months: Grand jury found $10 million "misappropriated" to Hope Florida, but no one will be charged. (Florida Trident via WGCU, 8/26/26)
- Grand jury finds DeSantis administration "misappropriated" $10 million in taxpayer money to Hope Florida. (CBS Miami, 8/26/26)
- Trump praises AG Uthmeier as 'one of the absolutely best,' reaffirms endorsement. (The Floridian, 9/8/26)
- Florida AG vows to use office to eliminate abortion clinics. (Bradenton Herald, 10/26/26)

Further Research

- Campaign website: jamesforfl.com
- X: @JamesUthmeierFL

Jose Javier Rodriguez

Democrat challenger Jose Javier Rodriguez was born Aug. 8, 1978, and grew up in Miami. His father fled Cuba as a teenager during Operation Pedro Pan; his mother's family has midwestern roots. He received a B.A. in international relations from Brown University in 2000, served in the Peace Corps from 2000 to 2003, and earned his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 2006. (Wikipedia; Ballotpedia; Campaign website)

Rodriguez was elected to the Florida House of Representatives, District 112, in 2012 and was reelected in 2014. In 2016, following court-ordered redistricting, he ran for the newly created Florida Senate District 37, defeating incumbent Miguel Diaz de la Portilla, and served in the Florida Senate from 2016 to 2020. He briefly sought the Democratic nomination for Florida's 27th Congressional District in 2018 before withdrawing. In 2020, he narrowly lost his re-election bid for Senate District 37; news investigations later found that a spoiler candidacy in that race was funded by dark money connected to a former state senator who was arrested in connection with financing it. (Wikipedia; Ballotpedia)

In 2021, President Biden nominated Rodriguez to serve as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training at the U.S. Department of Labor. The nomination was confirmed on March 21, 2024, and he served in the role from April 2024 until Jan. 20, 2025. (Wikipedia)

Rodriguez married Sonia Succar Ferre, granddaughter of former Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre, in 2014; they have two sons. He launched his campaign for attorney general on June 2, 2025, saying he wants to be the "people's lawyer." (Wikipedia; Campaign website; Florida Phoenix)

Platform

Rodriguez describes his candidacy in first-person terms on his campaign website: "Now running for Attorney General, I'm committed to bringing stability back to the office – serving as a steady, professional enforcer of the law, not a political operation. I'm focused on keeping Floridians safe, fighting to lower costs, and rooting out corruption, all while serving as a fair, independent advocate for all Floridians, not special interests."

His campaign website lists these stated priorities (campaign website):

- Provide relief for homeowners and small businesses from sky-high insurance rates and rising fees.

- Crack down on corruption and fraud in both the public and private sectors.
- Hold powerful corporations accountable when they hurt Florida families.
- Serve as an independent voice for the people of Florida.
- Support law enforcement.
- Defend our rights.
- Tackle the fentanyl crisis.
- Take on scammers.
- Protect minors and the most vulnerable.

Endorsements

- **National leaders:** Former U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor, U.S. Rep. Maxwell Frost, former U.S. Rep. Gwen Graham, and gun-safety advocate, Parkland parent Fred Guttenberg, and more. (Campaign website)
- **State leaders:** Former Florida Attorney General Bob Butterworth, former Florida CFO Alex Sink, former state Rep. and 2010 Democratic AG nominee Sean Shaw, former Palm Beach County State Attorney Dave Aronberg, Broward County State Attorney Harold Pryor, Steven Leskovich, a former Republican candidate for attorney general in this cycle, and more. (Campaign website; Florida Politics)
- **Florida Legislature:** Florida House Democratic Leader Fentrice Driskell, state Sens. LaVon Bracy Davis and Victor Torres, and state Reps. Anna Eskamani, Michele Rayner, Lindsey Cross, Dianne Hart, Michael Gottlieb, Ben Diamond, and Ashley Gantt. (Campaign website)
- **Organized labor:** Florida AFL-CIO, SEIU Florida, Florida Professional Firefighters, AFSCME Florida, and UNITE HERE Florida locals. (Florida Politics; Florida Politics; Campaign website)
- **Advocacy organizations:** VoteWater, Latino Victory Fund, End Citizens United, the Democratic Environmental Caucus of Florida, and SAVE Action PAC. (Campaign website)
- **Media:** The Palm Beach Post editorial board. (Palm Beach Post)

In the News

- ‘Ghost candidates’ blamed for siphoning votes in Florida Senate races. (CNN, 11/24/20)
- ‘Ghost candidate’ says he was offered $50k to run for office. (NBC 6, 9/20/24)
- He lost his Senate seat to a conspiracy. Now he wants to be Florida’s top prosecutor. (Miami Herald, 6/2/25)
- Jose Javier Rodriguez launches bid for attorney general, vows to ‘root out corruption’. (Florida Politics, 6/2/25)
- Jose Javier Rodriguez crosses $1M raised for attorney general bid, adds VoteWater endorsement. (Florida Politics, 4/8/26)
- Florida attorney general candidate Jose Javier Rodriguez on ‘fighting for the little guy’ and more. (WUSF, 3/31/26)

- Jose Javier Rodriguez adds major union endorsement to attorney general campaign. (Florida Politics, 5/19/26)
- Florida AFL-CIO endorses ‘principled’ Jose Javier Rodriguez for attorney general. (Florida Politics, 5/29/26)
- Florida AG candidate Jose Javier Rodríguez wants probe of ‘Alligator Alcatraz’ after DHS findings. (WLRN, 9/17/26)
- A Florida climate warrior challenges corrupt political power structure. (Florida Trident, 9/22/26)

Further Research

- Campaign website: jjr.vote
- X: @JoseJavierJJR
- Instagram: @josejavierjjr

Campaign Finances

Political committees may raise and spend money without limit to support or oppose candidates, but Florida law caps direct transfers from a committee to a candidate’s own campaign account at $3,000 per election, with the primary and general treated as separate elections. For more on how to read these figures and what this information does and does not tell us, see Sparker’s Civics primer, Understanding Campaign Finance Data.

James Uthmeier’s Contributions

James Uthmeier’s campaign took in $2.0 million in monetary contributions: 69 percent from 1,439 individual and business donors, 22 percent from political committees giving directly to his campaign account, and nine percent ($173,515) in state public matching funds. The committee share includes $250,000 from the Republican Party of Florida. Of the money from donors and committees, 87 percent came from Florida. Virtually all of his in-kind support, $364,270 in total, came from the Republican Party of Florida.

Separately, Friends of James Uthmeier, a political committee he chairs, has raised $13.5 million since its formation, of which $5.7 million remains available.

Jose Javier Rodriguez’s Contributions

Jose Javier Rodriguez’s campaign took in $1.7 million in monetary contributions: 73 percent from 3,412 individual and business donors, six percent from political committees giving directly to his campaign account, and 21 percent ($361,471) in state public matching funds. Of the money from

donors and committees, 90 percent came from Florida. Nearly all of his in-kind support, 97 percent of the $360,647 total, came from the Florida Democratic Party.

Separately, Floridians for JJR, a political committee, has raised $2.1 million since its formation, of which $99,098 remains available.

Campaign finance data is from Florida Division of Elections filings, cross-checked against source records. See the Division of Elections' Candidate Listing search for complete filings. Affiliated political committee data for Friends of James Uthmeier and Floridians for JJR is from the Division of Elections' Committee Database Search.

This post was researched and drafted with the assistance of Claude (Anthropic AI). The content was reviewed, edited, and fact-checked by the author. Both humans and AI can make mistakes. Please let us know if you spot one.