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Governor Ron DeSantis Signs the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget

Tallahassee, Fla. – Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed the state budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The budget totals \$92.2 billion, provides over \$350 million in tax relief and includes more than \$1 billion in vetoed spending.

“Despite the present challenges Florida faces due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget ensures the state’s priorities are protected and funded,” **said Governor DeSantis**. “Our current economic landscape is vastly different since the Legislature passed this budget in March. As Governor, I must remain a mindful steward of taxpayer dollars. This budget reflects a steadfast commitment to Floridians by safeguarding important investments in key areas including education, the environment, infrastructure, public safety and more. As we move forward with our *Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step. Plan for Florida’s Recovery*, we will overcome the adversities before us and emerge stronger than before.”

Highlights of the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget are provided below:

K-12 Education

Governor DeSantis vowed to make 2020 the “Year of the Teacher” by making historic investments in our K-12 education system. The budget includes \$500 million to raise the minimum K-12 teacher salary into the Top 5 nationwide and increase salaries for veteran teachers and other eligible instructional personnel. The budget also includes record per student funding of \$7,793, an increase of current year spending by \$137 per student.

Higher Education

To continue building on the success of Florida’s higher education system, the budget includes historic state operating funding for the Florida College System and State University System at \$1.3 billion and \$2.7 billion respectively. It does not include any tuition increases. The budget also provides an increase of \$18.9 million for Florida’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Environment

The budget continues Governor DeSantis' record investments in Florida's environment and water quality, providing more than \$625 million for Everglades restoration and the protection of water resources.

Included in this investment is more than \$322 million for Everglades restoration projects, \$50 million for springs restoration, \$160 million for targeted water quality improvements, \$40 million for alternative water supply, and \$25 million to combat harmful algal blooms and red tide. With this budget, Governor DeSantis is more than halfway to his goal of securing \$2.5 billion for Florida's environment.

Additionally, the budget includes \$100 million for Florida Forever, the state's premier conservation and recreation lands acquisition program to ensure the conservation and preservation of our natural resources for future generations.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the state has not lost its focus on critical transportation infrastructure and hurricane recovery needs. The budget provides \$9.2 billion for the State Transportation Work Program, including \$2.5 billion for highway construction, \$400.5 million for aviation improvements, \$885.5 million for rail/transit projects and \$236.4 million for safety initiatives.

Additionally, the budget includes \$1.3 billion in federal and state funding for communities to respond to, recover from, and mitigate against major disasters or emergencies. Further, the budget provides \$10 million for state-level election oversight activities, with a focus on cybersecurity enhancements to Florida's election system.

Health and Human Services

The health and well-being of all Floridians is paramount. The budget invests \$117.6 million in funding for children and families who receive services through Florida's child welfare system, including \$53 million for major reforms to our child welfare system to enhance accountability and the quality of care a child receives. The budget also includes \$8.7 million in funding to support the Office of Public and Professional Guardianship to ensure the legal rights of Florida's elderly population are protected.

The budget includes \$138.1 million in total funding to fight the opioid epidemic in Florida, investing \$81.8 million from the State Opioid Response Grant to address the opioid crisis by providing evidence-based prevention, medication-assisted treatment and recovery.

Public Safety

The budget continues to make necessary investments in public safety. It includes \$2.3 million to implement the first Statewide Behavioral Threat Assessment strategy in the country and more than \$8.1 million to expand and enhance Florida's crime databases.

The budget includes \$6 million to make Florida's correctional facilities safer, including \$3 million for security equipment. It also provides important funding for pay increases for correctional officers and \$17.3 million for a pilot project that transitions these officers from a

12-hour shift to an 8.5-hour shift.

Reserves

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Florida continues to maintain strong reserves. Reserve amounts included in the budget are:

- \$2.3 billion in unallocated General Revenue
 - Includes projected reversions of \$781.6 million. This does not include adjustments for COVID-19 revenue losses.
- \$1.7 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund
- \$1.5 billion in unallocated Trust Funds
- \$0.8 billion in Tobacco reserves
- \$6.3 billion in Total Reserves