



THE FLORIDA SENATE
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President

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Senate Balanced Budget Holds the Line on Spending, Maintains Strong Reserves
Promotes affordability by keeping taxes & per capita spending low, continues early debt payoff

Tallahassee—The Florida Senate Committee on Appropriations, chaired by Senator Ed Hooper (R-Clearwater), today released Senate Proposed Bill (SPB) 2500, the General Appropriations Act (GAA), as well as the implementing bill and conforming bills associated with a balanced budget for the upcoming 2026-2027 fiscal year. The total budget is slightly lower than Florida’s state budget for the current fiscal year, facilitating long-term financial stability with a focus on keeping taxes low, paying down debt and saving for the future.

“The best thing we can do to keep Florida affordable is to keep taxes low, limiting the financial burden taxes and regulations place on Florida’s families and businesses. To keep taxes low, state government has to live within its means, pay down debt, and save for the future. These key principles reflect the sound financial stewardship Floridians expect and deserve,” **said Senate President Ben Albritton (R-Wauchula)**. “Floridians are counting on us to maximize the use of their tax dollars by responsibly investing in key functions of government in a meaningful way, chief among these are education, health care, public safety, as well as our environmental, transportation, and clean water infrastructure. Through this budget, we are holding the line on spending, living within our means and striking the right balance between spending and saving.”

“Limiting the size and scope of government helps keep Florida affordable for families and seniors. Many items needed to raise a family and retire with dignity are tax free, and we want to keep it that way,” **said Chair Hooper**. “Our revenue forecasts, while still growing, have stabilized, so by spending less than we have, we are continuing to right-size our budget for the long-term, maintaining a healthy savings account, and preserving the permanent, meaningful, broad-based tax relief that families and businesses plan for and count on.”

SPB 2500 provides record funding for K-12 public schools, teacher raises, and school choice opportunities for Florida parents, coinciding updates in SB 318 that increase education funding transparency and improve efficiency for schools and families. The budget makes major investments in Florida’s transportation and public safety infrastructure.

To support Florida’s vital agriculture supply chain, the budget dedicates significant resources for Florida’s environment, including Everglades restoration, citrus recovery, clean water resiliency,

and the preservation of working farms and ranches along Florida's Wildlife Corridor. The budget heavily invests in the health care needs of vulnerable Floridians, including children, elders, those with disabilities, and foster families. These investments coincide guardrails outlined in SB 1758 to ensure state resources are dedicated to the most vulnerable.

Additionally, Florida has the smallest state workforce per capita in the country. To retain the talented and dedicated workers who serve in state government, the budget includes an across-the-board salary increase to address inflation as well as targeted raises for some of the most difficult jobs in state government.

The Senate's proposed budget appropriates \$115.0 billion, slightly less than the total budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year (\$115.1 billion), as noted in Florida's Fiscal Analysis In Brief. The proposed budget also takes into account the authorization of \$250 million in early payoff of state debt.

A budget adjusted for an anticipated CPI of 2.7% would total \$118.2 billion. A budget adjusted by official estimates for population growth of 1.4% would total \$116.7 billion. The Senate's proposed budget of \$115.0 billion holds the line, spending less than last year and reducing per capita spending.

President Pro Tempore Jason Brodeur (R-Sanford) Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government:

"We are continuing our longstanding efforts to preserve Florida's unique natural resources and making critical improvements to our environment and clean water infrastructure. These investments benefit current and future generations of Floridians, while also safeguarding Florida's economy as our pristine natural features continue to attract visitors from across the country and around the world.

"We are dedicating significant funds to preserving and expanding our iconic citrus industry, which is key to Florida's overall economy as citrus production, harvesting, packing and shipping create steady, good-paying jobs in rural, heritage communities across Florida's Heartland. We continue our focus on Florida's iconic Wildlife Corridor, recognizing the need to connect key portions of the Corridor before the opportunity is gone. Taking into account the tremendous success of the Farmer's Feeding Florida Program, we continue efforts to prevent food waste by connecting Florida's food banks with nutritious, Florida-grown products.

"On the governmental operations side of our committee, we maintain our focus on efficiency and long-term planning that keeps government accountable to the taxpayers who fund it."

Senator Ileana Garcia (R-Miami), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Civil and Criminal Justice:

"Our budget reflects a balanced approach to addressing key priorities in corrections, juvenile justice, law enforcement, and the court system, including significant, targeted pay raises to help

address recruitment and retention of law enforcement and correctional officers who protect our state.

“Investments in the Office of Wellness reinforce the Senate’s commitment to the mental health and well-being of law enforcement officers. Additionally, to increase and incentivize people to pursue careers in law enforcement, we are dedicating funds for law enforcement apprenticeships that help pay salaries while new hires are in training.

“We are making a significant investment to support day-to-day operations and responsibly plan for the projected growth in the prison population next year. We also include funding to continue the expansion of dorms at Lancaster Correctional Institution to meet future capacity needs.

“We include funding for clerks of court related to the Baker Act, Marchman Act, sexually violent predator cases, and injunctions for protection, as well as additional support for jury-related expenditures and fund the Supreme Court’s certification of 25 new judgeships.”

Senator Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Pre-K–12 Education:

“Again this year, Florida taxpayers will make an unprecedented investment in our children’s education, providing \$30 billion for public schools and K-12 scholarships, representing a \$693 million increase over the current year. This level of funding increases per student funding by \$150.98 and increases the Base Student Allocation by \$50. We are also raising our annual investment in teacher raises to more than \$1.4 billion.

“Our goal was to focus much of our per student increase on flexible funds. Cutting red tape and increasing opportunities to level the playing field between public and private schools has been a priority of the Senate for several years. This budget reflects that policy, maximizing opportunities for local school districts to spend funds as they see fit.

“We are providing \$25 million to assist districts that have a decline in student enrollment compared to the prior school year. This supplement helps ensure districts can manage fixed costs like staff and facilities, even when student numbers decrease, preventing severe, immediate budget cuts, such as school closures.

“We are funding more than \$4.5 billion for Florida’s robust school choice scholarship programs. Complemented by efficiencies and enhanced transparency requirements in SB 318, we will ensure our school choice programs live up to their full potential and promise as Florida remains the national leader in parental choice in education.”

Senator Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Higher Education

“We know students are best served when education is linked to the realities and opportunities of the economy and the job market. As such, our budget places an emphasis on programs and initiatives that provide training to help meet Florida’s critical workforce needs.

“We are funding an increase in operating funds for school district workforce education programs along with \$80.7 million for the Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program for public schools and colleges to fund the creation or expand career and technical education programs.

“In our university system, we maintain the low cost of tuition for instate students and make other targeted investments in specific programs. This includes \$100 million for preeminent research universities, \$6.4 million for UF – IFAS for workload increases and \$26.2 million to support the Community School Grant Program. To support Floridians with unique abilities on the pathway to economic independence, we are investing \$21.2 million for the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program administered by the University of Central Florida, including a workload increase. This excellent program just celebrated its 10th anniversary.”

Senator Jay Trumbull (R-Panama City), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services:

“Over the last several years, Florida has made key policy changes designed to create an efficient and effective health care system that provides more options for the people to receive the best care possible in an environment suited to their needs. Incorporating the vision outlined in President Albritton’s Rural Renaissance legislation and with investments made possible through President Trump’s Rural Health Transformation Program, our budget continues a strong focus on improving access to health care screenings and services across rural Florida.

“We include \$1.75 billion in additional funding to support Medicaid and KidCare services. This significant investment coincides policy changes in SB 1758 that strengthen protections for public assistance to ensure those most vulnerable receive the support they need while shielding Florida taxpayers from fraud, waste, and abuse.

“Foster families are on the front lines of Florida’s child welfare system. We are including a 10% increase in support for foster parents, in addition to the normal COLA. We continue a strong focus on mental health and substance use services with funding that enhances our mental health bed capacity. We also strengthen support for elders living at home and individuals with Alzheimer’s disease, invest in life-saving cancer research and screening opportunities and provide additional resources for food and product safety testing.

“In addition, the budget strengthens the direct care workforce and protects continuity of services for individuals served through the iBudget Waiver, helping ensure Floridians with disabilities receive consistent, high-quality care in their homes and communities.”

Senator Nick DiCeglie (R-Indian Rocks Beach), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development:

“Recognizing that our statewide transportation infrastructure is the foundation for Florida’s vibrant, diverse economy, this budget continues significant investments in the Department of Transportation Work Program.

“Affordable housing options for our workers, the backbone of Florida’s economy, are also a critical component of our state infrastructure. We maintain the critical commitment and vision for workforce housing outlined in Live Local, as well as funds to preserve rental housing in rural areas contained in President Albritton’s Rural Renaissance legislation (SB 250). We also include \$100 million for our Hometown Heroes program to assist Florida workers in purchasing homes in their communities. Health care workers, school personnel, public safety officials, and others continue to utilize this highly sought after program for down payment assistance they repay over time.

“Thankfully our beautiful state was spared during the previous hurricane season. Unfortunately, as we saw with the recent cold-snap, disaster can strike at any time, and we have to keep our guard up. Our budget continues to fund key emergency response infrastructure across our state.”

A full summary of SPB 2500 is attached. The legislation will be considered by the Senate Committee on Appropriations on Wednesday, February 18, 2026.

For more information, please visit www.FLSenate.gov.

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