

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 5, 2017

### **HOUSE BUDGET SECURES LONG TERM FISCAL HEALTH, INCREASES RESERVES, FUNDS EDUCATION AND CRITICAL NEEDS, CUTS TAXES, AND PREVENTS BACKDOOR TAX INCREASES**

Tallahassee, FL – Today, the House Appropriations Committee, chaired by Representative Carlos Trujillo, passed PCB APC 17 – 01, the Florida House Budget. Upon Committee passage of the budget Speaker Richard Corcoran said,

**"This budget secures long term budget surpluses while funding all of our states critical needs . We give massive tax relief to Florida families with sales tax and property tax reductions and make huge cuts in pork barrel spending on Member projects. We did all of this while funding innovative programs to end failure factories in Florida schools and still putting record amounts in reserves. This is a budget the people can be proud of."**

The Speaker concluded by saying, **"The state had returned to its pre-recession levels by 2014. Since then the budget has grown by 12%. That kind of growth is unsustainable and irresponsible. We were facing projected shortfalls of 1.3 billion and 1.9 billion over the next several budget cycles. This House budget corrects that course by reducing the budget and providing for future year surpluses in excess of \$1 billion for FY18-19 and FY 19-20 in addition to healthy reserves for those years."**

Upon passage, Chairman Carlos Trujillo said, **"This budget is the product of countless hours of bipartisan input and discussion. Our shared goals of eliminating waste and abuse, funding needed priorities, cutting taxes, and demanding accountability from those who accept taxpayer generosity, were achieved in this budget. I am thankful to my colleagues on the Committee for their hard work and principled dedication to the people of Florida. Fundamentally changing the way we do business is not easy and not always popular, but the Appropriations Committee answered the call."**

### **BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **TAXES -**

- Prevents a \$500 million backdoor property tax increase in the RLE
- Adds a \$25,000 additional homestead exemption for hard-working homeowners
- Reduces the business rent tax
- Authorizes a back-to-school tax holiday
- Authorizes a disaster preparedness tax holiday
- Authorizes the veterans tax holiday

- Authorizes sales tax reductions on feminine hygiene products, diapers and incontinence products and college textbooks

## **RESERVES -**

- Provides for \$3.6 billion in reserves
- Provides for future year surpluses in excess of \$1 billion for FY 18 – 19 and FY 19 – 20 in General Revenue in addition to healthy reserves for FY 18 – 19 and FY 19 – 20

## **PREK-12 APPROPRIATIONS -**

*The Florida House budget increases pre-K through 12 spending and establishes "schools of hope" to provide students in low performing schools with a high-quality education.*

- The PreK-12 Education budget proposes an overall budget totaling \$15.1 billion which is an \$821 million (or 5.75 percent) increase over the base budget. It is a \$540.1 million dollar increase from current year funding (or 3.71%)

### **Best and Brightest Program**

- Funds an additional \$200 million in recurring General Revenue to provide for a \$10,000 scholarship for qualifying teachers and expands the eligibility requirements by lowering the qualifying assessment score on the ACT or SAT and recognizing other national standardized assessments from the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 77<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- Establish the Best and Brightest Principal Scholarship Program. Eligible principals can receive a \$10,000 scholarship if a principal has been at a school for at least the last 2 consecutive school years and faculty at the school has a ratio of Best and Brightest Teachers to other classroom teachers that is at the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher.

### **Schools of Hope**

- Funds \$200 million to assist in the establishment of "schools of hope" and designation of "hope operators" to provide students in areas of persistently low-performing schools with a high-quality education option designed to close the opportunity gap and increase student achievement.
- Establishes a grant program to cover specified operational expenses for "schools of hope" and establishes the Schools of Hope Revolving Loan Program to help schools of hope cover school building construction and startup costs.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS -**

*The Florida House budget requires greater accountability and transparency from our universities and colleges.*

### **State University System**

- Total funding for the State University System is \$4.56 billion, which is a decrease in funding for the State University System of \$174.3 million from the base budget, or \$175.3 million from the current year appropriation.
- A recurring reduction to the base of each university that transferred or provided personnel support to its DSO (\$53,211,316)

### **Florida College System**

- Total funding for the Florida College System is \$1.15 billion, which is a \$63.5 million decrease from the base budget, or \$87.2 million under the current year appropriation.
- A recurring reduction to the base of each college that transferred or provided personnel support to its DSO (\$9,866,896)

### **HEALTH CARE APPROPRIATIONS -**

*The Florida House budget takes care of the most vulnerable and puts additional resources into mental health and substance abuse as well as outbreak control for diseases like Zika. In addition, KidCare is fully funded and additional funding is provided for child protection teams. Lastly, this budget implements the discontinuation of participation in the federal refugee resettlement program.*

- **Florida Kid Care Enrollment** - - Fully funds the KidCare program for the 2017- 2018 Fiscal Year to serve to serve approximately 224,431 children.
- **Alzheimer’s Disease, Community Care, and Home Care for the Elderly Initiatives** - Funding to reduce the waitlist by 249 individuals for Alzheimer’s respite services, by 497 individuals for the Community Care for the Elderly program, and by 1,302 individuals for the Home Care for the Elderly program.
- **Local Community Initiatives and Alzheimer’s Disease Community Projects** - Provides nonrecurring funding for elder meal programs, local community initiatives, and Alzheimer’s Disease projects that provide needed services to vulnerable seniors in a home and community based setting.
- **Domestic Violence Services- \$6.8 M Total:** Additional authority for an increase of federal grant award and state trust funds for services in support of, and preventing, victims of domestic violence and rape.

- **Additional Staff at State Mental Health Facilities:** Funding for additional staff resources at the Mental Health Treatment Facilities based upon an analysis showing Florida's therapist-to-resident ratio are lower than comparable states. This includes restoring \$2.7 million of nonrecurring funds provided in FY 2016-17 for the same purpose.
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health**
  - **Program Expansions--** Provides funding for additional community-based, team-supported behavioral health programs in areas with the greatest need and lacking in sufficient resources.
  - **Community Initiatives** - Funding for local service providers including behavioral health treatment, residential services, crisis stabilization units, and facility repairs.
  - **Epidemiologists for Outbreak Control** – Provides funding for 21 new epidemiologists, spread across the state's county health departments, to serve their community by assisting with investigations and outbreak control related to Zika, West Nile Virus, Dengue Fever, Measles, Meningitis, and other diseases.
  - **Child Protection Teams** – Provides additional funding for 7 ARNPs and 9 Case Coordinators and the purchase of 17 iRecord System sites to increase the capacity for follow-up activities referred to Child Protection Teams in the assessment of serious cases of child abuse and neglect. Total program funding is \$22.7 million.
  - **Reduce Federal Budget Authority for Refugee and Entrant Services** – reduces federal budget authority associated with Florida's election to discontinue participation in the Federal Refugee Resettlement program beginning January 1, 2018 as included in HB 427. In the event this bill fails to become law, the departments are authorized to request additional budget authority to fully implement the federal program in Fiscal Year 2017-2018.

### **Justice Appropriations –**

*The Florida House budget provides needed pay raises to state correctional officers. It also addresses the backlog in sexual assault kit analysis. Critical needs are funded as well as new counter-terrorism assets to deal with increasing threats against the homeland in the wake of refugee crises and destabilization of governments across the globe.*

- **\$22.8 million recurring GR** to increase pay for correctional officers, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains.
- **Five positions and \$1.2 million TF** to continue the department's three-year plan to eliminate the backlog of unprocessed sexual assault kits
- **46** new counter-terrorism positions.
- **126 new critical administrative positions** in correctional facilities.

- **\$10 million recurring GR** for healthcare expenses.

## **AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES –**

*The Florida House budget protects our environment, the Everglades, our beaches and our state parks. It also funds such as health and greening response programs for Florida's signature agricultural product.*

- **Everglades Restoration** - \$94.9M for Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan; \$32M for Restoration Strategies Regional Water Quality Plan; \$29.9M for Northern Everglades & Estuaries Protection; \$5M for dispersed water storage; and \$3.9M for agricultural nutrient reduction and water retention projects in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed.
- **Beach Restoration Projects** - Provides financial assistance to local governments and special taxing authorities for beach and dune restoration, nourishment, and inlet management.
- **State Park Improvements** - Provides \$14.7M for state park facility improvements, \$4.0M for ADA projects, \$3.6M for the Lovers Key State Park Environmental Education Center, \$1.9M for state park road repairs, and \$295K for maintenance and repairs for coastal and aquatic managed areas.
- **Citrus Greening Response/Agriculture Research** - Provides funds for \$8M for citrus research; \$7.7M for Citrus Health Response program; and \$2.5M for citrus crop decline supplemental and \$750K for Florida beef research.

## **TRANSPORTATION & TOURISM appropriations -**

*The Florida House budget fully funds all aspects of the Department of military affairs budget request. In addition the budget provides \$2 million for the Florida Defense Support Task Force to ensure Florida keeps its military bases.*

- Fully funds the Department's 5 year work program.
- The budget has fully funded all the key aspects of the Dept. of Military Affairs' budget request. This includes \$6M in funds for Armory Renovations, approximately \$933,000 for new equipment, and an additional \$4.8M for various training and support facility needs. The armory funding will conclude a near decade-long plan to renovate 52 armories around the state, leading the nation in this regard.
- Conforming to changes adopted in HB 7005 related to the Department of Economic Opportunity and economic development activities, recurring funding remains in place for underserved areas or populations, as well as military or space activities unique to Florida. These programs include: the black business loan program at \$2 million, the Hispanic business initiative at \$775,000, military base protection at \$1 million, the

Florida Defense Support Task Force at \$2 million, and Rural/Defense Infrastructure at \$3.2 million.

- Visit Florida's budget is \$25 million in an effort to promote our state's vital tourism industry through marketing and advertising.
- Space Florida's budget is \$10 million to further bolster the space and aerospace industry in our state.
- Affordable Housing programs are funded at \$155 million. This includes \$85.3 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan program (SAIL) and \$69.8 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP). This will also include a \$4 million set aside for homeless issues.

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