



## Chairman Negrón's Comments on the Senate's 2013-14 Budget Allocations

The development of the Senate's 2013-14 budget began with a comprehensive review of the base budget in order to assist all Senators with making informed budgetary decisions. As always, our desire to fund the most critical needs of our state must be reconciled with our constitutional obligation to pass a balanced budget.

The key to keeping Florida on the path to economic recovery is private sector job creation. As such, to keep more money in the pockets of hard working Florida families and businesses, the amount of funding in the Senate budget will be based upon existing revenue streams.

To account for unpredictability at the federal level comprised of the unknown impacts associated with sequestration and potential impact to state revenues caused by the federal government's implementation of PPACA, the Senate's budget allocations reflect Florida's need to maintain adequate reserves.

Finally, to continue our commitment to investing in Florida's future, we have again prioritized investments in education. The Education Appropriations Subcommittee, which is responsible for both K-12 and Higher Education, will once again receive the largest increase in available general revenue.

Departing from past practice, every Senator is a member of at least two budget writing subcommittees and 18 Senators are members of three appropriations panels. This is in keeping with the President's desire to have broad-based bipartisan engagement in the budget process. Additionally, the Senate's Intensive Budget Review provided all Senators an opportunity for meaningful participation in setting funding priorities at the subcommittee level. President Gaetz and I believe these priorities should be preserved throughout the budget development process to the maximum extent possible. As such, in forming these allocations we relied heavily on the recommendations put forward and discussed with subcommittee chairman, who continue to have great latitude to fund new items when corresponding reductions are located in their respective areas. Through this process we can ensure that the Senate puts forward a final budget proposal that reflects the realities of today's economy and priorities of today's Senators.

Florida's fiscal situation is improving however, the outlook for the 2013-14 fiscal year continues to reflect the challenges of a slow economic recovery and the uncertainty caused by instability in Washington. I recognize that Congressional action regarding sequestration or policy choices regarding Florida's response to the federal government's implementation of PPACA could necessitate reprioritizing these allocations. This uncertainty, caused by a lack of leadership in Washington, highlights Florida's need to plan ahead and be cautious. As we move forward, President Gaetz and I encourage all Senators to remain heavily engaged in the budget process.

For additional information, please contact the United Way of Florida at: (850) 488-8276.

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