



The Florida House of Representatives

Paul Renner
Speaker

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
February 8, 2024

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Florida House Budget Builds Key Investments, Pads Reserves

Land management, water systems, roads, fiscal conservatism are hallmarks of House budget proposal

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (February 8, 2024) — Today, Members of the Florida House of Representatives passed a balanced budget proposal to invest in critical infrastructure needs, pay off state debts early, fund education options for all Florida students, improve healthcare access and affordability, and support public safety.

The proposed House budget makes significant investments toward Everglades restoration and protection of our natural resources, including \$158 million for the acquisition of conservation lands through the Florida Forever Program. It provides increases of \$224 million for the KidCare program and \$805 million for Medicaid caseloads and price level increases. The budget proposal invests \$350 million for performance-based incentive funding for our best-in-the-nation state university system while keeping tuition increases off the table. It provides \$12.5 million to Historically Black Colleges and Universities and \$42 million to the state's PreK-12 schools for facility hardening grants.

The proposal adds \$220 million for resiliency projects and grants and over \$250 million for grants to harden homes and condominiums against adverse weather events. An additional \$483 million is provided for affordable housing programs. The FDOT Work Program is fully funded at \$14.2 billion.

“Today, we delivered a fiscally responsible budget that honors Florida’s taxpayers,” said Speaker Paul Renner (R-Palm Coast). “As Florida’s economy continues to expand and grow, we must be fiscally conservative to ensure our state is prepared for any future downturn in the economy. We are proposing

significant investments in our natural resources, our infrastructure, and our educational institutions to ensure long-term viability and vitality. Our Appropriations Committee Chairs deserve great credit for meeting the challenge of prudent and strategic investments to prepare our state for a bright future.”

“Florida’s economic strength is built on a generation of not spending more than we take in and making sound, strategic investments toward long-term resilience and growth,” said Representative Leek (R-Ormond Beach). “This budget reflects the realities of a post-pandemic Florida balanced with making critical investments in our environment, infrastructure, education, public safety, and long-term growth. I appreciate Speaker Renner’s leadership and the work of our Appropriations Chairs and staff to produce a budget that delivers for all Floridians.”

The proposed \$115.5 billion state budget for FY 2024-25 reflects a 3% reduction from last year’s budget to ensure a structurally balanced budget plan.

The plan provides \$600 million to retire state debt early. It maintains near-record levels of reserves (\$12.1 billion), including \$6.4 billion in the General Revenue Fund Unallocated, \$5 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund, and \$700 million in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

The Florida House makes significant investments in the state’s critical infrastructure to ensure a secure and safe water supply and to protect our state’s natural resources, including the Everglades and our beaches, rivers, lakes, and springs. The Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee proposal includes \$1.4 billion for Everglades restoration, the protection of water resources, and beach restoration, \$220 million toward resiliency projects and grants (Resilient Florida Program), and \$770 million for the drinking water and wastewater revolving loan programs.

“This year, the Florida House proposes significant investments to bolster Florida’s infrastructure to ensure clean, accessible drinking water and the protection of our natural resources,” **said Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee Chair, Thad Altman (R-Indian River)**.

Health Care

In order to improve the safety, health, and well-being of our children and their families, the Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee budget proposal includes \$224 million to provide funding for price level and workload increases as well as to increase the income eligibility threshold for additional coverage under the Florida KidCare program. It allocates \$10 million to further sickle cell research and over \$100 million to combat the opioid epidemic. The proposal also seeks to increase the Medicaid reimbursement rate for pediatricians to attract providers and reduce waitlists for services.

“Our health care budget continues to fund our KidCare program to help struggling families, reduce the waitlist for budget waivers to assist Floridians with disabilities, and devote a significant investment to tackle opioid addiction,” **said Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee Chair, Sam Garrison (R-Fleming Island)**.

Higher Education

Home to the top-ranked higher education system in the nation, Florida provides an environment for open discussion and the debate of ideas, where individuals are allowed to teach and learn free from bias, in order to develop the leaders and entrepreneurs of tomorrow. While maintaining no tuition increases, the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee proposal provides \$350 million to restore performance-based incentive funding to State University System institutions and \$12.5 million for the state’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities for facility hardening grants.

“Florida’s higher education system remains at the top of its class because of our teachers, our students, our facilities, and our investments,” **said Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee Chair, Jason Shoaf (R-Port St. Joe)**. “We must ensure Floridians are ready for the jobs of the future with significant increases in career training and workforce education and performance funds that reward tech centers and adult learners who continue their education in the Florida College System.”

Infrastructure and Tourism

Whether they come to visit or to stay, Florida is attracting record numbers of visitors and new residents, and our infrastructure must be prepared to handle the additional traffic. The Infrastructure & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee provides \$14.2 billion to the Department of Transportation’s 5-year Transportation Work Program, an additional \$630 million to accelerate the completion of selected road projects in the Moving Florida Forward Plan, and \$483 million for affordable housing programs.

“With close to 140 million annual visitors, 23 million residents, and over 800 people moving to the state each day, the House’s proposed budget demonstrates our commitment to ensuring our roads, airports, and ports are prepared to handle the capacity,” **said Infrastructure & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee Chair, Alex Andrade (R-Pensacola)**.

Justice

Florida is a law and order state and the Florida House is committed to making investments to ensure public safety and to support our law enforcement and first responders. The Justice Appropriations Subcommittee proposal totals \$7.1 billion, including over \$100 million for technological and capital improvements, \$22 million in local law enforcement support grants, and \$16.4 million in inmate wellness and re-entry initiatives.

“Our budget proposal makes significant investments in our facilities and ensures that we have the capacity and resources to keep Floridians safe, while providing our inmates resources they need to become productive members of our communities,” **said Justice Appropriations Subcommittee Chair, Chuck Brannan (R-Macclenny)**. “I want to thank Speaker Renner and Chair Leek for their leadership and commend the members of the committee for their commitment to public safety.”

PreK-12 Education

The Florida House is committed to supporting a world-class education system with dedicated teachers and staff and students ready to learn. With Florida’s high school graduation rate at an all-time high, we are encouraged to provide funding for innovative solutions that lead the nation.

The PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee budget proposal includes \$28.4 billion in K-12 funding, a \$1.8 billion increase over current year or an additional \$217.53 per student. The House is proposing \$42 million for school hardening grants to address security, \$20 million to fund an increase in the amount of the reading and math scholarships, and \$6.9 million for a new VPK summer bridge program.

“We are encouraged by the success of our students and teachers, and their achievements are proof that we are investing in the right priorities,” **said PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee Chair, Josie Tomkow (R-Polk City)**. “I want to thank and applaud Speaker Renner and Chair Leek for their commitment to Florida’s future. This budget builds on our successes of universal choice, more opportunity, and greater flexibility to give our students the best education possible.”

State Administration & Technology

Finally, the House is committed to investing in programs to improve the resiliency of homes and condominiums and to ensure state-owned buildings are adequately maintained. The State Administration & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee proposal includes \$225.8 million for the My Safe Florida

Home Program, \$27 million in grant funding to harden condominiums under the Pilot Program, \$93 million for fixed capital outlay, and \$72.4 million in distributions for fiscally constrained counties.

“Our budget recommendation is fiscally sound, mindful of the taxpayers’ dollars, and serves the interest of our citizens,” **said State Administration & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee Chair, Demi Busatta Cabrera (R-Coral Gables)**. “I want to thank Speaker Renner for allowing me to serve as Chair and the members of the committee for their dedication to improving Florida’s critical infrastructure and technology systems.”

The proposed budget totals \$115.5 billion. This breaks down to:

- \$47.2 billion General Revenue
- \$29.9 billion State Trust Funds
- \$38.5 billion Federal Trust Funds

There is a total decrease of \$3.5 billion (3%) from the current-year budget. The proposed decrease in General Revenue spending is \$410 million (0.9%).

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