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CONTACT:

Matthew Herndon
Office of Representative Ben Diamond
Matthew.Herndon@myfloridahouse.gov
(850) 717-5068

Representative Ben Diamond Issues Statement on Failed Amendments to Support Florida's Small Businesses and Essential Workers

Representative Ben Diamond (D-St. Petersburg) filed two amendments to the Florida House budget proposal, which would have provided support to Florida's small businesses and essential workers. The amendments would have created the Florida Heroes Fund Grant Program and the Florida Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program, funding each at \$1.75 billion.

The Florida Heroes Fund Grant Program would have provided one-time \$1000 payments to Florida's essential workers. The Florida Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program would have also provided grants of up to \$25,000 to small businesses and nonprofits. Both proposals prioritized support for those who have been most impacted by the pandemic, including low-wage, frontline workers and businesses that are located in disadvantaged communities. Both amendments would have utilized federal funding from the **American Rescue Plan Act**.

Representative Diamond issued the following statement regarding his amendments:

"Across Florida, our families and businesses are still struggling to cope with the financial fallout from the greatest public health crisis in more than a century. As legislators, we could have done so much more to help Floridians at a time when they desperately need it. These amendments supported the heroes who put their health and safety on the line to keep Florida running during the pandemic, and the small businesses that are the backbone of our economy. We must adjust our priorities and spend the federal relief money for its intended purpose: To help Florida's families and businesses survive a pandemic that already has cost us so much."

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