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House Democrats Respond to Budget Signing

Tallahassee, FL – Today, the governor is signing Florida’s record-breaking \$109.9 billion state budget. This budget, as passed by the Legislature before vetoes, included nearly \$40 billion in Federal funds (including \$3.4 billion in American Rescue Plan funds), nearly \$30 billion in state trust funds, and almost \$44 billion in state general revenue.

While massive, and flush with Federal dollars, this budget simply doesn’t do enough to help Floridians in areas such as health care, education, and the ongoing housing affordability crisis.

Members of the House Democratic Caucus issued the following statements:

Leader Evan Jenne (D-Hollywood) issued the following statement, “While the Governor and Legislative leaders will brag about not sweeping the affordable housing trust fund this year, it’s important to remember that last year they passed a law to permanently pre-sweep two-thirds of the money that voters wanted to go to housing. And this was after they spent over \$2 billion set aside for affordable housing on other projects over the years.

This budget doesn’t do nearly enough for Floridians who don’t know how they’re going to afford to live in Florida another year. It’s impossible for most to pay skyrocketing rent, much less save to purchase their own home. And despite public demand to fix the problem, we just had a special session that will fail to stop the crisis of through-the-roof homeowner’s insurance rates.

Despite the huge price tag, I don’t think most Floridians will feel like they’re getting their money’s worth from this nine-figure budget.”

Leader-Designate Fentrice Driskell (D-Tampa) said, “The Governor doesn’t like to mention this, but Florida’s budget includes nearly \$40 billion in Federal money this year. It’s unfortunate that despite having record cash to work with, we couldn’t do

more for Floridians struggling with a housing crisis and global inflation.

Instead of holding back record reserves, we could have spent some of that money to invest in Florida. Our public schools are critical in creating opportunities for our future. Unfortunately, we are still below average in both teacher pay and dollars spent per student. Florida easily could, and should, be a national leader in education, but it's hard to turn out A+ students when the state only commits C- resources."

Appropriations Committee Democratic Ranking Member **Representative Nicholas X. Duran (D-Miami)**, added, "Nearly 40% of our state's budget is spent on health care services, and it's not expected to get cheaper anytime soon. Yet, Florida is one of only 12 states that still rejects Medicaid expansion provided by the Affordable Care Act. This leaves millions of dollars on the table, and denies help to thousands of low-income families across Florida. We could spend fewer state dollars and save more lives if we'd just take this common-sense step. Drawing down these funds would also free up our money to tackle other priorities, such as clearing the APD waitlist or devoting more money to mental health services to help Floridians in crisis."

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