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House Democrats Roll Out Policy Platform to Help Floridians Be Healthy, Prosperous, and Safe

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – This morning, in [our weekly Monday Media Availability](#), **Leader Fentrice Driskell (D- Tampa)** and Policy Chair **Representative Kelly Skidmore (D- Boca Raton)** unveiled six priority bills that House Democrats feel tackle important problems facing Floridians every day across the state. We offer this as a counterpoint to attacks on education, soft-on-crime gun bills, and extremist abortion bans.

Leader Driskell said, “You’ve probably heard us say this before, but we believe that ‘every Floridian deserves the freedom to be healthy, prosperous, and safe.’ We in the House Democratic Caucus use that statement as a guiding principle when we’re doing our work here in Tallahassee. Instead of getting bogged down with Culture Wars, partisan fights, or special interests, we look at issues through that lens. Does it protect our freedom? Does it help people be more healthy, prosperous, or safe?”

Today, we wanted to highlight some priority bills our caucus believes will deliver for Floridians and provide an alternative to what we’re seeing from the Governor and Republican Legislative leadership.”

The bills included:

[HB 1477- Insurance \(Leader Driskell\)](#)

- Florida’s property insurance crisis has been on the front page of every newspaper for the last 2 years, it seems. This is a major problem that we hear about constantly from our communities.
- We’ve now had two special sessions to address the housing insurance crisis in

Florida, and yet we've seen no relief for Floridians. We were told they "might" slow increases or lower costs in 1-2 years. That's unacceptable, considering we are paying the highest rates in the country.

- HB 1477 would require insurers to cap rates and lenders pay any interest they earn on insurance proceeds back to homeowners, providing the rate relief that Floridians deserve, and putting money back in consumers' pockets.
- This bill also would establish a Property Insurance Commission tasked with monitoring the market and reviewing reserve requirements for insurers.

HB 1629- Financial Accountability in Publicly Funded Education **(Leader Driskell)**

- This would create transparency requirements for voucher schools. They must disclose school policies on issues like: compliance with religious tenants, dress code/code of conduct, grooming/hair style requirements, provisions re: sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Creates a Task Force to look at ways to increase transparency for voucher schools, so parents can be informed and make the best decisions for their kids.
- If they disenroll 25% of scholarship students without parental consent, DOE would suspend payments to the school.
- These changes are designed to help parents make the best decision for their kids and families.

HB 1499- Affordable Housing (Rep. Skidmore)

- Affordable housing is a problem that we hear about constantly from the people in our communities. They can't find a home they can afford.
- The housing crisis wasn't created overnight, and it won't be fixed quickly. But Florida is becoming too expensive for Floridians, and we must act immediately to provide relief now.
- Empowers our communities to tackle their housing crisis locally.
- Gives the Florida Housing Finance Corporation more tools to encourage affordable housing construction through tax credits and other means.

HB 511- Medicaid Expansion (Rep. Joseph)

- Florida is one of just 11 states that hasn't accepted Medicaid Expansion made possible under the Affordable Care Act. Every other state is getting federal money to help low income people, giving them better health care options, healthier outcomes, and reducing the costs that occur when people get sick and have to go to the ER but cannot afford to pay.
- This bill would expand Medicaid eligibility requirements, which would help keep people healthy and save us all money. Florida already has some of the most

restrictive access to Medicaid in the country. It's incredibly hard to get the help that some low-income families desperately need.

- And this is about to get even more cruel: As Federal COVID protections run out, the rule that says a state can't kick someone off Medicaid even if their qualifications changed is ending. Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature are doing nothing as hundreds of thousands of low-income Floridians lose access to help through Medicaid.
- Florida should join the vast majority of other states and accept Medicaid Expansion. This is about literally saving lives, we have to put politics aside and say yes to this commonsense program. It's leaving millions of dollars on the table for no good reason.
- Families shouldn't live in fear that one preventable illness or injury means financial ruin.

HB 1283- Small Business Investment Corporation (Rep. Gottlieb)

- Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. They are an enormous job creator, and the profits stay in the communities.
- This would establish a Small Business Investment Corporation to encourage, support, and promote small businesses across Florida.
- For many people, their American Dream is starting their own business to provide for their family, be their own boss, and build something they can pass on to future generations.

HB 1513- Responsible Gun Ownership (Reps. Hunschofsky & Daley)

- More guns in our communities do not make us safer. And Floridians want common-sense gun law reforms.
- Universal background checks, safe storage laws, and the other provisions in this bill are popular, common-sense, and way past due.
- We took good bipartisan steps in the right direction after the tragic shooting in Parkland, but now some GOP lawmakers want to roll back some of those common-sense safety measures.

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