



Florida House of Representatives
Democratic Office

Franklin Sands
Democratic Leader

Geraldine F. Thompson
Democratic Leader Pro Tempore

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CONTACT: Mark Hollis
(850) 488-9622

BUDGET STATEMENTS

House Democratic Leader Franklin Sands and Representative Ron Saunders, the Democratic Ranking Member on the House Full Appropriations Council, issued the following statements in response to Governor Charlie Crist's budget presentation.

Democratic Leader Franklin Sands (D-Weston):

"I congratulate Governor Crist for recognizing the important priorities of job creation and economic development, the need to develop the talent of Florida's students and workforce with increased education spending, and for keeping in mind the health care and other priorities of Florida families.

"Governor Crist wisely embraces the use of federal stimulus aid provided by President Barack Obama and Congress. Unfortunately, his budget dangerously relies on draining important state trust funds, draws down budget reserves to levels that will require close scrutiny, and is built on a sunny optimism that is in sharp contrast to the dire warnings of Republican legislative leaders.

"I once again call on Republican legislative leaders to begin the state's budget writing process by committing to holding all budget talks in the sunshine, and to make budget-allocation decisions in public rather than relying on the secretive

process of the past that drew criticism in a grand jury report.

“Meanwhile, I am hesitant of the governor’s call for changing the Class Size Amendment in the state constitution. I seriously doubt that Floridians will want to undo what they approved in 2002. I strongly support giving school districts the flexibility they need to deal with small increases in the student-teacher ratios. But it is important to remember that Florida still averages more students in its classrooms than any other state in the Southeast. The flexibility our schools need can be achieved by changing state law to implement the Class Size Amendment. There is not presently a need for voters to change the amendment.”

From Representative Ron Saunders (D-Key West):

“It is abundantly clear that Florida’s Republican leadership is at sharp odds with our Republican governor. While Governor Crist is eager to embrace federal stimulus funds for Florida, the Republican legislative leadership is still sounding a message of worker layoffs, stagnant education spending and painful budget cuts. It’s no wonder that Floridians are looking for an alternative to our current Republican leadership.”

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