



Florida House of Representatives
Democratic Office

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Democratic Leader

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SUMMARY OF REMARKS
BY HOUSE DEMOCRATIC LEADER FRANKLIN SANDS
JANUARY 27, 2010, AP LEGISLATIVE PLANNING SESSION

ON HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS PRIORITIES:

- **SANDS:** “In 2010, creating and retaining jobs for Florida is Job Number 1 for the Florida House Democratic Caucus.”

- “We also stand for education accountability and reform. We stand for better health care for Floridians. We stand for tax fairness and equity, and for integrity to the legislative process.”

ON TAX RELIEF FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS:

- **SANDS:** “We don’t want a repeat of last year. That’s when the ruling party passed about \$1-billion in fee hikes on the middle class and small businesses.”
 - **HB 99** -- Repeals fee hikes passed by House Republicans in 2009.
Sponsor: Rep. Ron Saunders, D-Key West.

- “We should look at new ideas to give businesses the incentives to develop high-tech and environmentally friendly industries...Be vigilant watchdogs and be wary of simplistic slogans. Don’t let them paint all Democrats as tax-and-spenders or unconcerned about the needs of the business community.”

- **HB 597** -- Back To School Tax Holiday. Provides a sales-tax break on a variety of products, including computers and EnergyStar-rated appliances. **Sponsor: Rep. Keith Fitzgerald, D-Sarasota.**
- **HB 165** – Applies tax fairness by addressing goods sold on the Internet. **Sponsor: Rep. Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda, D-Tallahassee.**
- **HB 749** -- Gaming Compact between the Seminole Tribe and the State of Florida. **Sponsor: Rep. Jim Waldman, D-Coconut Creek.**

ON UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION BUSINESS TAXES:

- **SANDS:** “Today, skyrocketing unemployment compensation taxes are hitting Florida’s small businesses and threaten to drastically harm the state’s economic recovery...It is imperative that the Legislature, Congress, and the White House work cooperatively, in bipartisan fashion, to provide our state’s employers relief from business-crushing taxes.”

ON 2010 BUDGET PRIORITIES:

- **SANDS:** “Just last week, I asked House Speaker Larry Cretul to conduct joint meetings of the House Finance & Tax Council and the appropriations committee to do what the House failed to do last year---and that is to simultaneously consider the state’s potential revenues and expenditures---and to do so in an open and transparent debate.”
 - **January 21, 2010** letter to Speaker Cretul. Read more at www.flhousedems.com

ON RESTORING THE PUBLIC’S FAITH:

- **SANDS:** “We support holding officials to the highest standards when they are entrusted with acting on the citizen’s behalf. We are calling for a new amendment to the state constitution that will require the state budget to be written in a more open and transparent manner. We want to put an end to those so-called strike-all amendments on the floor of the House of Representatives that cut the public out of the process.”
 - **HJR 241** – Expands the Public’s Access to the Legislative Process and Public Records and Meetings. **Sponsor: Rep. Keith Fitzgerald, D-Sarasota.**

- **SANDS:** “We think there are campaign finance reforms that should be considered, and changes that must be made to discourage public corruption, fraud, and dishonesty by government officials.”
 - **HB 271** – Offenses by Public Officials or Others. **Sponsor: Rep. Martin Kiar, D-Parkland.**
 - **HB 489** – Public Corruption. **Sponsor: Rep. Adam Fetterman, D-Port St. Lucie.**
 - **HB 533** -- Testimony Before the Public Service Commission. **Sponsor: Rep. Mark Pafford, D-West Palm Beach.**
 - **HB 343** – Standards of Conduct. **Sponsor: Rep. Ari Porth, D-Coral Springs.**

ON PUBLIC EDUCATION:

- **SANDS:** “We are all focused on addressing the pressing economic problems of today, but we have to have a vision for Florida in the future. No matter what political party one belongs to, we must all embrace the notion of providing our children with every chance to learn and to grow. Job creation and investing in our communities are not competing priorities. They are complementary.
- “I am truly pleased by Governor Charlie Crist’s announcement on Monday to break from Republican dogma and to call for increased spending for education.
- “House Democrats are also supportive of policy changes that aim to increase accountability but loosen our state’s reliance on the FCAT. That test is narrowly focused on a few subject areas—and doesn’t give a true picture of a student’s actual academic progress.
 - **HB 473** -- Public Education. **Sponsor: Rep. Dwight Bullard, D-Miami.**
 - **HB 383** -- PreK Education. **Sponsor: Rep. Janet Long, D-Seminole.**

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