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**HOUSE DEMOCRATS URGE REPUBLICAN LEADERS  
TO STOP PUNISHING FLORIDA'S ECONOMY**

**TALLAHASSEE** – Florida House Democratic Caucus members today called on Republican legislative leaders to stop punishing Florida's economy and admit that their refusal to accept \$444 million in federal economic stimulus this year has injured Florida businesses and residents.

Unemployment compensation costs for businesses are increasing dramatically because of high rates of joblessness and the state's failure to provide further relief by obtaining all-available federal economic recovery funds.

Rep. Kevin J.G. Rader (D-Delray Beach) hopes to revive legislation he sponsored during the 2009 legislative session to help Florida obtain additional federal stimulus monies. Today, he called on Republican legislative leaders to make changes to Florida's unemployment compensation system.

"Florida's families and businesses have suffered long enough," said Representative Rader. "Republican legislative inaction has raised the cost of doing business in Florida."

The call for action follows a Florida Department of Revenue announcement that the unemployment compensation payments by businesses will increase 12-fold, a

jump from \$8.40 per employee this year to \$100.30 per employee next year.

“If not for Republican legislators’ political maneuvers, the business tax hikes would be cut today by about 20 percent,” said Representative Rader.

Legislation that Representative Rader proposed during the 2009 legislative session (House Bill 1333) called for accepting \$444 million in federal economic stimulus money and the state agreeing to a much-needed modernization of its unemployment compensation system.

House Bill 1333 would have offered benefits to individuals who lose their jobs due to family circumstances, such as the relocation of a spouse, family illness or domestic violence. The bill also would have fixed a timing flaw in what’s known as the Alternative Base Period that unnecessarily limits unemployment compensation eligibility.

“Conservative and liberal economists alike now believe that the federal economic recovery act has worked,” said Rep. Keith Fitzgerald (D-Sarasota), the House Democratic Policy Chair. “Disappointingly, Florida did worse than many other states in pulling down our fair share of federal stimulus.”

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