

2008 SESSION UPDATE

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE EVAN JENNE DISTRICT 100



## Budget

This Legislative Session, the Florida Legislature produced a \$66.2 billion budget for the upcoming 2008-09 fiscal year – the smallest budget the state has passed in three years. As expected, the budget shortfalls required tough decisions. This spending plan includes a more than \$5 billion reduction from the original 2007-2008 fiscal year budget. Due to the ongoing decline in state revenues, a reduction in spending is necessary to balance the state's budget.

The budget-cutting process posed many challenges for my colleagues and me. Nonetheless, throughout the session, I continuously advocated for funding for our most vulnerable citizens: students, seniors and disabled individuals. While some wonderful programs will receive adequate funding, many other effective programs will be subject to significant cuts.

National Board Certified teachers will continue to receive 10 percent bonuses. Also, the Merit Award Program, Florida's performance-based bonus program for the state's best educators will remain. However, this budget included a nearly \$2.3 billion reduction in public education funding – with Broward schools among the

hardest hit. The budget cuts \$332 million from K-12 education funding – a per-student funding drop of about 1.8 percent or \$131 less per student. Universities and community colleges also received large funding cuts resulting in tuition increases.

Health care funding received dramatic reductions. Nursing homes will face a \$163.7 million reduction in what they are paid to take care of residents on Medicaid, which in turn will reduce the staff at nursing homes and, by extension, the quality of patient care. Thankfully, the Medically Needy program that pays for the healthcare of people who cannot get private health insurance because of chronic or catastrophic illnesses was funded. In addition, the state's subsidized health insurance program for children, KidCare, will receive \$13.4 million to cover an additional 38,000 children under the program.

Ultimately, I was unable to support this budget because I believe the final comprehensive budget failed to prioritize essentials. Rather than getting our state out of recession, this budget may push Florida into deeper economic and social crisis.





Representative Evan Jenne  
6943 Stirling Road  
Davie, FL 33314



**District Office**

6943 Stirling Rd., Davie, FL 33314  
(954) 321.2760

**Tallahassee Office**

1401 The Capitol, 402 S Monroe St.,  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
(850) 488.0245

E-mail: [evan.jenne@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:evan.jenne@myfloridahouse.gov)

# Session Successes

While the 2008 Legislative Session presented challenges to most of the legislation offered, many of the bills I sponsored successfully moved through the legislative process either on their own or as an amendment to other legislation. Below is a summary of the policies I worked on directly, most of which were requested by residents of House District 100.



- ⇒ Victims of Sexual Violence - House Bills 489 & 1141 expand existing law that provides employment protection for victims of domestic violence to include victims of sexual violence while protecting the identities of victims from public records laws. These bills were unanimously approved by the Legislature and are currently awaiting approval by Governor Crist.
- ⇒ Missing Persons - Senate Bill 502, the companion to House Bill 223, received unanimous approval by the Legislature. This legislation requires law enforcement agencies to adopt written policies and procedures to be used when investigating missing children and missing adult reports. It also provides a timeframe for transmitting the report to state and national databases. The changes made by this legislation will help law enforcement locate and identify missing persons. This legislation was requested by a resident of Dania Beach.
- ⇒ Green Building - Although House Bill 1191 did not pass as an independent bill, the substance of the bill that facilitates energy-efficient “green” building construction was approved by the Legislature as part of this session’s comprehensive energy plan. This legislation was requested by residents of District 100.
- ⇒ Homeowners Associations – Senate Bill 1986, the companion to House Bill 921, addresses basic consumer protections for homeowners in the homeowners’ association assessments collection process. This bill was a follow-up to legislation passed during the 2007 Legislative Session.
- ⇒ Relief for Adrian Fuentes – House Bill 183 compensates a family that resides in District 100 whose son was born with severe birth defects as a result of medical errors. This legislation allows the South Broward Hospital District to pay the court-approved settlement agreement.



During the 2008 Legislative Session, the majority of the bills I sponsored were a direct response to suggestions made by the residents of District 100. As I prepare for the 2008 Legislative Session, please let me know if you have suggestions for legislation. Suggestions can be submitted by e-mail to [evan.jenne@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:evan.jenne@myfloridahouse.gov) or by mail to Representative Evan Jenne, 6943 Stirling Road, Davie, FL 33314.

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