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Representative Cruz Serves on the Following Committees:

Insurance & Banking Subcommittee
Democratic Ranking Member
Energy & Utilities Subcommittee
Health & Human Services Committee
Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee
Joint Committee on Public Counsel Oversight
Senate Redistricting Subcommittee



A MESSAGE FROM REPRESENTATIVE CRUZ

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for the honor of serving you in the Florida House of Representatives. I am sending you this newsletter as an update on the 2011 Legislative Session.

Each day during the session, I was reminded that Floridians remain worried about the economy, and that it is crucial that our state focus on creating jobs and improving livelihoods. **Unfortunately, I believe the Florida Legislature simply failed to do what was needed to help small businesses and Floridians who are struggling to provide for their families.**

I proudly fought to protect our schools from record cuts and thousands of cops, firefighters, teachers and nurses from having their jobs eliminated. But, I was unable to keep the Legislature from taking what I fear are huge steps backwards on many of these issues that are critical to all of us.

Nevertheless, I hope you find this legislative update to be a useful source of information on the 2011 session. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the issues, please call my office at (813) 673-4673 or send me an email at janet.cruz@myfloridahouse.gov. And as always, if there is anything that I can do to assist you, feel welcome to contact my office.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you.

Sincerely,

Janet Cruz



2011

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JANET CRUZ



REPRESENTATIVE JANET CRUZ: SERVING HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY



I VOTED AGAINST THE BUDGET, AND HERE'S WHY:

NO PLAN TO CREATE JOBS

Arguably, not a single new job was created as a result of this budget – in fact, 5,000 positions are eliminated. Worse, the plan would essentially cut teachers, firefighters and police officers' pay by 3% while reducing benefits to participants in the Florida Retirement System.

GIVEAWAYS TO BIG CORPORATE INTERESTS

In my opinion, this nearly \$70 billion spending plan is based on the wrong priorities. It hands big tax breaks to out-of-state corporations. Yet it cuts spending on everything from public schools to affordable housing and environmental protection.



HISTORIC CUTS TO OUR SCHOOLS

Deep cuts to public schools mean funding to educate Florida's children will be reduced by \$1.35 billion. Per-student funding declines by a whopping \$542 to \$6,267 per student, amounting to an 8-percent cut. These cuts also mean that, ultimately, thousands of teachers will face layoffs.

RECKLESS CUTS THAT HURT FLORIDA

The budget raids millions of dollars from state trust funds intended to pay for priorities such as road construction, environmental land purchases, affordable housing and fighting fraud. It also freezes spending for Florida Forever, the state's land-buying program, and reduces spending toward Everglades restoration.

The budget slashes Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospitals and nursing homes, which I fear will put seniors and the neediest Floridians at risk. It also reduces spending on the Healthy Start program for women and infants.

STANDING UP FOR THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

I proudly sponsored a bill that would strengthen penalties to help keep repeat abusers away from their victims. We need to do everything we can to protect victims from further trauma.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE INSURED

I co-sponsored a bill that changed the rules to ensure that insurance policyholders are made whole, even when their insurers become insolvent, while also protecting state employees who work to help process these claims.

FIGHTING TO PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

I voted against a plan to overhaul the state's Medicaid program by shifting patients to privately-run managed care plans because I worry about the effects of such a harmful experiment on the care of millions of Floridians. I also strongly disagree with a bill that reduced nursing home staffing. But I was proud to support an effort to crack down on prescription drug abuse at "pill mills."

