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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ELIZABETH PORTER

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Economic Development
& Tourism Subcommittee

Vice Chair

Education Committee

Vice Chair

Agriculture & Natural
Resources Subcommittee

K-12 Subcommittee

Select Committee on Gaming

Transportation &
Economic Development
Appropriations Subcommittee

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ELIZABETH PORTER
2014 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

“It’s an honor to serve you everyday in Tallahassee.”

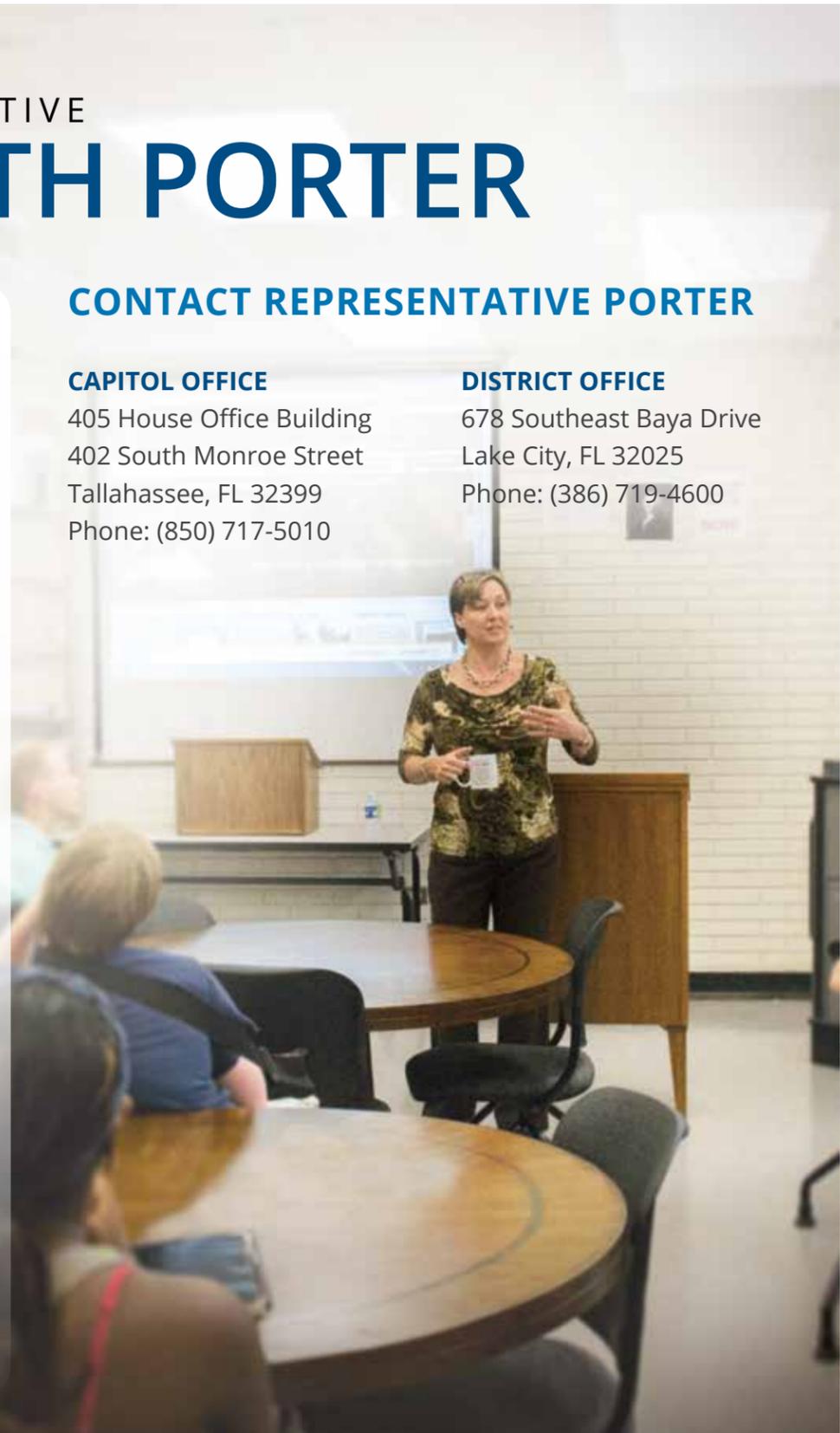
As you are probably aware, we just concluded another legislative session. In my view, this was a very successful session in which we were able to accomplish much on behalf of all Floridians. In my opinion, Florida has made an amazing comeback and the work we did this session will continue to move our state in the right direction.

This year, we have once again produced a budget that is balanced and what I believe is fiscally responsible. The budget prioritizes our state’s critical needs while leaving \$3.1 billion in reserves to prepare Florida for the future and putting money back into the pockets of Floridians with \$500 million in tax and fee cuts — the largest in over a decade.

Additionally, we have worked to make Florida the most veteran friendly state in the nation by passing the Florida G.I. Bill, which will increase educational and employment opportunities for our brave men and women in uniform.

Enclosed in this newsletter, you will find more details about our work this session. I hope it is helpful. Thank you again for the opportunity to be your State Representative. As always, please feel free to contact me if I may be of assistance to you or your family.

Elizabeth Porter



STATE REPRESENTATIVE ELIZABETH PORTER

KEEPING DISTRICT 10 FAMILIES INFORMED

SALUTING FLORIDA'S VETERANS

I believe the brave men and women who serve our country and protect our freedom should be honored and treated as heroes. That's why I enthusiastically supported House Bill 7015, Florida's GI Bill. This bill, which was signed into law by Governor Rick Scott on March 31, establishes Florida as the top "Welcome Home" state in the nation for veterans, military personnel and their families.

This legislation creates the Congressman C.W. Bill Young Tuition Waiver program, which waives out-of-state tuition and fees for honorably discharged veterans and increases funding for the Education Dollars for Duty program to allow more members of the Florida National Guard to earn a degree. The bill also includes provisions aimed at helping veterans find employment, including the creation of the nonprofit Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to assist retired and recently separated military personnel to keep Florida their home, equip them for opportunities to get a job and promote the hiring of veterans. To better serve our veterans in their time of need, this legislation also makes it easier for elderly veterans to get into Florida's state-run military nursing homes. These first-class facilities honor their patients with high-quality care, and I am pleased we were able to reduce barriers for our veterans to receive care faster.



Whether it is members of the Greatest Generation or those who have recently served overseas, I strongly believe that our servicemen and servicewomen deserve the best. I am proud that my first vote cast this session was for the Florida GI bill.

SECURING A BALANCED BUDGET

The Legislature passed a balanced state budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year, which totals \$77.1 billion, provides over \$500 million in tax relief to our hardworking citizens and businesses, and plans for the future by maintaining \$3.1 billion in reserves.

In my opinion, the budget we passed this session demonstrates our continued commitment to providing a quality education for Florida's students by proposing total state education funding that exceeds any previous year. We also reward universities that help students get jobs after graduation by providing \$200 million in State University Performance Funding. Additionally, we included \$544 million for maintenance, repair, renovation and construction projects at public K-12/charter schools, colleges and universities.



The budget continues to strengthen Florida's safety net by increasing funding to serve our most vulnerable populations. The Legislature has provided funding to serve all Floridians on the Agency for Persons with Disabilities Medicaid Waiver intensive needs waiting list and significantly invested in Florida's child welfare system to reduce case loads for Child Protective Investigators to better serve and protect children in this state. We provided \$116 million total funding for cancer treatment education and biomedical research. The budget includes significant investments to protect our environment, ensure the safety of our citizens and improve our transportation and education infrastructure.

I believe the 2014-15 budget responsibly directs significant funding toward key services, provides meaningful tax relief to Floridians, maximizes every dollar, and prioritizes funding in the best interest of all Floridians.

DELIVERING \$500 MILLION IN TAX FEES AND CUTS

Recently, our state confronted as much as a \$6.4 billion budget shortfall. Now, thanks to what I believe was responsible fiscal management and an improving economy, we have turned that shortfall into a surplus and have the opportunity to once again offer tax relief for all Floridians. As part of the House and Senate leadership's Work Plan 2014, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 156 and House Bill 5601 to provide \$500 million in tax and fee cuts for Florida's families and businesses — the largest tax and fee cut of its kind in over a decade.



House Bill 5601 includes significant tax cuts and spending aimed at providing over \$105 million in savings to Floridians and encouraging job creation in the state. This tax cut package incorporates a broad range of components aimed to benefit all Floridians, including:

- A "Back to School" sales tax holiday from August 1 to August 3, including no sales tax on clothing and shoes priced at or below \$100, school supplies priced at or below \$15, and the first \$750 of price on personal computer equipment.
- A "Hurricane Preparedness" sales tax holiday from May 31 to June 8 for supplies such as fuel tanks, flashlights, etc.
- A sales tax holiday from September 19 to September 21 on the first \$1,500 spent on energy-efficient and water-efficient appliances.
- A sales tax exemption for children's car seats and youth bicycle helmets.
- A sales tax exemption for certain prepaid college meal plans.
- A \$37.5 million increase in the tax credit cap for the New Markets Program to encourage job creation in low-income communities.

Floridians deserve to keep more of their hard-earned money. I believe the record tax cuts passed by the Legislature this session will keep Florida's economy moving in the right direction.