

Representative Keith Perry
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Exploring Medicaid Alternatives for Florida's Uninsured

In addition to nearly \$1 billion to cover increased Medicaid costs this year, the Florida Legislature explored options for providing health care to medically-needy families, including the possibility of opting out of a federal expansion of Medicaid coverage. Due to a ruling by the US Supreme Court, the federal government cannot force how Florida or any other state makes up for the planned loss of 100% percent federal funding in 2017 – just a few short years from now.

The Florida House of Representatives created a Select Committee that researched and reviewed whether or not full Medicaid expansion was the right choice for Florida. The committee concluded that expansion was not in Florida's best interest and instead proposed a health coverage option that would extend



health insurance choices to two groups that currently may not be covered under Medicaid.

The Florida Health Choices Plus Plan proposes to cover low-income parents and disabled adults with incomes under the poverty level, closing the coverage gaps for these two at-risk groups. During the 2013 Legislative session, this plan passed the Florida House, but unfortunately, the Florida Senate did not take it up. The House is committed to continue working on a Medicaid alternative that is driven by the free market, funded sustainably, and provides the best possible health care to those truly in need.

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Representative Perry, I care about our future and want to be kept up-to-date on the important issues being discussed in Tallahassee.

Please add me to your contact list to receive updates and other important information.

Name _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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I would like to join your Email list Mailing list Both

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Keith Perry

2013 STATE HOUSE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Dear Friends,

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as your voice in the Florida House of Representatives. The 2013 legislative session ended with a number of successes, and I want to once again present this annual report to you so you can receive the most up to date happenings in Tallahassee.

One of the most important jobs I have as your voice, in our state capitol, is to listen. Many of you are dealing with issues that affect your family, your job or business, as well as your communities and schools. I am proud to report that Tallahassee is listening – we have taken steps to help ease many of the problems that are being faced by our families and businesses.

Our top priorities this session were to continue fixing Florida's economy, get our hardworking families back to work, and to continue raising expectations for our students, teachers and schools by investing in education. Ensuring your tax dollars are spent wisely is a mission I take very seriously, and it showed in this year's budget, with thoughtful economic and education spending.

My first priority as your legislator is to serve you and your family, and that will never change. Staying in touch with you is a critical part of the legislative process, and it should never be a one-sided conversation. My office is always open so please do not hesitate to stop by with your concerns or comments on how we can build a stronger Florida together.

Sincerely,

Keith Perry
Florida House of Representatives

Representative Keith Perry is currently the Vice Chair of the Healthy Families Subcommittee and serves on the Economic Affairs Committee, Education Committee, Education Appropriations Subcommittee, and Transportation & Highway Safety Subcommittee.



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Balancing the Budget to Meet Our Priorities

Increasing funding for education and infrastructure, without raising taxes on Florida's families or businesses, was the legislature's top priority for the 2013-2014 state budget. This year, the final budget allocated an additional \$1.5 billion for schools and teacher salaries - more funding per student than the Florida Legislature has ever allocated before, and we accomplished this without raising taxes.

The budget also invests \$8.5 billion to modernize Florida's roads and bridges and keep Florida's highways the best in the country. Included in the budget is another \$200 million for economic development projects that will bring more jobs into Florida and help existing businesses expand their operations all across our state.

Strengthening Florida's safety net was another major priority. The budget includes \$996.3 million for Medicaid increases while fully funding the anticipated growth of



KidCare, and provides a \$24.2 million boost to expand services for disabled Floridians.

Florida has one of the most fiscally responsible budgets in the country, and when compared to other states, we provide services to our citizens at a much lower cost. All of this makes Florida the best place to live, work, and do business in the country.

Lowering Taxes to Boost Florida's Economy

Florida's economy and job market is steadily improving. Over the past year, Florida's unemployment rate dropped to 7.2% and we added over 141,000 jobs to the economy. We must continue to take steps to reduce the tax burden on Florida's businesses and families and create an environment for sustained economic growth. This year we passed two major tax breaks – one for businesses and one for families.

For businesses, the legislature passed a sales tax exemption on the purchase of capital equipment for manufacturers, which will incentivize more investment, make Florida more competitive with its neighboring states, and create more high-paying jobs. A major goal of the state's economic development strategy has been to find ways to diversify Florida's economy. With our many ports to export goods, the manufacturing industry can be a major economic driver for economic growth that will provide benefits to all corners of the state.

For families, one of the best actions the legislature took this year was to continue the annual Sales Tax Holiday. Getting our kids ready for school each and every year can get expensive. We made the important decision to continue that



program again this year, to help ease the financial burden for families as children prepare to head back to school. The Sales Tax Holiday starts on August 2, 2013, and continues for three days ending on August 4, 2013. During this period, parents will be able to buy school supplies under \$15 and clothing under \$75 without having to pay state sales tax on these purchases. And to provide greater relief for Florida's families we also expanded the list of exempt supplies to include computers and related accessories under \$750. This Sales Tax Holiday will give families some much needed relief as they prepare for school this year and will benefit Florida as a whole by boosting our economy and bringing more shoppers to Florida businesses.

Investing in Florida's Future

Reforming Education

This year we took significant steps on our path to create a world-class education system in Florida that aligns with the workforce needs of our state. We improved standard high school diploma requirements and maintained rigorous standards to prepare students for higher education, while at the same time making students career ready if they choose to forego college and enter the workforce immediately after high school. Legislation passed this year also emphasizes digital and technological proficiency and expands the opportunity to earn industry certifications for high school students. We invested an additional \$1.5 billion in our schools, which boosted funding by nearly \$400 per student and set aside \$480 million to be used for

merit-based pay raises for our hard-working teachers. At the university level, we passed legislation to modernize higher-education delivery and make it flexible, convenient and accessible for Floridians from all walks of life. But we didn't stop there. We also invested an additional \$300 million in the State University System to make sure our state schools are able to compete academically on the national level. I believe that Florida has made tremendous strides in education over the last 15 years, and the continually improving achievement of our students is the proof. This year's legislation ensures our state will remain a national education leader for years to come.

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