



THE MAYFIELD MINUTE

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During the 2009 Legislative Session we faced many significant challenges including the worst budget crisis in Florida’s history with an unprecedented \$6 billion deficit. The budget we passed puts Florida’s core missions first. We made tough, yet responsible decisions that are in the long-term best interest of our state’s financial future and together we focused on the core missions of government – keeping our families safe, providing our children with the opportunity for a world-class education and providing critical health care for the most vulnerable among us.

The 2009 Legislative Session was not only focused on responding to current economic challenges, but also on pursuing policies that are in the best interest of Floridians and the long-term financial future of the state. We passed legislation to incentivize new business, stimulate job creation and remove barriers to economic growth.

-Rep. Debbie Mayfield



Rep. Mayfield speaking on the House floor.

A HELPING HAND FOR FLORIDA’S UNEMPLOYED

I know that times are tough and that Floridians are hurting. The Florida Legislature is committed to lending a helping hand to those Floridians who have lost their jobs due to the economic downturn. That is why I voted to accept nearly \$2 billion in federal stimulus money to extend the length of time that unemployed workers receive assistance. Part of the \$2 billion will also be used to increase the weekly unemployment benefit by \$25, to help Floridians until they can find another job.

I realize that federal stimulus dollars are not a silver bullet for the problems facing Florida, but these funds can help us bridge the gap for unemployed Floridians until they can find another job.



Florida’s Old and New Capitols

Budget Summary:

- Increased per-student funding for our K-12 schools to \$6873
- Worked to stimulate economic recovery with \$30 million for first-time Homebuyers
- Protected services and provider rates for Florida's developmentally disabled
- Maintained our commitment to restoring the Everglades with continued funding
- Invested in the future of Florida's economy by increasing funding for state universities
- Provided \$13.5 million in the Quick Action Closing Fund to attract new companies to Florida
- Prioritized public safety by protecting funding for vital probation and security officers who work with offenders



BUDGET

The 2009 Legislative Session was focused first and foremost on facing the challenges posed by unprecedented deficit of \$6 billion and an uncertain economic outlook. You may know that Florida's Constitution requires a balanced budget and, unlike the U.S. Congress, we cannot spend money that we do not have. We were forced to make difficult choices and set spending priorities with our state's limited dollars.

First, we met our constitutional responsibility of passing a responsibly balanced budget. We did this just like Florida's families and small businesses handle their finances – by deciding to stop spending more than we can afford and making tough decisions that would be in the long-term best interest of our state's financial future.

Because of our limited state dollars, it forced us to prioritize spending and focus on what was most important. For me, this meant focusing on the core missions of government – keeping our families safe, providing our children with the opportunity for a world-class education and providing critical health care for the most vulnerable.

Beachland Elementary's 4th Grade Class, April 30, 2009



GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Governor Charlie Crist signed Senate Bill 360 into law on June 1, 2009 which will help to recharge our economy by streamlining the growth management process while maintaining safeguards for environmental protection.

This is a commonsense approach to create incentives that will promote responsible development in urban areas, thereby reducing sprawl in other areas. This legislation also strikes a balance between state and local control of growth management by retaining state regulatory oversight of planning and development processes, while recognizing the role and responsibility of local elected officials to make land use decisions in the best interests of their local community.

Senate Bill 360, specifically Section 14, will extend or renew permits that have an expiration date of September 1, 2008 through January 1, 2012 for a period of two years following its date of expiration.

For more detailed information on legislative issues, please check out the Florida Legislature's website!

www.myfloridahouse.gov

THE FLORIDA OFFICE OF
Economic Recovery

www.flarecovery.com

For more detailed information on state agencies, please check out the official State of Florida website!

www.myflorida.com



GENERAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING

At a time when all dollars are precious, protecting Florida taxpayers' hard-earned money has never been more important. Florida's taxpayers deserve their money to be spent in the most efficient and accountable manner possible. This year, I focused on fiscal responsibility and rooting out wasteful spending and also worked hard to protect the taxpayer rather than the tax-spender.

During Session, I cosponsored and supported House Bill 479 that would put an end to the process known as "double-dipping." We closed the loophole that has allowed a growing number of elected officials and state employees to collect retirement benefits and a state salary at the same time.

This year, I worked hard to make Florida affordable and force government to live within its means. That's why I made it a top priority to focus on responsible stewardship of your taxpayer dollars.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Keeping Florida a low-tax, low-cost state is vital to our state's prosperity. This session, we passed several pieces of legislation aimed at providing additional property tax relief for Floridians.

We restored balance and fairness to the property appraisal process and leveled the playing field between homeowners and property appraisers. If you disagree with your property appraiser's assessment, the appraiser will now have to justify the assessment. Before, it was up to you to prove that the appraisal was wrong.

We also passed a ballot measure for November 2010 that will provide voters with the opportunity to limit the property tax increases on non-homestead property and provide first-time homestead property owners an additional exemption. If approved, the measures are a significant step toward jump starting Florida's economy.

I believe that tax relief is not just about providing relief to families, seniors and businesses, it is about stimulating our economy. I feel strongly that we can speed up our economic recovery by keeping taxes and burdensome government regulations low, reducing state spending while maximizing the value of every tax dollar we collect and pursuing policies that encourage entrepreneurship and re-investment in our state.

PROTECTING FLORIDA HOMEOWNERS

It is vital that we use every opportunity available to provide fairness and relief to Florida taxpayers, particularly during difficult economic times. The current property appraisal system unfairly favors government at the expense of taxpayers, and it needed to change.

That's why I cosponsored and supported House Bill 521, which maintains that a property appraiser's assessment is presumed to be correct, but only if they have shown that they have complied with applicable Florida Statute and professionally accepted practices. If that standard is met, then the burden will shift to the homeowner to show that the property in question exceeds the just value or that the assessment is based on an uneven standard to similar properties.