





# Representative Lori Berman: 2014 LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

## TAX RELIEF

The Legislature provided more than \$500 million in tax and fee relief. The majority of the cuts will occur by rolling back vehicle-registration fees starting September 1.

This year shoppers buying clothes and school supplies will have get a three-day sales tax holiday. The Legislature authorized a three-day sales tax holiday on the purchase of energy efficient appliances and a nine-day sales tax holiday on the sale of hurricane preparation supplies.

Additionally, the Legislature's tax-relief package includes permanent sales tax exemptions for car seats and booster seats, youth bicycle helmets, and college and university meal plans.



## CHILD PROTECTION

The Legislature approved a major overhaul of the state's child protection laws, which, if signed into law, is expected to result in closer scrutiny of the Department of Children and Families in its handling of abuse and neglect cases.

The Legislature passed bills to protect children from sexually violent predators by strengthening Florida's ability to punish these criminals to the fullest extent of the law. The goal is to help ensure that sexual offenders are no longer allowed to slip through cracks in our justice system and reoffend.

With my support, the Legislature passed a bill dealing with human trafficking. Specifically, House Bill 989 would prohibit the employment of minors in adult theaters and eliminates the statute of limitations for prosecutions under a specified human trafficking provision.



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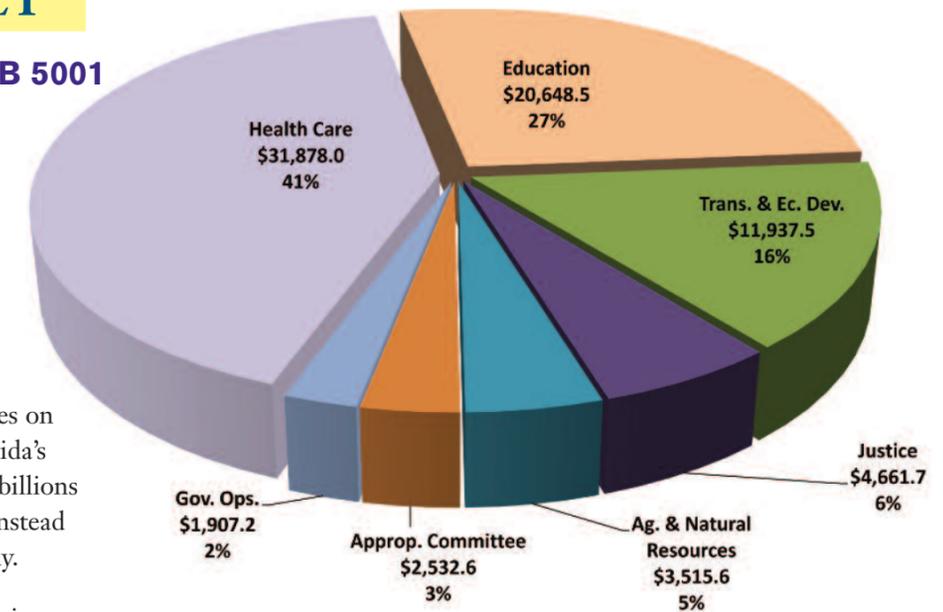
### THE STATE BUDGET

**Fiscal Year 2014–2015 CR/HB 5001  
General Appropriations Act  
All Funds – \$77.1 Billion**  
(In Millions of Dollars)

I couldn't support the 2014 state budget proposal when, in my opinion, the Legislature let down Florida's middle-class families.

The \$77.1 billion state spending plan relies on higher property tax values to address Florida's new investments in schools, and it places billions of dollars in reserves that I think should instead be circulated now into our state's economy.

The budget makes what I consider insufficient progress toward reducing waiting lists for state services, fails to restore school spending on a per-pupil basis to pre-recession levels, and



doesn't accept the return of our federal tax dollars to help pay for health coverage for many hard-working Floridians.

## HEALTH CARE FOR FLORIDIANS

Despite sometimes contentious deliberations, many of the major health care bills were left unresolved at the last night of session. Among those ideas that didn't pass was an effort to improve oversight of assisted living facilities, or ALFs.

I am pleased that the Legislature sent to the governor the Compassionate Medical Cannabis Act. This legislation will allow people suffering from cancer, and other illnesses to be able to legally use a strain of non-euphoric low-THC marijuana under the direction of a licensed Florida physician. With more than 125,000 children and 380,000 adults in Florida with severe epilepsy and other debilitating illnesses, I believe it's time to ease the suffering and bring relief.



## PUBLIC SAFETY

The Legislature passed a law to keep nicotine and nicotine dispensing products including electronic cigarettes out of the hands of children. Another public safety initiative that passed this year was the "Aaron Cohen Life Protection Act." The Act, named after a cyclist killed by a hit-and-run drive in 2012, imposes penalties on drivers guilty of leaving the scene of a crash.