
CAPITOL CONNECTION

News and Views from
**Representative Trudi
Williams**



Florida, District 75
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BUDGET UPDATE

Last week, the Florida House began the final sprint toward approving a responsible, balanced budget as mandated by the Florida Constitution by meeting with the Senate to iron out differences in each chamber's budget proposals. Due to extensive negotiations, both chambers decided to extend the regular Session through this week to address the budget. The extended Session is not without precedent, and I believe that it is more important to get the budget done right than to do it quickly.

Today, the Florida Legislature passed out its budget and although the process took a little longer than anticipated, it was important that the priorities of both the House and the Senate were fairly represented in the final budget.

BILL TRACKER

SB 788- Today, the Florida House passed SB 788, which sets the parameters for a new Seminole Indian Gambling Compact. SB 788 proposes new compact terms to be negotiated by the Governor and the Seminole Tribe by August 31, 2009. The Legislature was forced to engage on this issue after Governor Crist entered into a gaming compact with the Seminole Tribe that was challenged by the Florida House and resulted in the Florida Supreme Court declaring the Governor's Compact unconstitutional. Moreover, if provisions of the new compact relating to covered games, the amount of revenue sharing payments, suspension or reduction of payments, or exclusivity contained in SB 788 are amended, then these amendments are also subject to Legislative ratification. While the House has never advocated or relied upon gaming revenues to balance Florida's budget, the terms proposed by the Legislature deliver more revenues, guarantee more oversight, and are a better deal for Floridians than the original terms proposed.

TRUDI'S THOUGHTS

The Florida Legislature is known for its many traditions and the Sine Die ceremony is truly the most inspiring to see. The technical term for the end of session is called the *Sine Die adjournment*. Sine die is the Latin term for "without day" and a motion to adjourn sine die concludes the legislative session. Tradition holds that each chamber opens its doors so they can see across the rotunda to the other chamber. When the motion to adjourn passes, the Sergeant-at-Arms of the respective chambers drop a handkerchief. This is a practice dating back before telephones were installed in the Old Capitol, so that the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House knew when the other chamber had adjourned for good. I am always

humbled when watching this ceremony and reminded of the awesome responsibility it is to serve my constituents in Tallahassee. Facing the worst budget crisis in Florida's history made the budget process this year very difficult and as a legislator I had to make some tough choices. However, I have always believed that it is important to have a fiscally responsible long-term view that puts Florida in the best shape possible to rebound when the economy picks up. As a Legislature, it was important to be responsible with taxpayer money and not spend more than Florida could afford so that we could create a stable financial environment for Florida's economy to rebound.

Thank you to all of those that contacted me this session expressing their support, ideas and concerns. Your feedback is at all times encouraged and always greatly appreciated. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you in Tallahassee.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“There are no constraints on the human mind, no walls around the human spirit, no barriers to our progress except those we ourselves erect.” –Ronald Reagan

Please send correspondence to Trudi.Williams@myfloridahouse.gov. All comments are reviewed by Representative Williams. To receive a response, please include your name, address and telephone number. To unsubscribe from this e-mail, send a blank e-mail to Trudi.Williams@myfloridahouse.gov with “unsubscribe” in the subject line.