

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Gaetz and Speaker Weatherford Announce Work Plan Florida 2014

Tallahassee —

Tallahassee—Florida Senate President Don Gaetz (R-Niceville) and Florida House Speaker Will Weatherford (R-Wesley Chapel) today announced their joint 2014 Work Plan Florida Agenda. Addressing a group of reporters and editors from across the state who gathered in Tallahassee for the annual Associated Press Editors Forum, the President and Speaker outlined the 5-point agenda they will pursue during the 2014 Legislative Session.

“There are hundreds of issues that arise during a legislative session. Some come from outside Tallahassee, some from time deadlines, and some from the constitution. Speaker Weatherford and I have decided to work together to go beyond these basic responsibilities and lift up other issues we want to solve,” said President Gaetz. “We’ve traveled thousands of miles together, listening to people all over Florida. We’ve heard from our members, who’ve heard from their constituents and of the hundred things we could do, these are the five things we will do and they form our bicameral 2014 Work Plan for Florida.”

“Work Plan 2014 represents the second year of an aggressive, inclusive reform agenda,” said House Speaker Will Weatherford (R-Wesley Chapel). “I look forward to working with President Gaetz during the upcoming Session on these issues, which are important to the future of our state.”

“The 2014 Work Plan centers on steps we can take to keep Florida on the road to economic recovery. By reducing taxes and fees by \$500 million, government is taking less money from the hardworking Floridians who earn it, leaving more money for the day-to-day needs of Florida’s families,” continued President Gaetz.

Work Plan 2014, Joint House and Senate 5-Point Agenda

1. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY THROUGH EDUCATION

Expand pathways out of poverty through education and jobs

Increase the Value and Accessibility of Higher Education

- No tuition increase for 2015
- End soaring cost increase for Florida Prepaid College Board
- Reduce tuition differential

Expand Education Choices for Families In Poverty

- Raise cap for Florida's Tax Credit Scholarship Program

Cement Link Between Education and Jobs

- Reward performance in higher education
- Increase student access to Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Industry Certifications opportunities
 - Remove 0.3 weighed FTE funding limit on CAPE
 - Florida CAPE Digital Classroom

2. FLORIDA GI BILL

Establish Florida as the top “Welcome Home” state for the military, veterans and their families

Expand Education and Employment Opportunities

- Waive out-of-state tuition for veterans
- Fund scholarships for members of the Florida National Guard, including online programs and book stipends
- Waive licensing fees for returning veterans

Invest in Florida's Military Infrastructure

- Finish commitment to restore and renovate Florida's armories
- Fund base buffering efforts to preserve Florida's military missions and protect our military bases

3. PROTECT VULNERABLE FLORIDIANS

Increase safeguards for Florida's children and seniors

Improve Protections Against Sexual Offenders

- *Keep offenders off our streets and away from our children*
 - *Increase the length of sentences and extend monitoring after release*
- *Better inform our communities, law enforcement and families*
 - *Require individuals registered in the sexual offender database to provide more information*
- *Improve coordination between government and law enforcement*
 - *Enhance communication between state and county officials when a sexual offender is released from prison*

Child Welfare Reform

Fund Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to reduce the Critical Needs Waiting List

Fully Fund Maximum Current Year Expansion of the Guardian Ad Litem Program

Keep seniors safer by making the administration of Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs) more transparent and accountable

Increase Funding for Child Advocacy Centers

Better Address Human Trafficking

4. \$500 MILLION TAX CUT

Reduce the amount of money government takes from Floridians who earn it

- Reduce Taxes and Fees
- Lower Vehicle Registration Fees for All Florida Drivers

5. IMPROVE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

Achieve reform of the Florida Retirement System and continue to improve ethics laws

- Strengthen the retirement system for public employees
- Develop an Information Technology Governance Strategy for State Government
- Continue to Improve Florida's Ethics Laws
- Implement Lobbyist Compensation Audits
- Clarify Legislator Residency Requirements

On, Thursday, January 30, 2014, the House and Senate will hold their annual Pre-Session Media Workshop from 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. All media are invited to attend in order to learn about issues expected to be addressed during the upcoming legislative session. Members of the media will have access to the top substantive experts among the senior legislative staff and the opportunity to ask questions, for informational purposes, related to complex issues of public policy.

Members of the media wishing to attend the information session should contact Ryan Duffy via Ryan.Duffy@MyFloridaHouse.gov or Katie Betta via Betta.Katherine@FLSenate.gov to RSVP.

Please see the agenda below for a schedule of topics.

Pre-Session Media Workshop

Date: January 30, 2014

Time: 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Location: 333 Capitol

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. BUDGET

Budget Overview, Outline of Budget Process

- JoAnne Leznoff, Staff Director of the House Appropriations Committee
- Cindy Kynoch, Staff Director of the Senate Committee on Appropriations

8:40 a.m. – 9:20 a.m. FLORIDA GI BILL

Outline of Florida GI Bill

- *Kerrington Kiner, Policy Chief, House Veterans & Military Affairs Subcommittee*
- *Dr. Rick Harper, Senate Senior Policy Advisory on Economic Affairs*

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Question and Answer Session

- *Additional members of the House and Senate policy staff will be available to answer questions for background purposes.*

Sessions on the budget and Florida GI Bill will be broadcast via the Florida Channel www.TheFloridaChannel.org. The workshop packet will be posted to the House and Senate websites, www.MyFloridaHouse.gov and www.FLSenate.gov.

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