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Gov. Scott: The Securing Florida's Future Budget Makes Historic Investments and Cuts Taxes

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott visited Northern Tool + Equipment in Jacksonville to announce his Securing Florida's Future budget which proposes \$180 million in tax cuts to help Florida families. The Governor's recommended budget also invests record funding in Florida's education system, transportation, and environmental protection while continuing to support law enforcement and keep Florida's economy growing.

Governor Scott said, "When I made the decision to run for Governor in 2010, a lot of people doubted that a businessman who had never been in politics could cut taxes and get our state back to work. For years, politicians in Tallahassee had run our economy into the ground through tax increases, frivolous spending and a lack of focus on job creation. I have spent every day since taking office fighting to get Florida on the right track by turning back the harmful policies of past politicians and I am proud of the work we have accomplished to secure Florida's future by creating an environment where Floridians of all ages have the tools they need to succeed in our state. Today, I am proud to announce my budget which cuts taxes and makes historic investments in education, transportation and Florida's environment.

"Turning around Florida's economy would not have been possible without our hard work to cut taxes and encourage business to thrive here in the Sunshine State. Since I took office, I have been proud to work with the Florida Legislature to cut taxes 75 times saving Floridians more than \$7.5 billion. Together, we have paid down \$9 billion in state debt and made government more efficient to save even more taxpayer money. These accomplishments have helped secure future success and prosperity, and have made it possible for more than 1.3 million Floridians to find a job so they can support their families. As we look ahead to the future of Florida, it is important to continue fighting every day to make sure that our children and grandchildren have every opportunity to lead successful lives in the Sunshine State. Our Securing Florida's Future budget advances Florida's record of success and represents years of fighting to do what's right for Florida families and I will keep fighting every day to secure Florida's future for every Florida family."

✓ **Cuts Taxes and Fees**

The Securing Florida's Future budget proposes to cut taxes by **\$180 million** including reducing the fee when obtaining or renewing a driver's license, reducing traffic citation fines for individuals

attending driving school and implementing a 10-day back-to-school sales tax holiday and three one-week disaster preparedness sales tax holidays in May, June and July.

✓ **Protects the Environment**

To continue protecting Florida's world-class beaches, award-winning and nationally acclaimed state parks, renowned springs and iconic Everglades, Governor Scott is recommending more than **\$3.8 billion**, including record funding to preserve Florida's environment and keep the state beautiful for generations to come. This includes:

- A **record \$355 million** for Everglades restoration including **\$50 million** to expedite repairs for the federal Herbert Hoover Dike at Lake Okeechobee;
- A **record \$55 million** for Florida's springs;
- A **record \$100 million** for Florida's beaches;
- A **record \$50 million** for Florida's state parks;
- More than **\$21 million** to help Florida's citrus industry following Hurricane Irma; and
- **\$50 million** for Florida Forever to help preserve and protect our natural lands.

✓ **Invests in Education**

For the sixth straight year, Governor Scott is recommending historic funding for education. The Securing Florida's Future budget invests historic amounts of funding in voluntary pre-kindergarten, K-12, state colleges and universities to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed in the Sunshine State. Historic investments include:

- An additional **\$11.6 million for a record total of more than \$408 million** for Florida's VPK program, a quality free education initiative, which serves more than 158,000 four and five-year olds;
- More than **\$21.4 billion** in state and local funding for Florida's K-12 public schools. This historic funding equates to **\$7,497 per student – an increase of \$200 per Florida student – the highest total funding, state funding and per-student funding for K-12 in Florida's history;**
- **\$15 million** in funding for a brand-new program to expand opportunities for middle and high school students to learn coding and computer science;
- **\$12 million** in funding to establish the English Language Learners Summer Academics program. This program will be focused on reading improvements and making sure students in grades 4 – 8 displaced by Hurricane Maria have access to summer academies.
- Historic funding for higher education including record state operating funding for Florida's higher education system of more than **\$1.2 billion** for Florida colleges, and more than **\$2.4 billion** for Florida universities; and
- More than **\$23 million** for Bright Futures scholarships and ensures the Bright Futures Academic Scholars award will continue to cover 100 percent of tuition and fees for all semesters, including summer, for all eligible students. There are also **NO** tuition increases included in the budget.

✓ **Healthy Florida Families**

The Securing Florida's Future budget makes important investments to keep Florida families healthy:

- **\$53 million** to continue Florida's fight against the national opioid epidemic;
- More than **\$1 billion** in mental health and substance abuse funding, including **\$14.7 million** for community-based behavioral health services;
- More than **\$1.3 billion** for Florida's child welfare system which includes more than **\$10 million** for an additional 130 Child Protective Investigator and Florida Abuse Hotline Counselor positions. Under Governor Scott, the number of CPIs has increased by nearly 300 and the number of by Florida Abuse Hotline counselors has increased by nearly 50;

- More than **\$198 million**, a more than **\$2 million** increase over current year funding, for maintenance adoption subsidies which provide funding for the families of children who are adopted from foster care to receive the services they need. This funding will also provide critical post adoption services for more than 37,000 children. Since taking office, Governor Scott has championed investments for the adoption of more than 20,000 children from Florida's child welfare system;
- **\$2 million** for the Department of Children and Families and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to provide employment services to approximately 1200 individuals with behavioral health needs and those with developmental disabilities who are ready to work; and
- More than **\$18 million** to add approximately 900 individuals who are in crisis into the APD waiver program. This is the sixth year that Governor Scott has provided funding to enroll individuals into the APD waiver program to help them live, learn and work in their communities.

✓ **Secures Great Transportation for Florida's Future**

The Securing Florida's Future budget invests a **record \$10.8 billion** for the Florida Department of Transportation to ensure that more than 20.7 million residents and more than 112 million visitors are able to move safely and effectively throughout the state. Since 2011, Governor Scott has overseen the investment of **\$85 billion** in funding for roads, bridges, airports and seaports. This includes priority investments in Florida's seaports exceeding **\$1.4 billion**.

✓ **Keeps Florida's Communities Safe and Strong**

The Securing Florida's Future budget invests **\$5.3 billion** in public safety, an increase of nearly **\$200 million** over current year funding, and makes important investments to support Florida's dedicated law enforcement officers. Key public safety investments include:

- **\$30 million** for Florida's state law enforcement agencies to use for additional pay raises to award Florida's nearly 4,800 sworn state law enforcement officers;
- **\$1.3 million** to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for incident command vehicles and emergency ordinance disposal vehicles to strengthen counterterrorism and intelligence efforts;
- More than **\$8 million** for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to provide a 10 percent salary increase for Florida's Juvenile Detention and Probation Officers;
- **\$317,000** and three positions for DJJ to establish the Office of Youth and Family Advocacy which will serve as a firsthand resource working directly with youth and families to foster communication and amplify their voice in the ongoing improvement of the juvenile justice system; and
- **\$68 million** and 476 positions for the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) to better serve inmates with mental illness.

✓ **Invests in Florida's Emergency Preparedness and Response**

The Securing Florida's Future budget includes a total of **\$1.4 billion** for the Florida Division of Emergency Management to continue to prepare for and respond to both manmade and natural disasters. This reflects a 257 percent increase over the current year level of funding of \$390.6 million. This funding will also support communities and state operations in disaster response and rapid recovery related activities due to Hurricane Irma and other prior storms. This is the highest level of funding since Governor Scott took office.

✓ **Invests in Florida's Veterans Community**

The Securing Florida's Future budget recommends **\$178 million** to support active duty military, veterans and their families.

Click [here](#) to view the Securing Florida's Future Budget highlights.

Click [here](#) to view the Securing Florida's Future Budget FAQ.

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