



THE FLORIDA SENATE
SENATOR JOE NEGRON
President

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Senators
FROM: Joe Negron, President
SUBJECT: Update Regarding Budget Negotiations
DATE: April 24, 2017

As we begin the last two weeks of the 2017 Session, I want to provide you with an update on the Senate's budget negotiations with the House.

Last week both the House and the Senate exchanged meaningful and productive offers on proposed budget allocations and significant policy issues. Yesterday, after the Senate transmitted a budget and policy counteroffer, the House responded with a document entitled "Continuation House Offer."

Despite serving as the Appropriations Chair in both the House and Senate, I had never encountered this term in state government until it began to appear in these negotiations. I understand the concept of a "continuation budget" to be a Washington creation where Congress is habitually unable to pass a budget and then simply carries forward the current budget for years at a time, with additional spending.

I have no interest in adopting this ineffectual practice. Our constituents deserve and expect more.

I value the extraordinary amount of creative energy Members of the Florida House and Senate have contributed to build their respective budgets over the last six months. I do not wish to set aside that work product and instead settle for last year's base budget. I will insist on a budget work product that reflects public testimony from our fellow citizens, input from the constituents we represent and the thousands of informed decisions – big and small – elected legislators have made since November 2016.

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Accordingly, I stand ready, willing, and able to respond to a budget and policy counteroffer from the House, with both the House and Senate negotiating in a principled way to agree on allocations and policy for the upcoming fiscal year. Before the appearance of the “continuation budget” from the House, many budget and policy issues had been amicably resolved.

Appropriations Chair Latvala and I will continue to work toward the goal of achieving joint allocations with the House so we can begin the Budget Conference in a timely manner and pass a budget before the close of Session. Thank you for your continued efforts to develop a 2017-18 balanced budget for our state in a thoughtful and transparent manner.