



Florida House of Representatives

Representative Adam M. Fetterman

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TALLAHASSEE, FL – State Representative Adam Fetterman (D-Port St. Lucie) today calls on Republican leadership to say closing schools is unacceptable. With state spending cuts to education at fault for potential public school closings, employee layoffs and salary cuts in St. Lucie County, Representative Fetterman says once again we have failed our children.

“Frankly, I’m disgusted. The priorities in Tallahassee are so backwards it’s no wonder people have lost faith in their state government,” said Representative Fetterman. “When the Republican leadership’s budgetary policy means we are closing “A”-rated schools, we know their policies are a failure. Their lip service about putting children first is hollow; their actions speak louder than words.”

School district officials this week announced the possibility of school teacher layoffs, school closings, salary cuts and other harmful reductions to meet an anticipated \$30-million deficit in state funding to the county school system. One school on the chopping block is Port St. Lucie Elementary, an “A” school.

“Lawmakers talk a big game about accountability but rarely hold themselves accountable. It is time for those who fail to put our children first and adequately fund education to stand on the unemployment line with the teachers, custodians, bus drivers and librarians losing their jobs because of failed leadership in Tallahassee.”

The proposed \$30-million budget reduction to St. Lucie County Schools will likely result in the closing on July 1 of two public schools and a facility that teaches pregnant teens. Also slated for cuts - 157 teaching positions next year out of a total 331 employees.

“We have to stop taking the politically expedient path – we sometimes have to do unpopular things to protect our most valuable resources,” said Representative Fetterman. “Billions of dollars in sales tax exemptions were up for review in the House this week, yet House Leadership refused to discuss them and walked out of a meeting with a statement that not a single exemption should be repealed.”

Representative Fetterman says, “Why do we exclude charter fishing boats from sales tax to the tune of \$71 million? A thousand dollars for a day of fishing with your pals and another \$65 is going to hurt or stifle tourism? I don’t buy it. How do we justify giving a \$21.3 million subsidy to professional sports teams while they continue to pay athletes outrageous sums? Floridians can barely afford to attend games, much less the \$5 hot dog. Skyboxes are not more important than our children - we need solutions, we need to have an open and honest debate about revenue and expenses, and it’s time that Republicans in Tallahassee begin to own up for the budget problems that their failed policies helped create.”