

# Gibbons Chronicles

May 5– May 11, 2009



**H**ello Friends and Neighbors:

We passed the budget on Friday. I am very unhappy with this budget because, again, this budget does not reflect the values and priorities of our state and people. I continued to ask myself and my colleagues, "Does the bad outweigh the good and in this budget, the bad clearly outweighs the good. I was opposed to a 2% cut to state employees who make over \$45,000.00 annually; these individuals have not received a raise in four years, why would we deduct their pay? I was in opposition of the 5% cut to home care for the elderly, the \$1million cut for community care for the elderly, and the \$1million cut to minority health initiatives because it makes no sense to take from the already struggling initiatives that assist our people who need the help most. This year we passed the buck to local school boards by allowing them to increase property taxes when we should have funded education with state dollars as required by the Florida Constitution. I could go on with the ugly truths of this bad budget. I am saddened by this and I am looking forward to the day when I can come back to District 105 with gifts and a good sound budget that actually reflects the people of this great district and state.

## Seminole Compact Update

We, in the House and Senate finally agreed on a combined bill (SB 788) that gives the Governor the authority to execute an Indian Gaming Compact that allows the Seminole's to have Las Vegas Style Slot Machines (class III) along with blackjack and baccarat at two of its states seven facilities( Hollywood and Tampa). The Seminole's can only offer class III slot machines at the other five facilities located throughout the state.

The Seminoles would be required to pay between 12% to 25% to the state based on the amount of net revenue generated. The bill also reduces the tax rate on slot machine net revenue from 50% to 35% on existing Dade and Broward County pari-mutuels but does not allow for blackjack and other games at this time. They are also allowed to conduct no limit poker in cardrooms and extends the hours of cardroom operation from 12 to 18 hours per day Monday through Friday and 24 hours per day Saturday and Sunday.

While this agreement does not give the existing pari-mutuels parity of product they need to level the playing field with the Seminoles, it does leave open the door for them to come back to the Legislature for further expansion.

This represents our own home grown stimulus package to spur investment in existing facilities creating more jobs and spending with other local businesses in surrounding communities.

## Be Informed

### The Good Stuff

All was not lost during our 2009 Legislative Session. We had some positive bills to pass on to the Governor to sing into law. Here are a few that I feel would be of interest to you.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT

On June 1, Senate Bill 810 will become law. This bill will provide *up to* an additional 20 weeks of federal stimulus-funded unemployment compensation, known as Extended Benefits or EB, to eligible claimants.

For more Information, log on to [www.floridajobs.org](http://www.floridajobs.org) where you may view the new link that provides commonly asked questions and answers about Extended Benefits. The exact link is:

[http://www.floridajobs.org/unemployment/EB/EB\\_FAQ.html](http://www.floridajobs.org/unemployment/EB/EB_FAQ.html).

#### INSURANCE

In the 2008 legislative session, the insurance provisions were substantially amended. The requirement that a unit owner purchase hazard insurance and name the association as an additional insured. If the owner did not purchase insurance, then the association may purchase insurance on behalf of a unit owner and may require the unit owner to reimburse the association for the cost of the insurance. Well, the 2009 HB 419/SB714 repeals this very bad law. On June 1, 2009, unit owners will no longer be required to purchase such insurance and they cannot be forced to take on association purchased insurance on their behalf.

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