

DAN GELBER

April 25, 2013

Honorable Rick Scott
Governor, State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

I urge you to inform the Florida Legislature that you intend to veto the 2013-2014 General Appropriations Act if the budget fails to expand Medicaid, and does not adequately fund the salaries of Florida's teachers.

First, in its current form the legislature's budget fails to accept the federal Medicaid money provided under the 2010 health care reform law, leaving nearly one million low-income Floridians without even the prospect of health insurance. Not only is it inhumane to leave so many – including so many children – without the health care safety net enjoyed by you and every legislator, but it also means Florida will not begin to receive the \$51 billion that comes with this health care expansion.

Florida has four million residents lacking health insurance. The notion that we can afford to reject funds from the federal government is irrational, especially considering that a large portion of that money came from Florida taxpayers in the first instance. Further, the delivery of over \$51 billion of new money into the Florida economy over the next decade will create well over 50,000 new jobs according to multiple studies. Florida can ill-afford to turn away that type of economic stimulus.

Second, the proposed Florida budget still fails to properly fund the salaries of Florida's teachers. Your request that we boost teacher salaries \$2500 – while failing to make up for your previous billion dollar cut to public education – was at least a start. Even with the proposed increase, Florida's teacher pay would lag seriously behind the nation's average teacher salary.

Further, the legislature's decision to index the limited funds that are being made available to a faulty merit-pay proposal is offensive. Other state workers in law enforcement and public safety don't have their pay raises tied to unreasonable evaluation systems. Why should teachers?

Both these proposals were central to your legislative agenda and, more significantly, to the health and welfare of our citizens.

It is your Constitutional prerogative and, in fact, your duty to veto the 2013 Florida Budget.



Dan Gelber