

1995 Turkey Watch

**1995 State Budget Stuffed with
42 Turkeys Worth \$36.5 Million**



July 1995

Updated to include June 16, 1995 Governor's Vetoes

GENE PACKWOOD
THE DAILY COMMERCIAL



Special thanks to Gene Packwood and the Leesburg Daily Commercial for allowing us to reprint this cartoon.



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Byron E. Hodnett
Chairman

Dominic M. Calabro
President and Chief Executive Officer

Dear Fellow Taxpayers:

This year marks the third in a row when Florida TaxWatch has had to tag a flock of budget turkeys. While the number of 1995 budget turkeys decreased from last year, not enough has been done to remove them from the state budget and prevent them from recurring.

The 1995 Legislature generated a total of 42 budget turkeys totalling \$36,508,062. The budget for 1995-96 is \$39.0 billion. Of the total appropriated for budget turkeys, 28 budget turkeys worth \$15.1 million were found in General Revenue and 14 budget turkeys worth \$21.4 million were found in trust funds.

When lawmakers do not show restraint, taxpayers invariably pay more. This year's budget turkeys cost \$6.31 for each Florida household, with budget turkeys costing every man, woman and child in Florida \$2.54. On top of that, Florida TaxWatch investigated other funding opportunities for the revenue appropriated to this year's turkey crop. There are a variety of resources that the millions spent on turkeys could buy with taxpayers' hard-earned money.

For instance, in the area of social services, the state could buy 979 prison beds, 4,475 child care slots, 795 secure drug treatment beds and 4,251 foster homes. In education, we could buy 450 beginning public school teachers, an additional \$6.53 for every student in every public school and 4,000 additional students (2,000 FTEs) in the state university system.

Taxpayers and state leaders all know the truth about budget turkeys: they can be curtailed – they were curtailed in 1990 and 1992. It is possible for lawmakers to show restraint -- they have proven it. Because as the Ft. Lauderdale Sun Sentinel phrased it: "When lawmakers put money into the budget without following proper channels, they are stealing money from more important programs." These words are true and should be heeded before the budget turkey buildup becomes too severe. Only continuing vigilance and demands for restraint will keep the problem from getting worse.

Sincerely,

Byron E. Hodnett
Chairman

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President and Chief Executive Officer

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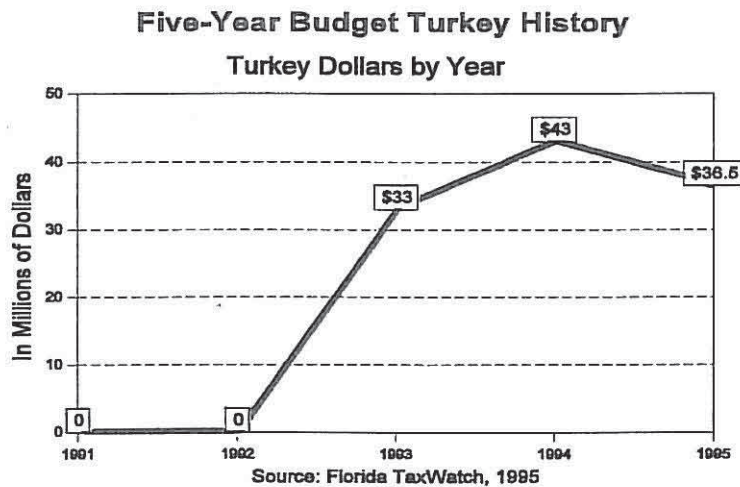
"Improving taxpayer value, citizen understanding and government accountability"

1995 Turkey Watch

The 1995-96 State Budget Contained 42 Turkeys Worth \$36.5 Million

For the last two years, Florida TaxWatch was dismayed to report that the budget turkey had made a comeback after two relatively turkey-free years. Unfortunately, 1995 is no exception. Following the 1995 legislative session, TaxWatch flagged 42 fowls, amounting to \$36,508,062. Of the total nearly \$37 million appropriated for budget turkeys, 28 budget turkeys worth \$15.1 million were found in General Revenue and 14 turkeys worth \$21.4 million were found in trust funds. This year's budget turkeys cost \$6.31 for each Florida household with turkeys costing every man, woman and child in Florida \$2.54.

During the 1994 legislative session lawmakers generated 60 budget turkeys worth \$43.8 million – a whopping 2 1/2 times more than the previous year. So not only was the moratorium on budget turkeys at an end, its demise was due largely to special interests that circumvent the open review process. The graph below illustrates the path taken by these budget bogies.



All of the blame for rising turkey crops should not be placed solely on lawmakers' shoulders. Florida voters also must share responsibility when they place greater importance on projects within their community than projects that clearly are more important for the state. Legislators, who are almost always well intentioned when first elected, quickly learn that petty parochialism pays off when voters tally the score of legislative actions. Voters, businesses, editorial boards, electronic media, special interest groups and campaign contributors all have a hand in reelecting turkey-prone lawmakers. They are no less guilty of abuse of the state's trust than are the lawmakers themselves. Floridians deserve the kind of leadership that places the good of the many over the good of the few.

Governor's Vetoes

Florida TaxWatch's 1995 Turkey Watch was originally released on June 12, 1995. On June 16, Governor Lawton Chiles vetoed 41 items worth \$103.4 million. The Governor's veto list included 12 items TaxWatch identified as "budget turkeys" that are worth \$6.675 million. These are denoted in this report by a red "vetoed" stamp.

What Is A Budget Turkey?

As noted in previous years, the "turkey" label is not meant as a condemnation of a particular project's worthiness. The name merely suggests that with the state's vast and pressing needs and limited resources, the question must be asked: "Is this the best use of Floridians' state tax dollars?" The priorities of all citizens must be considered.

This and previous Turkey Watch reports are not attempts to record government waste or inefficiency. Rather, Turkey Watch is an attempt to offer an independent assessment about the honesty, integrity and public review of the state's \$39 billion 1995-96 state budget.



Most budget turkeys that are added onto the state budget during the legislative session circumvent the normal planning and budgeting process which, by necessity, requires close scrutiny by state agencies, the Governor's Office of Planning and Budgeting and legislative committees and staff.

Florida TaxWatch allows for legislative initiative. The definition of what constitutes sufficient budgetary review includes passages of substantive legislation regarding budget items and substantial review at legislative committee hearings.

Turkey Criteria

1. Projects or programs that did not go through any review process allowing for proper evaluation: agency budget requests, governor's recommended budget or legislative committee hearings.
2. Subsidies to private organizations, councils or committees which can and should obtain funding from private sources.
3. Local government projects benefiting local area residents but lacking significant local funding support and/or overall benefit to the state as a whole.
4. Projects lacking an empirically demonstrated public benefit but instead benefitting some special interest.
5. Low priority projects that get funded over higher priority items.
6. Inappropriate sources and questionable appropriations -- e.g., only partially funded with a large annualized cost in subsequent years, funded from inappropriate sources and/or duplicative of existing programs.

What Else Could a Turkey Buy?

Perhaps the best illustration of why budget turkeys should be avoided is the many urgently needed state services that the funds spent on turkeys could purchase. Florida TaxWatch investigated other funding opportunities for the revenue appropriated to this year's turkey crop. Listed below are the estimated number of additional resources that millions spent on turkeys could buy with taxpayers' hard-earned money. The \$15.1 million of general revenue currently slated for budget turkeys could provide funding for any of the following:

Corrections and Child Care

- ✓ 979 prison beds
- ✓ 4,475 child care slots
- ✓ 795 secure drug treatment beds
- ✓ 1,182 non secure drug treatment beds
- ✓ 4,975 developmental evaluations
- ✓ 4,251 foster homes

Education

- ✓ 450 beginning public school teachers
- ✓ an additional \$6.53 for every student in every public school
- ✓ 4,000 additional students (2,000 FTEs) in the state university system

1995-96 Florida TaxWatch Turkey Watch List

The Department of Education



55 **Fixed Capital Outlay - State University System Projects.** The Board of Regents annually submits to the Legislature a prioritized three-year list of capital facilities projects, as required by s. 235.435, F.S. To the extent that funds are available, projects on the first year list are funded by the Legislature. The following projects were funded outside the three-year priority list:

- **FSU Law Library Remodeling & Expansion (p)** \$470,000 TF
 - **USF Psychology/CSD/Lab Bldg (p)** \$1,608,312 TF
 - **UNF Land Acquisition (s)** \$3,000,000 TF
- note: s = site, p = planning*



93A **Florida Memorial Library Resources & Classroom Enhancements.** This item provides non-recurring funds to a private college for the entitled purpose. Although potentially a worthwhile purpose, this issue was not requested by the agency, nor recommended by the Governor and was not in the original Senate Bill.

Each year, the budget contains special appropriations to private educational institutions that were not requested by the Department of Education or recommended by the Governor. Florida TaxWatch appreciates the important contribution that these institutions make to the citizens of Florida and urges the Legislature to enact legislation that would provide for competitive grants, on a matching basis, to help support the operations and programs at these institutions that have demonstrated statewide benefit. The Post-Secondary Education Planning Commission could administer the grant program.

\$1,000,000 GR



152 **Public School Technology.** Proviso in this item allocates an additional \$150,000 for a technology grant to the School Board of Franklin County. The program equitably allocates \$55 million among the state's 67 school districts and lab schools on a per-student basis. Franklin County's per-student allocation totals \$40,191. This extra funding reduces all other allocations and raises Franklin County's allocation to \$190,191. It should be noted that Franklin County has the sixth highest level of student funding in the state (\$3,604.72) for 1995-96. The statewide average student funding is \$3,450.52. This item was not requested by the agency, not recommended by the Governor and was not in the original bills passed by the House and Senate. It only appears in the Conference Committee Report.

\$150,000 GR



159A **Florida Aquarium/ Environmental Education.** Environmental education programs are funded in the Department of Environmental Protection and administered by the Advisory Council on Environmental Education (FACEE) as authorized by s. 229.8058, F.S. The Council provides environmental education program grants on a competitive basis as required by law. Currently, the Council is reviewing 86 grant applications and has available \$1,500,000 for allocation to approved grant applicants. While the Florida Aquarium is a worthwhile project with many public benefits, this item circumvented the grant application process required by law. This item was not requested by the agency, not recommended by the Governor and was not in the original Senate bill. This project should be re-examined in the upcoming budget process.

\$200,000 GR



171 **Centers of Excellence.** Proviso in this item allocates \$400,000 for the purchase of four human patient simulators to four community colleges; Pensacola Junior College, Miami-Dade Community College, Florida Community College at Jacksonville and St. Petersburg Community College. The Division of Applied Technology and Adult Education conducted an RFP to determine the most worthy placements of the simulators. Based on ranked scores, only one of the provided colleges was in the top four positions (Pensacola Community College). The other three (**Miami-Dade Community College, Florida Community College at Jacksonville and St. Petersburg Community College**) received scores lower than fourth place. Scoring higher, but not receiving the simulators were: Sarasota County Technical Institute, Indian River Community College and Daytona Beach Community College. The inappropriately funded programs only appeared in the Conference Committee Report.

\$300,000 GR



199 **Lump Sum-Educational and General Activities.** This item is the primary funding component of the State University System. Although appropriated in "lump sum," the Legislature has earmarked 10 programs in proviso language. Of these, the Board of Regents requested 5 programs to be funded under the "Comprehensive University Presence II" category, one program as a cost-effective alternative to a Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) issue and one program transferred from a community college to a university. The Governor's recommendations and the final House and Senate bills did not contain proviso language earmarking these programs. The non-requested programs that appeared in the Conference Report are:

- **Institute of Public Health - Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University**
\$100,000 GR

- **Summit of the Americas Center - Florida International University** **\$500,000 GR**
- **Degree Tracking Program - University of Florida** **\$1,000,000 GR**

Maybe not a Turkey, But An
Education Issue of Special Concern:

150 - Florida Education Finance Program. The Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) provides state funding to the state's 67 school districts for the operations of public schools. Funded at almost \$5.0 billion, it is the single largest appropriation in the state budget. Generally, the FEFP is based on a formula in law (s. 236.081, F.S.), and reflects state education policy with respect to funding for programs, cost of services, educational opportunity differences between large and small districts and other such factors. The important consideration here is *funding policy based in law*. This year, the Legislature (an issue in the original Senate bill) adopted a major change to the funding formula (in proviso) in the Conference Committee Report, not in substantive law.

The change in funding policy attempts to redirect salary dollars to the classroom (classroom teachers and aides) from all other categories of district employees (academic support, administrators, administrative support, technical support, etc., excluding transportation and food service workers). The formula to accomplish this redirection and the data used in its application may have errors that affect the validity of the intended outcome. For instance, the data is as of a point-in-time and may not reflect the full-year operations of a school district (part-time teachers and vacant teaching positions as of the count point-in-time are not counted). Also, school districts that provide administrative support services for other school districts (multi-district consortia) are penalized because they may have a higher percentage of non-classroom teacher personnel than that of the districts that receive the service. Another concern is that the narrow

definition of "classroom personnel" excludes school librarians, guidance counselors and other personnel that have direct contact and significant influence on students. In addition, the implications of the redirection on individual school districts will not be known until the middle of the academic year, making planning and staffing decisions difficult if not impossible.

Florida TaxWatch has a long history of, and is prominently recognized for its efforts in promoting the cost-effective use of tax dollars by reducing government bureaucracy and administrative expenses. However, this acknowledged well-intended effort by the Legislature has potentially serious problems and implications.

Therefore, Florida TaxWatch recommends that if Governor Chiles vetoes the proviso language affecting the classroom redirection issue in line item 150, the Legislature should either postpone implementation until 1996-97 and seek recommendations from the state education policy makers, teachers unions, the school boards and administrators associations and others as to how to correct the problems in the proposed formula, or do the same if a special session is called early in the 1995-96 fiscal year.

The Governor vetoed the proviso language.-- Editors

Agency for Health Care Administration



228 Pain Management Commission. Proviso language associated with the Agency's OPS appropriation provides \$15,000 for the Pain Management

Commission. Initiated last fiscal year without enactment of substantive law or mention in the Appropriations Act, it received funding this year, although no request was made for this purpose by the Agency or the Governor and neither chamber of the legislature proposed the appropriation in their respective appropriations

bills. The proviso was added through the conference committee process.

\$15,000 GR



232 Healthy Kids Corporation Proviso language stipulates that the Healthy Kids Corporation be expanded with \$2.1 million divided

equally between Broward and Pinellas counties. However, legislative directives through appropriations proviso language about where the Corporation may operate and expand is in direct contradiction to Florida Statutes. Section 624.91 (3)(a) states "(corporation) shall operate initially at no more than 10 sites on a pilot basis to be designated by the corporation . . ." The Corporation currently operates in seven counties with a waiting list of 2,100 children in one county -- Broward. Additional funds are required for Broward and the Corporation would like to expand to other sites. Expansion funds were not requested by the Agency (although the Corporation did ask the legislature for \$6 million) nor the Governor. The House bill did not propose any funding for the Healthy Kids Corporation whereas the Senate bill proposed \$7.7 million with a \$2.1 million expansion for Broward County. The addition of Pinellas County as an expansion site for sharing the \$2.1 million appeared for the first time in the Conference Committee bill. The selection of future sites is a matter for the Corporation to determine as originally dictated by the Florida Legislature. The rule of law should prevail. Since the Corporation had already begun a program in Broward County, only the funds for Pinellas County should be vetoed.

\$1,050,000 GR

Department of Elder Affairs



308 City of West Miami Elderly Meals Program Proviso associated with this appropriation represents a \$100,000 increase in funds for a specific provider in Planning and

Service Area 11. The issue was not requested by the Department, recommended by the Governor, or proposed by either chamber of the legislature. The earmarked funding increase for the City of West Miami Elderly Meals Program appeared for the first time in the Conference bill.

\$100,000 GR



311 Local Services Programs. Identical to action taken in the last two legislative sessions, the Legislature has once again circumvented the allocation formula established for local services programs by earmarking in proviso language a special allocation to Pinellas, Pasco, and Broward counties in the Conference bill. The supplemental appropriation to these three counties was not requested by the Department, not recommended by the Governor, and not proposed in either the House or Senate appropriations bills. Special interests were served through the conference committee process that violates previously established fair and equitable allocation formulas.

\$248,750 GR

Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services



331A Ruskin Community Center. \$300,000 is provided for the initial planning, testing and design costs for the construction of a community service center in Ruskin. HRS did not request funding for a community center in Ruskin among its priorities for fixed capital outlay projects. The Governor did not recommend such funding and the House did not propose funding for this project although the Senate did. There is an established process for defining fixed capital outlay needs and establishing priorities. This project violates that established process.

\$300,000 GR



403A Crisis Stabilization Units and Detoxification Facilities. \$500,000 is provided for the construction of a crisis stabilization unit and substance abuse detox facility for Putnam County, and another \$500,000 is provided for the construction of a crisis stabilization unit for the South Broward Hospital District. These projects were not included in the HRS fixed capital outlay priorities, nor recommended by the Governor or proposed by the House. The Senate proposed \$1.1 million for Putnam and \$750,000 for the South Broward Hospital District. The Conference Committee changed the funding amounts as reflected above. There is an established process for defining fixed capital outlay needs and priorities. These projects violate that process.

\$1,000,000 GR



403B Intensive Domiciliary for Chronic Abusers. \$55,000 is appropriated for an intensive domiciliary for chronic abusers. The issue was not requested by the Department or recommended by the Governor. It was not proposed by either chamber of the legislature and appeared for the first time in the Conference bill. The problem: neither the Governor's Office nor the Department know what the money is for.

\$55,000 GR



452 Maternal and Child Health Services. Proviso language associated with this appropriation earmarks \$50,000 for the Childbirth Education Program in St. Johns County. The issue was not requested by the Department, recommended by the Governor or proposed by either chamber of the Legislature. It appeared for the first time in the Conference Committee bill.


\$50,000 TF




467A County Health Units Construction and Renovation. The Legislature appropriated funds for

ed capital outlay projects involving county public health units that are inconsistent with the priorities and needs determined by HRS in this para. Funded projects that were not among the priorities determined by the Department are:

Little Havana/Overtown	\$1,500,000
Palm Beach County	\$1,500,000
Pinellas County	\$1,000,000
Bay County	\$750,000
Hamilton County	\$200,000
Franklin County	\$700,000
Total	\$5,650,000 GR


 489A Childrens Medical Service Clinics. One project included among the fixed capital outlay appropriation for the construction/renovation of CMS clinics was not among the priorities established by HRS. The Department did not request funding for the project in Duval County.

\$225,000 GR

 489B Developmental Evaluation Center. The Legislature appropriated fixed capital outlay funds for a Developmental Center at Mount Sinai Medical Center. However, the Department did not request the funding in its prioritized fixed capital outlay request.


\$450,000 GR

Department of Law Enforcement

 984A Criminal Justice Pathology Unit. This appropriation, which first appeared in the house bill, is for planning and architecture for a new 60,000 square foot laboratory and office facility for the Hillsborough County Medical Examiner. The proposal is that the facility will be academically housed at the University of South Florida as part of a proposed Center for Forensic Sciences. However, FDLE did not request this

project and is not really sure how it fits in with their operations. One concern is the total cost of the project, which is \$9 million. The proposal suggests funding from the Legislature and the Board of County Commissioners but no commitments have been made as to who will pay for what. Further, the Board of Regents has not reviewed this project. Before any money is spent, Hillsborough County, FDLE, the Board of Regents, USF and the Legislature should get together and develop a consensus on what needs to be done and how this project will best serve the state.

\$250,000 GR

 1014 State assumption of the Monroe County Crime Lab. The state's criminal laboratory system is comprised of both state-operated and locally funded labs. These local labs are specifically designated in statute and are eligible for state matching funds. The Monroe County lab is one of these. Legislation was filed in both the House and the Senate to change the lab designation from local to state controlled. Both bills died in the respective appropriations committees. This proviso was added to the budget in the conference report to carry out the intent of the failed legislation. FDLE, which supports the switch, reports that the bills died because the FDLE did not think it had the funds in the Division of Local Law Enforcement Assistance to do it. After the conference committee added funds to the division, the proviso was added. While it appears the transfer of responsibility for the lab may have merit, the budget conference report should not be used to pass substantive legislation. Further, there is a statutorily established process under which a local lab may apply to become a state-operated lab. One of the requirements of this process is that the transfer is conditioned upon the approval of the Governor through inclusion in his budget recommendations. This was not done. Unfortunately, since there is no dollar amount assigned to the proviso, a veto would mean a veto of the entire division's budget.

Department of Agriculture



1073F Repair White Springs Inspection Station. This item is part of an 1997-1998 agency capital request for funds to renovate and repair agricultural inspection stations statewide. These stations are used by agricultural officers who inspect agricultural products entering the state. While many of these structures are very old and repairs may be needed, funding specific projects ahead of schedule is generally not good practice. This item was not requested by the agency for 1995-1996, not recommended by the Governor and was not in the House or Senate appropriations bills. It first appeared in the conference committee report.

\$10,000 GR



1123 Mosquito Control Program. The \$250,000 proviso for mosquito research appeared only in the Senate bill and the conference committee report. Funding would come from a transfer from the Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund administered by the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission. The Game Commission objects to the transfer of funds from the Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund for this project and correctly points out that neither the Commission nor the Department of Agriculture requested such an appropriation. This item appeared on the turkey list last year because it was funded from an inappropriate source, and also was vetoed by the Governor.

\$250,000 TF

Department of Community Affairs



1189 Hurricane Preparedness Public Education Program. This proviso will be used to fund a Hurricane Preparedness Public Education Program in cooperation with the

Florida Association of Broadcasters. The agency did not recommend it; neither the Governor, the House nor the Senate included this item in their budgets. This line item involves matching funds of one public dollar to every four private dollars. The issue has been funded in the past, but not in last year's appropriation.

\$250,000 TF



1213C Hurricane Andrew. The proviso language included in this appropriation allows for remaining Hurricane Andrew Trust Fund dollars to be used for Dade County Beach Renourishment, the City of Everglades wastewater system improvements and S.M.A.R.T. program dollars for the Department of Insurance. Neither the beach renourishment program nor the wastewater system improvements were on any prioritized lists of the Department.

The S.M.A.R.T. program is a private organization of building contractors in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. It is intended to aid future hurricane victims whose property is damaged by hurricanes. Through this program, contractors would immediately come in to help patch the roofs of these buildings until full repairs can be made. While this is a worthy cause, the insurance industry should be picking up the tab as the Department of Insurance requested them to do before the session began.

The Department of Community Affairs did not include these in its request, nor did the Governor. In fact, the appropriations did not appear until the conference report.

- Beach renourishment in Dade County
\$800,000 GR
- Everglades City wastewater system improvements
\$500,000 GR
- Department of Insurance - S.M.A.R.T. Program
\$200,000 GR

Department of Environmental Protection



1364A Small County Landfill Closure. This appropriation and proviso uses funds from waste tire fees to pay for the closure of small counties' (population of 50,000 or less) landfills. Last year's appropriations act included \$13,662,000 for the purpose of closing small county landfills. Of that amount, some \$2,845,176 was unexpended. The new funds will allow the Department to repay small counties which have already closed their landfills. The agency did not request this appropriation and is concerned "by the potential precedential impact of such a move." This item did not appear in any budgets until the final conference bill.

\$7,486,000 TF



1390A Chipley Park Improvements. The funds appropriated by this line item are for improvements of a city owned park in Chipley. This is an inappropriate use of funds. Projects from the land acquisition trust fund must be listed on a recreational improvements 10-year list. This project was not on the list, therefore it constitutes an inappropriate use of funds. Since it is a city owned park, it is also an inappropriate use of state trust funds. This item was not requested by the agency, nor was it included in the Governor or House budget. This item only appeared in the Senate budget.

\$100,000 TF

Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission



1421A Transfer for Mosquito Control Research. This would transfer trust fund dollars to the Department of Agriculture for mosquito control research. It is intended to study the effects of mosquito control activities on any kind of

wildlife, not just non-game wildlife (although the dollars come from a non-game wildlife trust fund). Research of this kind is already being performed through the non-game wildlife trust fund within the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. The Commission has requested that the Governor veto this issue. This item appeared in Senate and House budgets. It was requested by local mosquito control districts whose revenues are largely derived from their taxing districts.

\$250,000 TF

Department of Transportation



1455B Highway Patrol Services. This transfer from DOT to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles was included in last year's Turkey Watch report. Last year the Legislature funded 48 new trooper positions. The non-recurring cost (cars, etc) came from non-recurring general revenue but the recurring costs (salaries, etc.) came from a \$2,000,000 transfer from the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF). Florida TaxWatch did not question the need for the additional troopers, but objected to appropriation because "raiding" the STTF for non-DOT specific services sets a bad precedent and violates the intended purpose of the trust fund. The Secretary of the Department of Transportation also requested that the Governor veto the item. Florida TaxWatch cautioned that the costs to continue the positions would have to be found in future years. This year, the Legislature is using the STTF for this again. This supposed one-time tap into the STTF is becoming a recurring inappropriate diversion of transportation monies.

\$2,000,000 TF

Department of Commerce



1680AD Olympic Games Soccer Competition. This item appeared in the Senate appropriations bill but was not requested by the agency or

the Governor. The funds are to be used for security purposes at Olympic Games soccer preliminaries at Miami's Orange Bowl and the Citrus Bowl in Orlando. This is a local project primarily benefitting specific areas and it should be funded with local dollars or through an increase in admission prices, not with state money.

\$1,000,000 GR



1680AE Edward Waters/BCC Colleges. This \$2,000,000 appropriation is funded by a transfer from the Department of State to the Department of Commerce. This item first appeared in the conference committee report, was not in the House or Senate appropriations bills, was not recommended by the Governor and was not requested by the agency.

Each year, the budget contains special appropriations to private educational institutions that were not requested by the Department of Education (or other agencies) or recommended by the Governor. Florida TaxWatch appreciates the important contribution that these institutions make to the citizens of Florida and urges the Legislature to enact legislation that would provide for competitive grants, on a matching basis, to help support the operations and programs at institutions that have demonstrated statewide benefit. The Post-Secondary Education Planning Commission could administer the grant program.

\$2,000,000 TF



1680AG Economic Development Transportation Projects. The total appropriation of \$10,000,000 is an agency and Governor request and appears in the House and Senate bills. However, proviso language in this line item sets aside money for specific projects to be paid for from the

Economic Development Transportation Trust Fund. Three of these projects, added in the Senate and House bills, appear as follows:

■ **Miami Beach Convention Center/Hotel Access Road** **\$2,000,000 TF**

This proviso first appeared in the Senate bill. According to the Department of Commerce (DOC), the application for this project has been previously denied for being a private issue.

■ **U.S. Army Southern Command Relocation** **\$1,500,000 TF**

This proviso first appeared in the Senate bill. According to the DOC, the site for relocation is still being debated. Therefore, funding should be withheld until a suitable site is chosen and the exact needs are known.

The DOC did not request any specific transportation projects, nor did the Governor's recommended bill include any proviso. Section 288.063, F.S. sets forth procedures for the application for funds from the Economic Development Transportation Trust Fund and the selection of projects for funding. The projects specified above would be funded first out of the \$10,000,000 available without going through the formal selection process. This would result in a reduction in the amount available for approved projects.

■ **Spaceport Florida Authority** **\$440,000 TF**

This item appeared on Florida TaxWatch's turkey list last year as an item funded from an inappropriate source. This year, the Governor gave it a separate line item in the Department of Community Affairs budget (due to privatization efforts) and funded it from general revenue in the amount of \$442,144. It was listed in proviso in the House budget and in the conference bill and funded from the Economic Development Transportation Trust Fund, again an inappropriate source of funding.

Total - \$3,940,000 TF

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