

Analysis of the Potential Economic Impact of Repealing Certain Sales Tax Exemptions Related to Providers of Homes and Services for Florida's Aging

Introduction

Due to the current budget deficit, the Florida Legislature is reviewing all sales tax exemptions for possible repeal if not justified in terms of their fiscal and public benefits. Florida TaxWatch was asked by the Florida Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (FAHSA) to conduct an economic impact analysis of certain sales tax exemptions related to their membership, which consists of 370 senior housing and long-term care communities, 95 percent of which are not-for-profit organizations.¹ FAHSA members, and the residents they serve, currently benefit from several sales tax exemptions. The Florida LifeCare Residents Association (FLiCRA) also expressed an interest in the same issue and joined with FAHSA in making the request for this study. FLiCRA represents residents of continuing care retirement communities, which are regulated under Ch. 651, F.S., by the Office of Insurance Regulation. They are some of the consumers who would be affected by a repeal of the exemptions addressed in this report.

In this study, Florida TaxWatch (TaxWatch) examines the economic impact of the possible repeal of six current sales tax exemptions affecting FAHSA and other non-profit organizations. The report provides the estimates of short- and long-term net economic impacts of the resulting changes in government and consumer spending.

REMI Impact Analysis

Florida TaxWatch used the Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) to capture the economic impacts resulting from the repeal of certain sales tax exemptions related to FAHSA members. The model estimates the economic impact of transferring money from consumers to the government by repealing some sales tax exemptions. The full economic impact of such policy changes consists of direct, indirect, and induced impacts. Direct impacts are the immediate economic effects of new hiring and spending in the industry providing the good or service. Indirect impacts occur in sectors that supply inputs, goods, and services to the business that initiated the direct impact. Induced impacts are created by the increase in consumer spending

¹ FAHSA member communities have a long history of providing services to Florida's many seniors. More than 80,000 elderly Floridians, with an average age of approximately 80 years, reside in FAHSA member communities.

generated by increased payrolls in the direct and indirect effects. An aggregate multiplier, determined by these three impacts, measures the total economic impact of economic events such as repealing sales tax exemptions. For example, an aggregate economic multiplier of \$3.5 would mean that for \$1 of spending at an event, \$3.50 is generated in the economy. Subtracting the original \$1.00 spent on the event (direct impact) leaves \$2.50 of additional net new spending in the economy (indirect and induced impacts).

This highly regarded econometric model (REMI) is widely implemented to measure the economic impacts of proposed legislation and other programs and policies. REMI is based on a nationwide input-output model that captures inter-relationships among sectors and measures the impact of changes in economic variables on overall economic activity. The REMI model was specifically developed for the State of Florida, and includes 169 economic/industry sectors. The model’s principal advantages are that it is a dynamic input-output econometric model and that it can be used to forecast both direct and indirect economic effects over multiple-year time frames. REMI is used by the Florida Legislature’s Division of Economic & Demographic Research, the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, other state and local government agencies, universities, and private research groups.

For this study, Florida TaxWatch used the REMI model to estimate the economic impact of repealing the following sales tax exemptions identified by FASHA as important to their members and the customers they serve:

Exemptions	Estimated Value
Exemption No. 4 – “rent on low-income housing” ²	(\$68.2 million)
Exemption No. 161 – “in-facility meals purchased by residents of homes for the aged” ³	(\$83.9 million)
Exemption No. 168 – “items purchased or leased by certain non-profit organizations” and Exemption No.177 – sales or leases to 501(c)(3) organizations ⁴	(\$11 million) and (\$45.2 million)
Exemption No. 48 – “dues, fees, admissions charged by nonprofit organizations” and exemption No.39 – “convention subleases” ⁵	(\$44.1 million) and (\$7.3 million)

Source: 2008 Florida Tax Handbook, pages 123-28.

The economic impact analysis was conducted based on the assumption that repealing these specified sales tax exemptions will result in an increase in state government spending and a cut in consumer spending. This situation will increase the price of relevant goods and services, therefore, reducing the purchasing power of consumers. On the other hand, government will collect additional tax revenues which will result in an increase in governmental spending. While the reduction in consumer spending will have a negative impact on the economy, the increase in government spending will have a positive impact on the economy. Therefore, the net impact of

² s. 212.02(2), *Florida Statutes*

³ s. 212.08(7)(i), *Florida Statutes*

⁴ s. 212.08(7)(m)1, *Florida Statutes*; 212.08(7)(p), *Florida Statutes*

⁵ S. 212.04(2)(a)2.a, *Florida Statutes*; 212.031(5), *Florida Statutes*

repealing of these specific sales tax exemptions could be measured by the difference between the economic impacts resulting from increased government spending (resulting from increased government revenues) versus the economic impact resulting from decreased consumer spending (resulting from increased taxes). In this analysis, Florida TaxWatch used the REMI model to separately estimate both the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of the increase in the government spending and the cut in consumer spending as a result of repealing the sales tax exemptions mentioned above. The analysis then determined the net impact by measuring the difference between the two scenarios. It is important to note that the full economic impact consists of direct, indirect, and induced impacts on the entire state economy. The findings from the analysis will be presented in three major categories of impact:

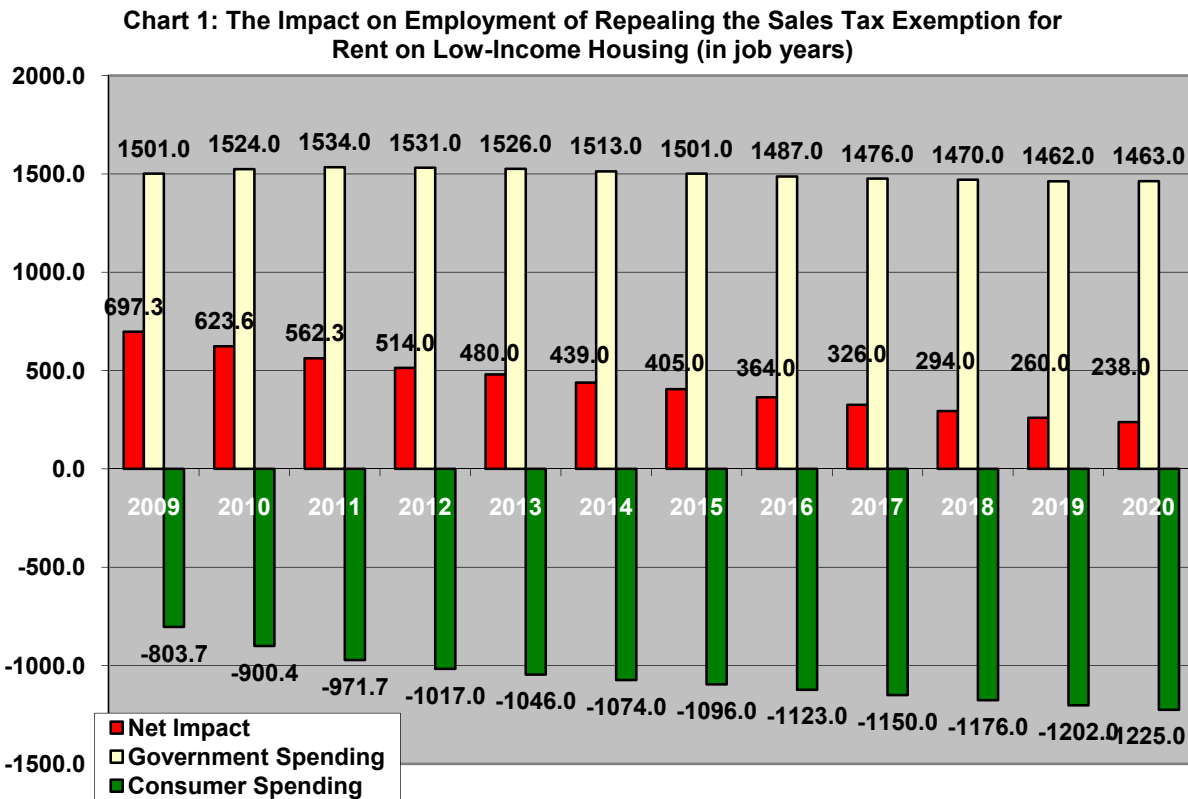
1. Employment in job years, which is a measure the number of years of full-time work created or lost (directly and indirectly) by the policy (i.e., the effect on employment is presented cumulatively for each year since the change in policy, not as the annual change from the previous year);
2. Gross State Product (GSP), which is an annual measure of *final* goods and services produced in the state (i.e., the effect on GSP is presented annually for each year since the change in policy; also note: GSP does not include intermediate goods and services, only final goods and services); and,
3. Real disposable personal income, or after-tax personal income, which is an annual measure of inflation-adjusted personal income minus taxes (i.e., the effect on real disposable personal income is presented annually for each year since the change in policy).

Estimated Net Economic Impacts of Repealing the Sales Tax Exemptions Related to the Membership of FAHSA

Repealing the Sales Tax Exemption for Rent on Low-Income Housing

The sales tax exemption for rent on low-income housing provides affordable housing to needy individuals, including nearly half of FAHSA members who own apartments that were built with below-market rate loans from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or the Florida Finance Housing Corporation. Since the tenants of these buildings are on fixed incomes, the repeal of the sales tax exemption on rents would create a further financial hardship on these residents.

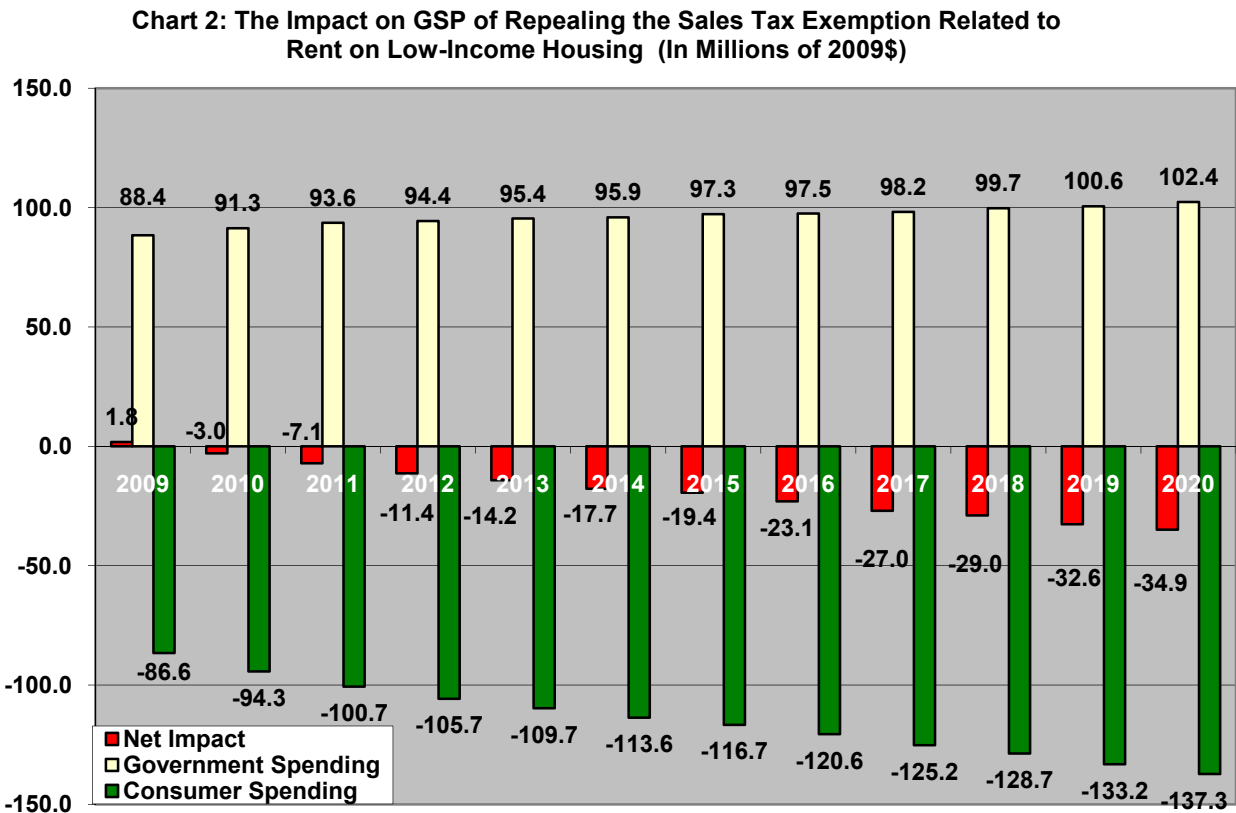
As seen in Chart 1, the repeal of the sales tax exemption for rent on low-income housing will create or sustain around 1,500 government jobs due to increased government spending; however, it will result in the immediate loss of more than 800 private sector jobs across the state, with additional private sector job losses due to the policy change each year due to decreased consumer spending. As presented in Chart 1, **the REMI model estimates that the initial net positive employment impact of nearly 700 jobs will disappear over time as the number of jobs created remains steady while the number of jobs lost increases each year, so that the total net positive impact in job years will be only 238 jobs by 2020.** Furthermore, this positive net impact on employment is offset by net losses in GSP and real disposable personal income from the repeal of the exemption, as presented in Charts 2 and 3, respectively.⁶



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

⁶ Labor productivity will decline since GSP will be falling at the same time as employment is rising.

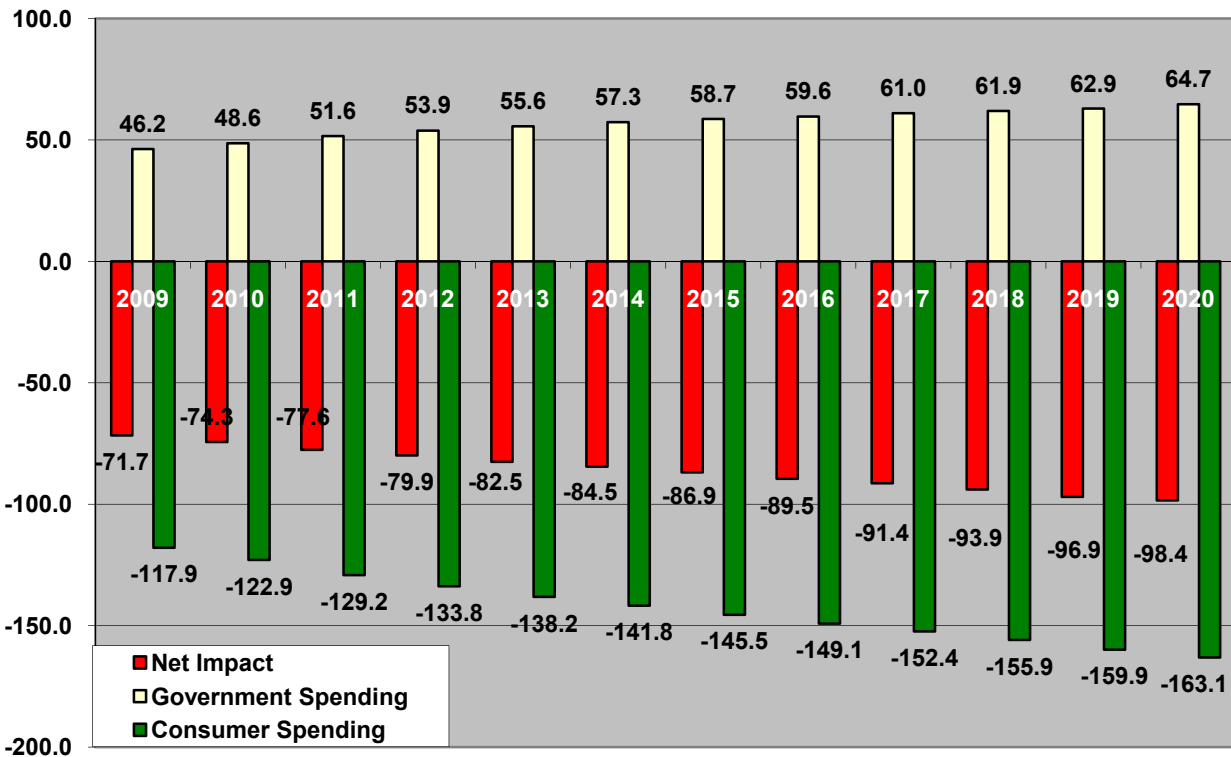
Chart 2 presents the impact on state GSP of repealing the sales tax exemption for rent on low-income housing. The model estimates that the annual contribution of an additional \$68.2 million in government spending to GSP generated from the repeal of the exemption will range from \$88.4 million in 2009 to \$102.4 million (in 2009 dollars) in 2020. However, the annual loss in consumer spending due to the repeal will increase from \$86.6 million in 2009 to \$137.3 million (in 2009 dollars) in 2020. As the chart presents, the annual loss in GSP from decreased consumer spending due to the repeal of the sales tax exemption exceeds the contribution to GSP from the increased government every year. Furthermore, while the net effect on GSP is positive in the first year (\$1.8 million in 2009), the net impact turns negative in 2010 (-\$3 million) and continues to worsen over time, culminating in an annual net loss of \$34.9 million (in 2009 dollars) in 2020. According to this analysis, the cumulative net impact on GSP from the repeal of the sales tax exemption related to rent on low income housing from 2009-2020 is estimated to be -\$218 million (in 2009 dollars).



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Chart 3 presents the impact on state real disposable personal income of repealing the exemption. The model estimates that the net loss in real disposable personal income for Floridians will be over \$71 million in 2009, greater than the estimated revenue from the possible repeal of the sales exemption for rent on low-income housing (\$68.2 million). Indeed, as Chart 3 shows, the net annual loss will reach to almost \$100 million (in 2009 dollars) by 2020. Furthermore, the cumulative net impact (2009-2020) on real disposable personal income from the repeal of the sales tax exemption related to rent on low income housing will be more than \$1 billion dollars (in 2009 dollars).

Chart 3: The Impact on Real Disposable Personal Income of Repealing the Sales Tax Exemption Related to Rent on Low-Income Housing (in Millions of 2009\$)



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Repealing the Sales Tax Exemption Related to In-Facility Meals Purchased by Residents of Homes for the Aged

In-facility meals provided to “residents of a home for the aged”⁷ as defined by state and federal law are exempt from sales and use tax. If this exemption were repealed, the meals would be taxed as if served in a restaurant open to the public. The meals covered by this statute are often vital to meeting the basic nutritional needs of individuals who are unable purchase and prepare their own meals; therefore, this exemption is akin to sales tax exemption on groceries, which

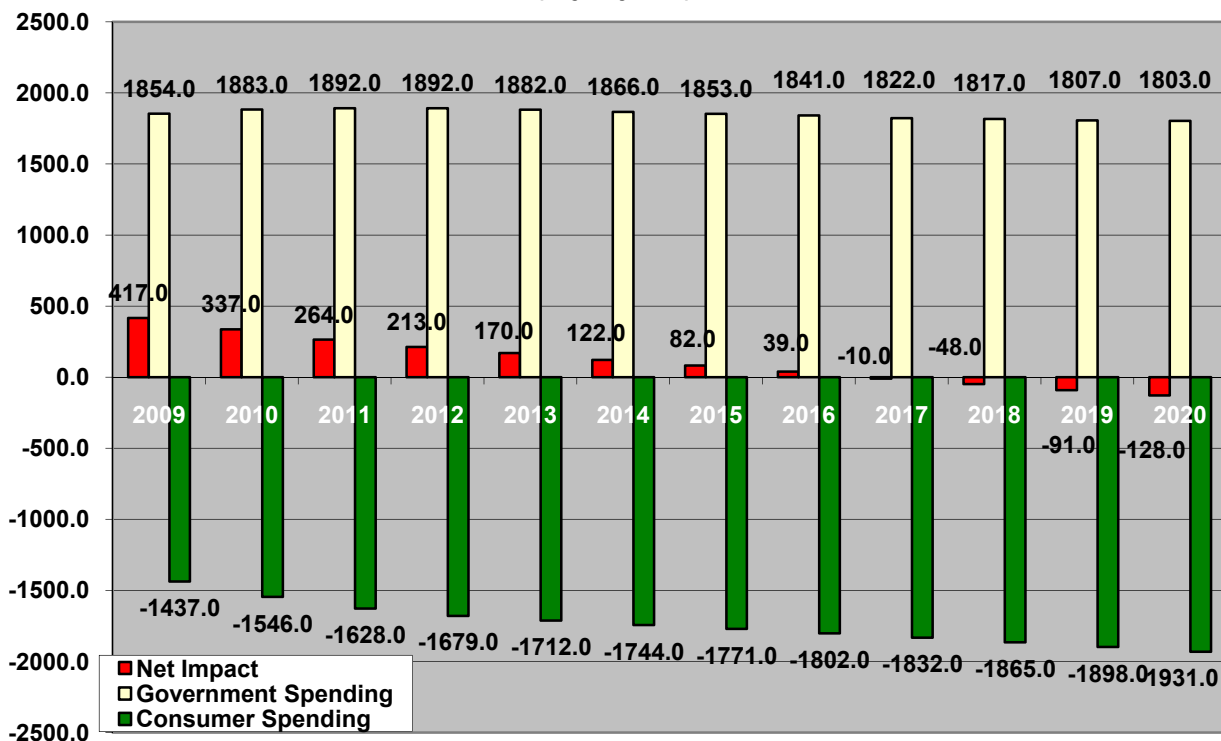
⁷ s. 212.08(7)(i), Florida Statutes.

clearly falls into the category of a life’s necessity. The retention of exemptions for life’s necessities has been a long-standing recommendation of Florida TaxWatch.⁸

Even without considering the critical social impact, health, and well-being of vulnerable Floridians, using the REMI model, Florida TaxWatch estimates the net impact of the possible elimination of the sales tax exemption related to in-facility meals purchased by residents of homes for the aged on the state employment, GSP, and real disposable personal income.

Chart 4 estimates the statewide direct, indirect, and induced employment impacts of the increased government spending and the decreased consumer spending in terms of the number of government jobs created by the government spending generated from the repeal of the exemption compared to the number of jobs lost due to the decrease in consumer spending – as well as the net impact on employment in Florida. Although net the statewide employment impact will be positive for the initial years (until 2016), it turn negative in the long run reaching a net loss of 128 full-time jobs by 2020. However, the cumulate effect (2009-2020) will be positive 1,367 jobs created over the period (in job years). Despite the short-term and cumulative positive effect on employment, as discussed before, the job gain is not justified by the decrease in GSP and real personal disposable income because of estimated lower labor productivity as a result of the sales tax repeal.

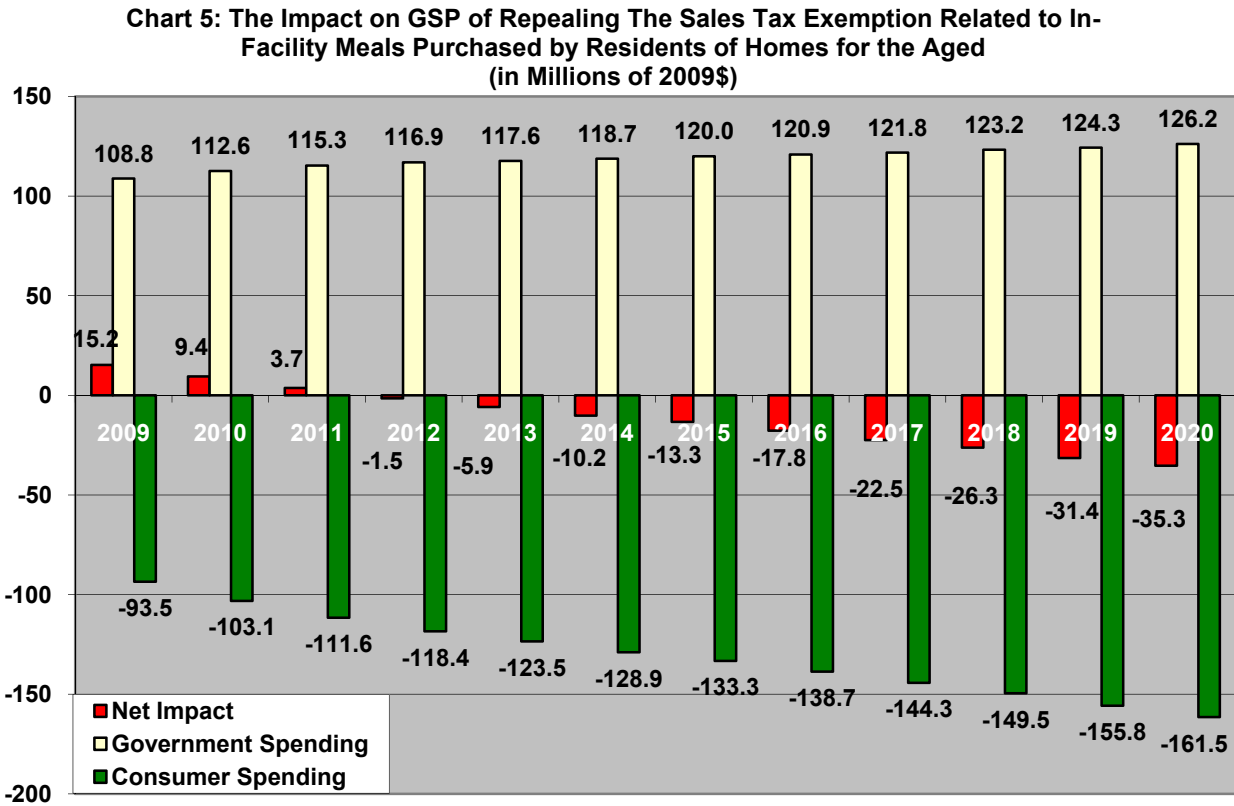
Chart 4: The Impact on Employment of Repealing The Sales Tax Exemption Related to In-Facility Meals Purchased by Residents of Homes for the Aged (in job years)



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

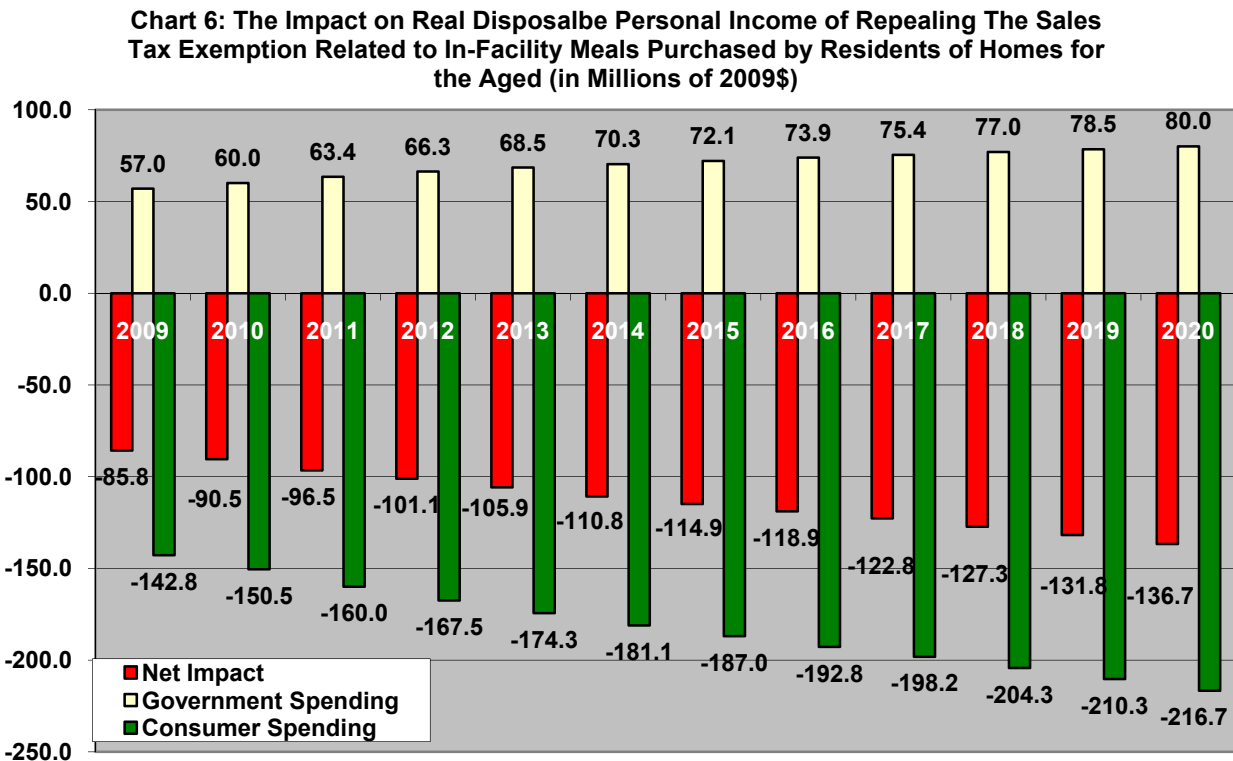
⁸ For further information please see: *Joint Report of the Florida TaxWatch Cost Savings Task Force Florida* <http://www.floridatxwatch.org/resources/pdf/JOINTREPORT.pdf>

Chart 5 shows that the small initial net increase in GSP will be replaced by growing losses over time. By 2020, the repeal of this \$89.2 million sales tax exemption will result in the annual net loss of \$35.5 million (in 2009 dollars) in GSP.



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Chart 6 illustrates even greater losses in real disposable personal income, ranging from nearly \$85.8 million in 2009 to \$136.7 million (in 2009 dollars) in 2020. **In other words, the higher price for in-facility meals purchased by residents of homes for the aged will reduce the consumer purchasing power and result in much greater loss in real disposable personal income.**



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Repealing the Sales Tax Exemption for 501 (c) (3) Organizations

Exemption No. 168 provides a sales tax exemption for “items purchased or leased by certain non-profit organizations” and Exemption No. 177 provides an exemption for sales and purchase to “Section 501(c)(3) organizations.”⁹ By their nature, non-profit organizations exist to provide some activity or service for the public good. Often, the services offered are ones which are not otherwise provided by local, state, or federal governments. During the current economic crisis, with the substantial cuts in government funding for health and social services, the demand for these type of services provided by non-profit organizations will most likely increase in a corresponding manner. Therefore, it is critical for these organizations to keep their tax exempt status to meet the likely demand.

It is very difficult for non-profit organizations to earn a tax exempt status. The organization must comply with stringent federal criteria to qualify for federal tax-exempt designation under

⁹ The 2008 Florida Tax Handbook, page 125.

Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).¹⁰ Particularly with the following recent changes in the IRS Form 990,¹¹ non-profit organizations must provide extensive information in order to receive and retain eligibility for the federal income tax exemption.¹² The new Form 990 (which took effect in federal fiscal year 2008) requires, among other things:

- detailed information about the organizations (transparency);
- a list of the activities in which the organization engages to provide benefit to the community and serve a public purpose; and,
- substantial information related to board members and executives to identify potential conflicts of interests..

In short, the newly adopted changes for the Form 990 give the IRS more information to ensure that 501(c)(3) organizations are mission-driven with a legitimate public purpose and not profit-based entities.

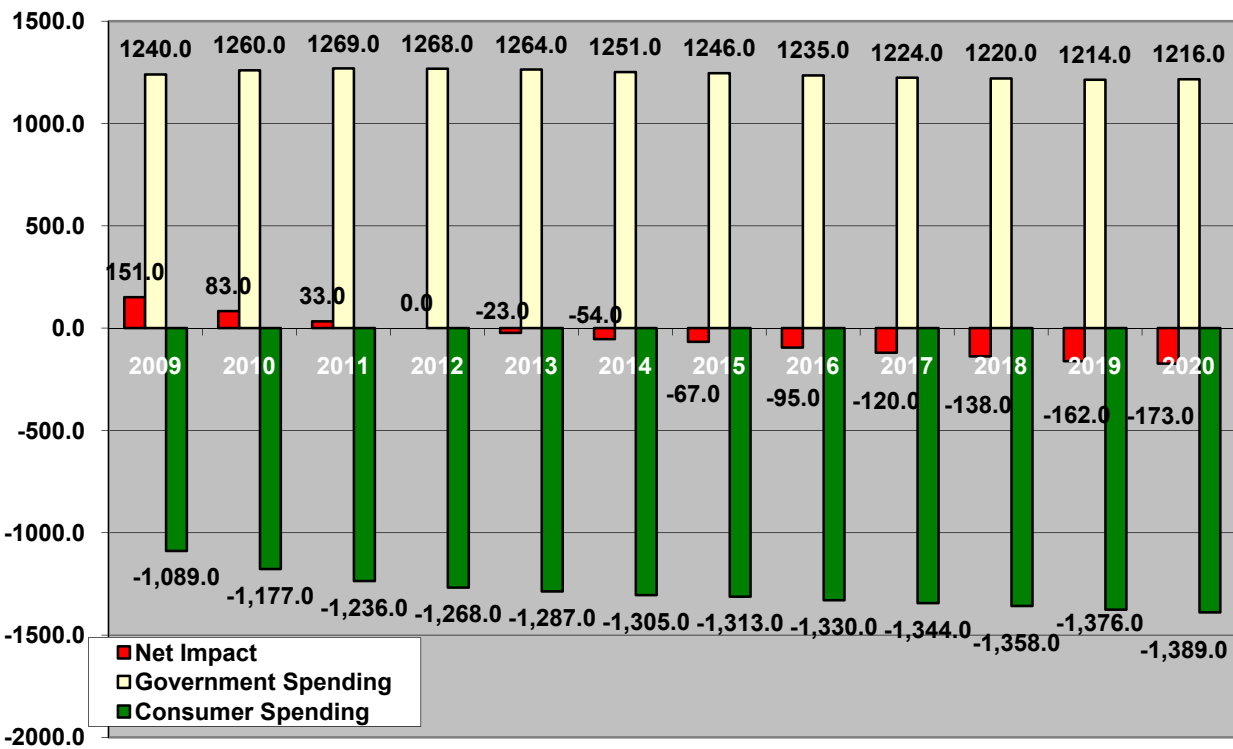
¹⁰ 26 U.S.C. §501(c)

¹¹ IRS Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," is the annual financial information form submitted to the Internal Revenue Service by non-profit, tax exempt organizations

¹² For further information on the changes to Form 9901, please refer to the presentation made by Ronald R. Shuck at the FAHSA regional meeting in January 2009.

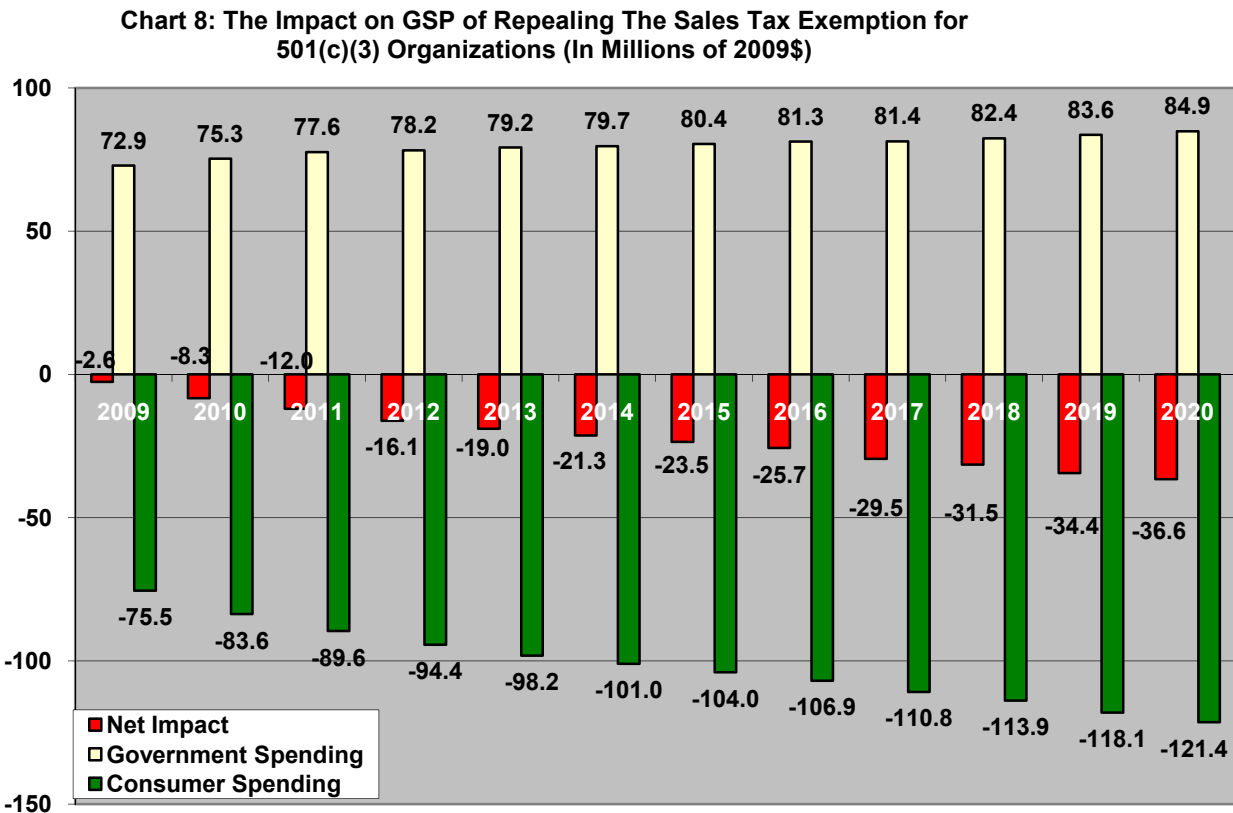
As before, Florida TaxWatch, using the REMI model, generated the following estimates of the economic impact of possible repeal of the above sales tax exemptions for non-profit organizations. Chart 7 presents the statewide direct, indirect, and induced employment impacts (in job years) of repealing the state sales tax exemption for 501(c)(3) organizations. Even though the net employment impact will be slightly positive for the first three years, the estimates show that it will turn negative in 2013, eventually resulting in a net loss of 173 full-time jobs by 2020. In other words, the additional government spending resulting from repealing the exemption will create a little more than 1,200 jobs by 2020, while the decreased consumer spending resulting from the repeal will cost Florida almost 1,400 jobs over the same period, resulting in a net loss of employment in the state.

Chart 7: The Impact on Employment of Repealing The Sales Tax Exemption for 501(c)(3) Organizations (in job years)



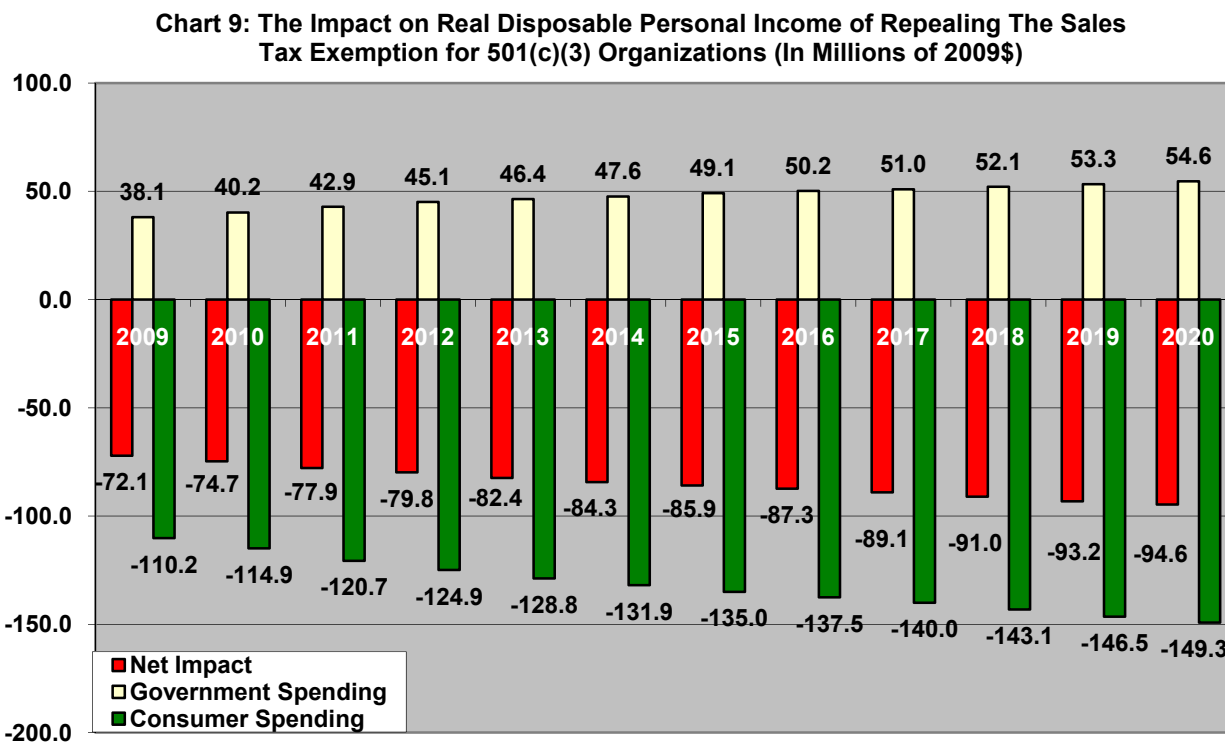
Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Chart 8 presents the impact on GSP of repealing the sales tax exemption for 501(c)(3) organizations. The model estimates that the contribution to GSP of an additional \$56.2 million in government spending (resulting from the repeal of the exemption) will range from \$72.9 million annually in 2009 to \$84.9 million (in 2009 dollars) annually in 2020; however, the net impact on GSP from the repeal of the exemption will immediately be negative (-\$2.6 million in 2009). Furthermore, the net impact will worsen over time, reaching to an annual net loss of \$36.6 million (in 2009 dollars) in GSP by 2020. **The negative impact on GSP indicates that the repeal of this exemption would be harmful Florida’s economy in the short- and long-terms.**



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Chart 9 presents the impact on the state real disposable personal income of retaining versus repealing the exemptions. **The model estimates that the net loss in the personal income will be more than \$70 million in 2009, greater than the amount of revenue from the repeal the sales exemptions for 501(c)(3) organizations. Indeed, the net loss will reach to nearly \$95 million (in 2009 dollars) by 2020.**



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

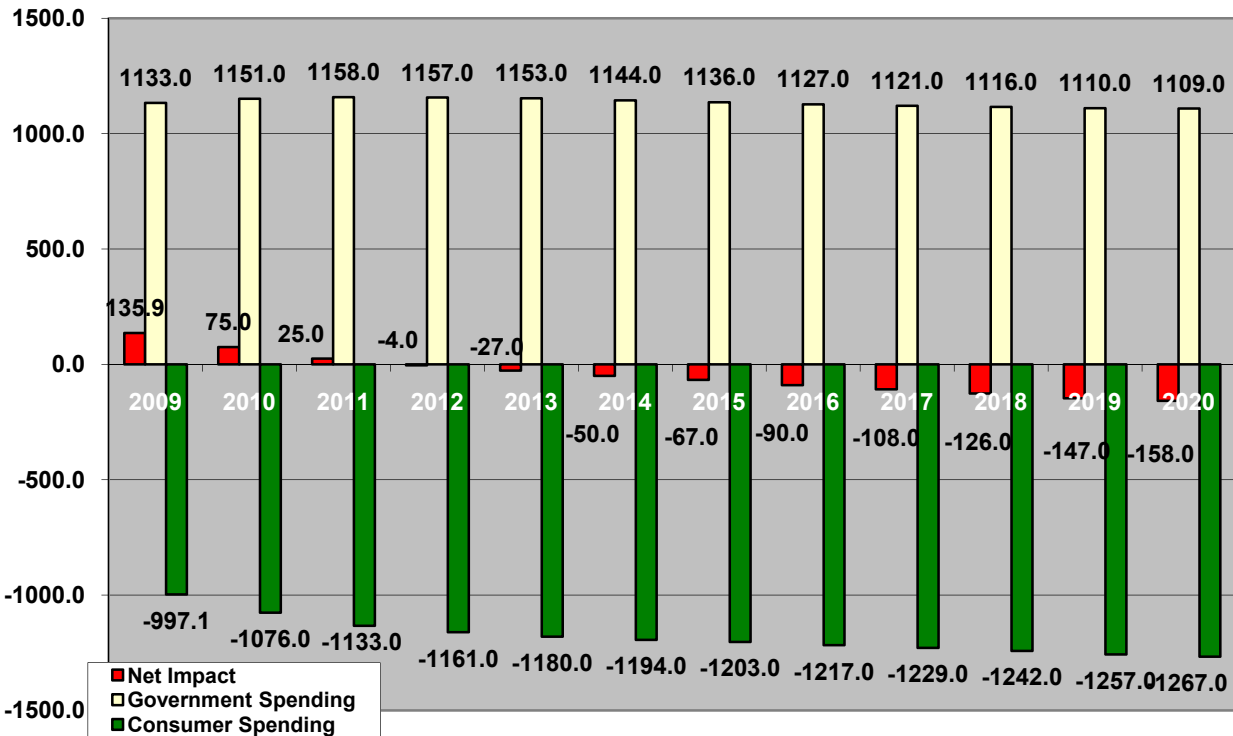
Repealing the Sales Tax Exemptions Related to Dues, Fees, and Convention Hall Subleases by Non-profit Organizations

Exemption No. 48 is a sales tax exemption for “dues, fees and admissions charged by non-profit organizations,” and exemption No. 39 concerns “convention hall subleases.”¹³ If these exemptions were repealed, the dues and convention hall subleases by non-profit organizations would be taxed. Repealing of these exemptions will make more difficult for organizations like FAHSA to fulfill their mission during the current economic hardship.

¹³ The 2008 Florida Sales Tax Handbook, page 123.

Chart 10 presents the statewide direct, indirect, and induced employment impacts of repealing the sales tax exemptions related to dues, fees, and convention hall subleases by non-profit organizations. According to the REMI-generated estimates, net employment impact will be slightly positive for first three years, but it will be negative by 2012, culminating in the net loss of 158 jobs by 2020. **In other words, the increased government spending resulting from the repeal of the exemption will support 1,109 jobs by 2020; however, the state will lose 1,267 non-government jobs as a result of the repeal, resulting in a net loss of 158 jobs (in job years) by 2020.**

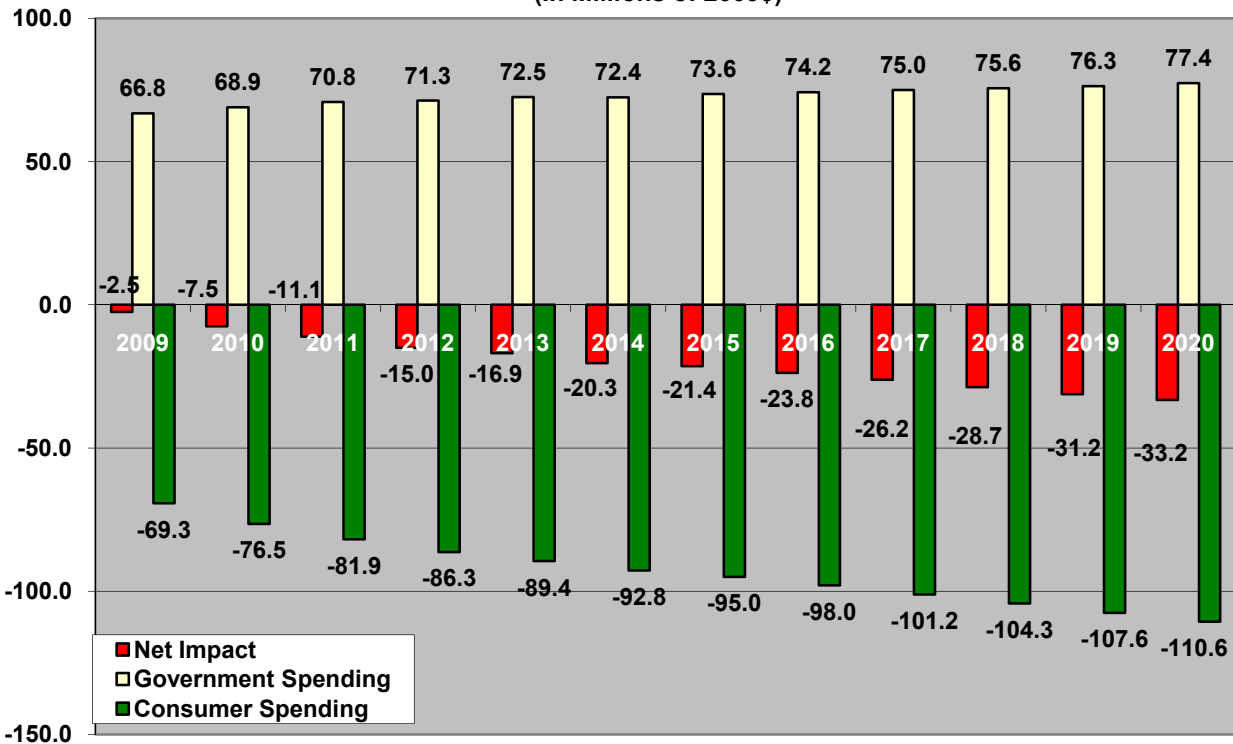
Chart 10: The Impact on Employment of Repealing The Sales Tax Exemptions Related to Dues, Fees, and Convention Subleases by Non-profit Organizations (in job years)



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Chart 11 presents the impact on GSP of repealing the sales tax exemptions related to dues, fees, and convention hall subleases by non-profit organizations. The model estimates that the contribution of an additional \$51.4 million in government spending to GSP (resulting from the repeal of the two exemptions) will range from \$61.9 million in 2009 to \$68 million (in 2009 dollars) in 2020. However, the net annual impact on GSP will be immediately negative (-\$2.5 million in 2009) and will only get worse from there, culminating in \$33.2 million (in 2009 dollars) annual negative effect on GSP in 2020.

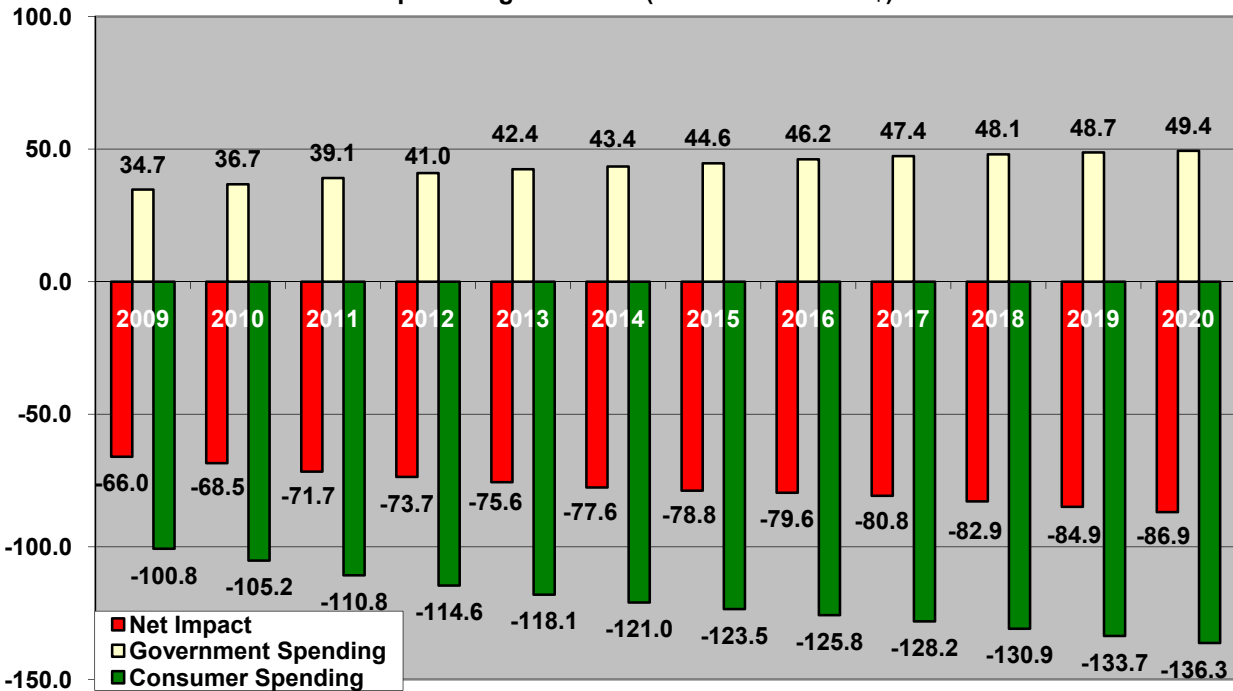
Chart 11: The Impact on GSP of Repealing The Sales Tax Exemptions Related to Dues, Fees, and Convention Subleases by Non-profit Organizations
(In Millions of 2009\$)



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Chart 12 illustrates the impact on real disposable personal income in Florida of repealing the same exemptions. The model estimates that the net loss in the real disposable personal income will be \$66 million in 2009, greater than the amount of revenue generated from repealing the two sales exemptions (which were estimated to be worth \$51.4 million in 2008). The net annual loss in real disposable personal income will reach to nearly \$87 million (in 2009 dollars) by 2020 if these two exemptions are repealed.

Chart 12: The Impact on Real Disposable Personal Income of Repealing The Sales Tax Exemptions Related to Dues, Fees, and Convention Subleases by Non-profit Organizations (in Millions of 2009\$)



Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Conclusion

Using the REMI model, this study separately estimates the statewide direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of an increase in government spending and a cut in consumer spending as a result of possible repeal of certain sales tax exemptions related to the members of FAHSA (i.e., providers of homes and services for the aged). As seen in the table below, these repeals will result in significant losses in GSP and disposable personal income. The net cumulative loss in GSP from the repeal of the six tax exemptions analyzed in this study is estimated to be almost \$900 million by 2020 (i.e., 2009-2020); thus the average annual loss would be \$71 million in GSP. Additionally, the repeal of these exemptions would result in the average annual loss of \$359 million in real disposable personal income. The model predicts, however, that the cumulative effect on employment would be positive, even through the largest short-term positive impacts will phase out within a few years.

Total Economic Impacts of Repealing Sales Tax Exemptions Related to the Members of FAHSA

Exemptions	Cumulative Impact (2009-2020)			Average Annual Impact		
	Employment	GSP	Income	Employment	GSP	Income
	(Job years)	(in millions of 2009\$)			(in millions of 2009\$)	
1. Rent on low income housing	5203	-\$218	-\$1,028	434	-\$18	-\$86
2. Meals	1367	-\$136	-\$1,343	114	-\$11	-\$112
3. 501 (c)(3) Org.	-565	-\$260	-\$1,012	-47	-\$22	-\$84
4. Dues and conv. subleases	-541	-\$238	-\$927	-45	-\$20	-\$77
Total	5464	-\$852	-\$4,310	455	-\$71	-\$359

Source: Florida TaxWatch REMI analysis

Given the overall effects of the repeal of the six analyzed exemptions, as well as the impact of the repeal of each category of exemptions individually, it is clear that repealing these exemptions would have a significant negative effect on Florida. Although there would be some gains in employment over the 11-year period (2009-2020), much of the early net employment gains would decrease over time or become net employment losses by 2020, and the immediate and long-term effects on GSP and real disposable personal income would be very harmful to many Floridians and the state's economy as a whole. Overall, this analysis concludes that the repeal of the sales tax exemptions related to the members of FAHSA would not only potentially hurt Florida's seniors, but would also likely create a ripple effect that would hurt all Floridians. Therefore, Florida TaxWatch strongly recommends the retention of these sales tax exemptions.

This Florida TaxWatch *Special Report* was written by **Necati Aydin, Ph.D.**, Senior Research Analyst/Economist under the supervision of **David Macpherson, Ph.D.**, Senior Director of Research and Development and a member of Florida Council of Economic Advisors at Florida TaxWatch, and the Rod and Hope Brim Eminent Scholar Chair in Economics at Florida State University, with the direction of **Dominic M. Calabro**, President and CEO. Edited by **Robert Weissert**, Special Counsel to the President and CEO and Director of Communications, and **Kurt Wenner**, Director of Tax Research.

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