NEWS

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STATEMENT FROM DOMINIC M. CALABRO, PRESIDENT OF FLORIDA TAXWATCH, REGARDING HB 691, CREATING A SALES TAX HOLIDAY

"We applaud it. There's no question that tax cuts are appropriate when you have an unexpected $3.2 billion in taxpayers money coming into the state government's coffers. We need to remember though that Florida has $22.5 billion in long-term debt, and we'd like the Governor and Legislature to pay down that debt, too. By reducing long term debt, the state gives taxpayers a gift that keeps on giving by saving tens of millions of dollars in interest payments on that debt and reducing the legacy of debt by hundreds of millions of dollars to our children and their children. True fiscal conservatives believe in paying down the state debt."

"Florida TaxWatch also recommends that the Legislature invest a portion of the $3.2 billion in necessary growth management infrastructure. We need to provide for roadways, water, public safety, and the schools necessary to promote the continued economic health and prosperity of the state."

Florida's total debt has more than doubled over the last ten years, rising from $10.2 billion in 1995 to $22.5 billion in 2005, an average annual increase of $1.23 billion.

"Our first order of business should be to get rid of taxes that are in the way of job creation and economic growth and diversification. Florida TaxWatch continues to urge the Legislature and Governor to eliminate the last phase of the antiquated Intangibles Tax and the last third of the impractical Alcoholic Beverage Surcharge, while providing expanded tax exemptions on equipment for research and development and manufacturing expansion. Together, these will create good paying jobs."

"The current state budget grew at a rate more than double the combined economic growth rate of 3.5% (inflation multiplied by population growth rate) and more than the most expansive measure of Florida's economy, personal income of Floridians of 6%. We need to be diligent to keep state government spending under control, so that we can provide necessary services during times of economic slowdowns."

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Florida TaxWatch is a private, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 26 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Our mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies and programs and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida Government. On the web at www.floridataxwatch.org