

Florida: Gov. Scott will keep fighting for jobs until his very last day



David M. Kall | Thursday, October 6, 2016

In a [press release](#) issued late last week, Florida's Gov. Rick Scott announced that he plans to propose \$85 million in his budget recommendation for the 2017-2018 fiscal year for economic incentives to bring more jobs to Florida. He also hopes to restructure Enterprise Florida "so the organization can get back to its core mission of creating jobs in Florida." [Enterprise Florida](#) (EFI), the principal economic development organization for the Sunshine State, is a public/private partnership between the state's business and government leaders. Funded by both the state and private businesses, its purpose is "to expand and diversify the state's economy through job creation."

In the press release, Gov. Scott revealed that his intense focus on jobs stems from his firsthand knowledge that "a job is the single most important thing to a family because it changed my family's life growing up when my parents had jobs." Accordingly, he promised to "fight for every resource available to bring jobs to Florida."

This plan follows the implementation of more than \$1 billion in corporate tax cuts over the last two years, to which the Governor attributed the creation of almost 37,000 private sector jobs since January 2016. In April, we addressed this and other tax exemptions that went into effect by way of legislation that took effect on July 1, 2016.

The crux of his recently announced incentives program is to reward companies for creating the jobs that they promise. This is where reformation of EFI comes in; Gov. Scott intends to refocus its attention on certain industries, such as aviation/aerospace/defense, financial services, information technology, and advanced manufacturing, in order to bring more high-paying jobs to the state.

Opposition

[SaintPetersBlog](#), which describes itself as "one of Florida's most influential political websites with more than 25,000 unique visitors per day," points out that Gov. Scott's plan puts him "at odds with House leadership." In fact, Designated House Speaker Richard Corcoran, who will assume that role in November, prefers to see EFI's funding re-allocated for education, reported the [Tallahassee Democrat](#) in June. In his opinion, "businesses that truly want to succeed in Florida are not looking for...corporate welfare." Furthermore, "[h]anding out corporate welfare checks is not something we should be engaged in." Corcoran pointed to the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute, a medical research facility with locations in Orlando, Florida, and San Diego, California, as an example of misspent funds. It received \$360 million in incentives, but is considering whether it should leave Florida.

The [Tallahassee Democrat](#) also reported on Corcoran's concerns with EFI with respect to transparency, favoritism, and abusive spending of public money. The [SaintPetersBlog](#) quoted him as asserting that "[t]he government engaging in social engineering to pick winners and losers that benefit the 1 percent is a bad deal for Florida taxpayers...There will not be any corporate welfare in the House budget."

Florida Gov Scott will keep fighting for jobs until

Another reason that Gov. Scott might be in for a scuffle is Florida's outdated tax system. In a [Sun-Sentinel](#) editorial, the paper contended that lawmakers, despite warnings from economists, have failed to modernize the current structure that exempts more transactions than it taxes.

It further argued that "[t]he latest state budget forecast, delivered to lawmakers this month, projects a surplus of just \$7.5 million next year, a pittance next to the state's annual \$82 billion in spending. In the following two years, growing shortfalls of \$1.3 billion and \$1.8 billion are projected.... With budget deficits on the horizon, it's time for lawmakers to stop stalling, and get cracking."

Despite all this, Gov. Scott's optimism persists. In his press release, he declared that he "ran on a mission to turn Florida's economy around, and while we have added over one million jobs in just five and a half years, I will keep fighting for jobs until my very last day as Governor." He told the SaintPetersBlog that he "couldn't imagine anyone is going to vote against" his \$85 million proposal.



David M. Kall

Team member bio