

# FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



April 20, 2017

The Honorable Carlos Trujillo  
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
221 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

## ***RE: Appropriations Priorities***

Dear Chairman Trujillo:

Thank you for your service to Florida as Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. As you prepare for budget negotiations, we offer the following recommendations regarding appropriations of great interest to the Conference:

- **Reject Nursing Home PPS**  
The House HHS Appropriations Committee will be considering a revision of the Navigant prospective payment system (PPS) proposal it rejected earlier in the session. The revised nursing home PPS model simply redistributes funds among nursing homes, with a disproportionate negative impact on higher quality, more efficient homes. It creates incentives and allows time to adapt operations to avoid reimbursement cuts in future years. We urge the legislature to reject that proposal the Senate has adopted.
- **Refugee Resettlement Trust Fund – without HB 427, accept Senate position**  
The House budget states four times that it reflects a discontinuation of Florida's Refugee Resettlement program unless HB 427 (Santiago) fails to become law. Concerns about HB 427 have been expressed to Representative Santiago. It appears unlikely to reach final passage, given the lack of a companion measure in the Senate. The current framework administered by the Department of Children and Families is sufficient to warrant its continuation in that role, and the stability afforded in that regard is beneficial to their partners like Catholic Charities as national refugee policy is in flux.
- **Affordable Housing – support full funding of Affordable Housing Trust Fund**  
While the improving real estate market benefits current homeowners and segments of the economy, there is insufficient housing affordability for many Floridians. We urge the legislature to fully appropriate the \$292.4 M available in state and local housing trust funds, \$204.9 M of that available for local State Housing Initiatives Partnerships (SHIP) distribution. In addition to improving access to a basic need for lower income Floridians, this would be expected to create 28,700 jobs and \$3.78 billion in positive economic impact in Florida.

- **Criminal Justice Reform Task Force – Support Senate’s position**

Florida spends over \$2.4 billion a year to incarcerate approximately 100,000 people and sends more children to the adult justice systems than any other state. At least 33 states have implemented comprehensive criminal justice reforms that reduce recidivism and keep society safe while saving taxpayer dollars.

Rather than continuing to address criminal justice reform measures each year in a piecemeal fashion, we support establishing a task force to undertake a comprehensive analysis of Florida’s criminal justice system. It would submit findings and recommendations to the House Speaker and Senate President prior to the 2018 legislative session. We urge the House to accept the Senate’s allocation of \$300,000 for this.

- **Hospital Funding Concerns – urge mitigation of cuts**

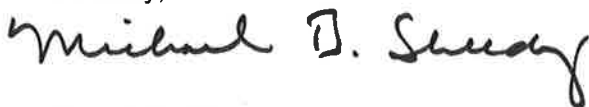
Both the Senate and House propose significant cuts to hospital reimbursement. The House position takes a deeper cuts. We urge openness to reinstating the Low Income Pool (LIP) program. Given the strain on Florida’s health delivery system relative to other states, we urge mitigating these cuts to the greatest degree possible. Medicaid funding contributes significantly to the system delivering care to all Floridians.

- **Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) – Senate position is favorable**

We support accountability and requiring the demonstration of value in providing this service. VPK has reached an all-time low in terms of its funding relative to the FEFP (34%) and is 8.9% below 2007 levels. It remains a challenge to maintain staff in the range of programs offered through our auspices. With an increase of \$92 (or just over 3%) the Senate position is favorable.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. We are pleased to address any questions you or your staff might have.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Sheedy

cc: Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, FCCB President & Archbishop of Miami