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**Representative Casello and Senator Berman Reintroduce
“Emergency Shelters Preparedness Act” to Harden Shelters
against Extreme Weather Events and Expand Solar Power**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Following the devastation caused by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole **State Representative Joe Casello (D-Boynton Beach)** and **State Senator Berman (D-Delray Beach)** reintroduced [SB 178/ HB 195](#) to harden our state’s emergency shelter infrastructure. Florida’s schools open their doors to 3 million students every day, and 97% of them serve as safe emergency shelters for communities during disaster. Only around 100 facilities have solar power and battery storage systems.

Under the bill, upgrades designed to improve the hardiness and energy independence of educational facilities will be exempted up to \$2 million from the cost per student station limitation imposed on school construction. Energy efficiency investments, coupled with upgrading solar technology, will allow school districts to tackle their high energy costs, make them more secure and resilient, and create an opportunity to integrate renewable energy technology into STEM curriculum.

“When it comes to school resiliency, we cannot let Florida fall behind. HB 195 is common sense legislation that will give our schools the needed tools to prepare for extreme weather events as well as support affordable clean energy,” said **Representative Casello**.

“Every year, Florida faces the prospect of grid-disrupting natural disasters. When our residents enter emergency shelters, they expect, at the very least, to be kept safe and have access to power. This legislation will seize on the opportunity to create more self-powered centers of refuge and build a greener, more resilient Florida,” said **Senator Berman**.

“Energy is typically among the top three expenses for schools, and this program would unlock more savings, keeping dollars in schools. With federal incentives now applicable to schools, the access to energy savings has never been more real.” – Heaven Campbell-Florida Program Director, Solar United Neighbors

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