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**Representative Rayner-Goolsby Responds In-District Project Vetoes
by the Governor**

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – In response to **Governor DeSantis** signing the new fiscal year budget with line item vetoes, **Representative Michele Rayner-Goolsby (D-St. Petersburg)** issued the following statement:

“I’m deeply disappointed about Governor DeSantis’ vetoes that have resulted in the removal of two critical appropriation projects I’ve passed in the state’s budget for the Tampa Bay region that aimed to support our community’s most vulnerable individuals.

“The first project, The Well Center for Trauma Recovery, Wellness, and Healing Justice, was for \$1.15 million. The Well is a groundbreaking initiative designed to establish a single point of contact for survivors of violent crimes and their families. These funds would have expanded essential, trauma-informed, and comprehensive services, to reduce psychosocial distress, improve quality of life, and promote post-traumatic growth. By vetoing funding for this crucial resource, the Governor is hindering the opportunity to minimize long-term disability and mitigate the risk of future victimization. It is disheartening to witness such a setback in our commitment to supporting those impacted by violence in our community.

“The Governor also vetoed a project for \$180,960 for Operation PAR, a licensed residential substance use treatment program specifically catering to pregnant and parenting women. The facility’s susceptibility to flooding during heavy rainfall events poses a significant risk to the safety and health of both our clients and the workforce. Funds could help divert water away from the facility by implementing necessary preventive measures, we could have ensured a secure and conducive environment for recovery.

“As a representative of our community, it is my duty to advocate for programs and initiatives that prioritize the well-being and safety of our constituents. I firmly believe that these appropriation projects were instrumental in addressing pressing issues and providing essential support to those who need it most. The decision to veto these projects not only disregards the needs of many Floridians but targets Black and Brown people, who are often more likely to experience violent crimes and substance use disorders. These cuts fail to acknowledge the long-term benefits and cost savings that such initiatives would have offered to our community.

“I strongly urge my fellow lawmakers to reaffirm our commitment to providing comprehensive services and care to survivors of violent crimes and support pregnant and parenting women in their journey toward recovery.

“I remain resolute in my dedication to fighting for the well-being and betterment of our community, and I will continue to work tirelessly to secure the necessary resources to address the pressing needs of our constituents.”

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