

The Wonk Room

Florida's Incoming Republican Speaker Casts Doubt On Scott's Plan To Cut Spending

By [Pat Garofalo](#) on Sep 13th, 2010 at 7:50 pm



Florida's Republican gubernatorial nominee Rick Scott — when he's not spending an inordinate amount of time discussing policies [over which he'd have no control](#) as governor — likes to tout his economic growth plan, which involves large tax cuts and supposedly large spending reductions.

[“You reduce every tax, every fee you can,”](#) Scott has said, adding that such tax cuts can be paid for by cutting waste in government. “You prioritize, what should I spend my money on? Does that program work? Should I spend money there like I have before? There's [so many things we waste money on](#) in this state,” he said.

In fact, Scott claims that he can [cut more \\$500 million](#) in government spending by simply implementing [“operational efficiency savings.”](#) However, the incoming Florida Speaker of the House, Dean Cannon (R), has warned members of his party [against such optimistic assessments](#) about finding waste in Florida's government:

“There is no secret stash of money, no hidden account, or no politically easy, pain free, magic bullet,” Cannon said. **“Republican House members have been looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow marked ‘waste, fraud and abuse’ as a means to solve all of our problems. No one has found it, because it isn't there.”**

This plan definitively puts Scott in the deficit peacock camp, as he's espousing easy solutions to what is, in reality, a complex problem. (To be fair, Scott's opponent Alex Sink has used some of the same rhetoric.) Florida is [facing a \\$2.5 billion budget shortfall](#) next year, before taking into the account the effects of the Gulf oil spill.

Medicaid costs in the state are [slated to surpass \\$20 billion](#) alone. It's a favorite conservative talking point to crusade against "waste, fraud, and abuse," but at the end of the day, that doesn't get your budget into balance.

Of course, Scott could take a look at Florida's tax system, which is one of the [most regressive in the nation](#), with no personal income tax and a high reliance on sales taxes. Florida's poorest 20 percent currently pay 13.5 percent of their income in taxes, while the richest one percent of Floridians pay just 2.6 percent. In fact, there's only one state in the nation (Washington) where [poor residents pay a higher percentage](#) of their income in taxes than Florida, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

Instead of repairing this inequitable system (and maybe helping reduce his state's deficit a bit), Scott only wants to [eliminate the state's corporate income tax](#) and reduce property taxes. Responsible budgeting means looking at both sides of the ledger — spending and revenues — but Scott steadfastly refuses to do so.