

## Rep. Fetterman, Sen. Dockery team up for bi-partisan support to protect money in state trust funds

By Jim Turner

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TALLAHASSEE — Rep. Adam Fetterman, D-Port St. Lucie, and Sen. Paula Dockery, R-Lakeland, will host a news conference today to announce bi-partisan support to protect money in state trust funds and to halt lawmakers from voting on bills that may personally benefit them.

Fetterman and Dockery found they supported bills the other introduced last month that focus on legislative accountability and have agreed to introduce similar legislation before their fellow lawmakers.

Fetterman said Dockery, who continues to run a gubernatorial campaign, approached him regarding his House Resolution 389 that is intended to make it more difficult for lawmakers to raid trust funds in order to balance the budget. Last year, more than \$500 million in trust fund money was shifted from its intended uses — such as health care, an anti-smoking education program and groundwater contamination cleanup — to balance the state budget.

By teaming with Dockery, Fetterman found someone from the Republican majority to assist his proposal, which requires support from three-fifths of both the House and Senate, to be placed before voters as an amendment to the state Constitution in November 2010.

"I think it's extremely important, not just because we have Republican leadership, but also because that's what the people want. The people are tired of partisanship," Fetterman said.

At the same time, Fetterman has agreed to support Dockery's Senate Bill 438, which would prohibit a member of the legislature from voting on or debating any issue that could create a personal gain for themselves, relatives, employer, business associates or corporate board they sit on.

"It is a conflict of interest, but as long as you disclose that interest within 15 days after the vote, it's allowed," said Fetterman. "I find that abhorrent and offensive."

Fetterman has already introduced House Bill 587, called the "Restoring Trust in Government Act," to address the voting conflict issue.



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