**HIGHER EDUCATION BUDGET VOTE DEBATE:**

1. Chairperson, as we speak her today, students at the University of Fort Hare do not know whether or not they will write exams.
2. Unlike in your traditionally white universities, students at traditionally black universities, such as Fort Hare, University of Limpopo, UKZN and others, have always struggled to get devices such as laptops, and they do not have data.
3. The COVID pandemic has exposed deep fissures in society. It has demonstrated that we have not invested in building the necessary foundational blocks for prosperous nations.
4. It has demonstrated the depth of the ideological bankruptcy of the liberation movement, which has persisted with the commodification of education, inherited from the National Party, which has ensured that access to higher education remains largely an exclusive right of those who have money.
5. Thousands of students from poor backgrounds are left out of the system, because NSFAS is not nearly enough to cover the education needs of the nations.
6. The COVID 19 crisis has also exposed your persistent favouring of the traditionally white universities over universities that traditionally catered for black people.
7. Universities such as Wits and UCT are able to provide online learning largely, because these universities are well capacitated, well resourced, with endless streams of funding.
8. It is your hatred of yourselves as black people that has allowed the situation to degenerate like this. It is your commodification of education that has condemned young, bright, black students to a life of hopelessness.
9. The adjusted budget does not take any of these realities into account. It is stale in imagination, and will certainly not lead up to the opening of institutions of higher learning for more disadvantaged black youth.
10. The country needs universal fee free higher education, with a strong enabling State with a comprehensive ideational capacity. Everything you are not.
11. We have put forward some very cogent proposals before, on how to make this possible.
12. We had previously said that there must be an overall annual education levy of 2.5% that is deducted from the pension funds. On its own, this will be sufficient to cover the full costs of free education for all.
13. This will benefit both the employees and the employers. For employees, it will ensure that they and their children get access to free higher education into perpetuity, while for employers, this will ensure an endless supply of skilled labour.
14. More importantly, this will not in any way affect the benefits employees must get from their pension funds when they retire. There will never be a time where all the employees will demand their pensions at the same time, or retire at the same time.
15. Secondly, we proposed that there be an increase from 1% to 2% on the skills levy that employees contribute to the National Skills Fund.
16. The government should through targeted interventions, also introduce a corporate levy for higher education and deal decisively with illicit financial flows.
17. All these taken into account, the country would have sufficient funds to finance the education of every deserving South African, and that this would happen without compromising other pressing needs that government must satisfy in this country.
18. This adjusted budget does not appreciated the critical moment we are in as a country, it shows no imagination, and does not consider the plight of students.
19. The EFF rejects this budget adjustment