



Capitol Comments

Newsletter from your
Iowa State Representative
Richard Anderson

State Capitol
March 19, 2009

COPS and Robbers – the Feds Giveth and the Feds Taketh Away

(The following script reads better if you read it out loud with your best gangster imitation.)

“Okay, Pugsy, hand over da’ dough!”

“Waddah ya’ mean Mugsy?! Ya’ just gives me my share. I thought we was in ‘dis deal together. I been wit’cha from the very start.”

“Yeah sure. You knows I’z the brains of ‘dis operation. I was plannin’ ‘dis deal before youz even came along. Now just hands it over or else...”

Where's the Money?

We are receiving more information on Iowa’s share of the federal stimulus package. The federal money comes with strings attached. One example is the COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) program, a competitive grant program through which federal money will pay 100% of the salary and benefits for local police officers for three years. At the end of the three years the federal money disappears, but the local community can’t terminate the positions created under the federal program. So if a community has five officers and adds two new ones under the federal program, the community must continue to fund all seven positions once the federal money is gone.

The same is true under federal job training/unemployment money. States have to create job training unemployment programs to re-train unemployed citizens to receive federal start up money. Then when the federal money runs out the states have to keep the program going.

These programs are great ideas and may help for a time, but look out when the federal government takes back the money and local and state government can no longer fund the positions and programs. Due to the strings attached – having to maintain programs with no money to do so – some states are refusing the federal bailout money. It is expected Iowa will take all the Federal money it can get its hands on.

A High Speed Chase

It has been very busy these past couple of weeks in the Iowa House. I didn't have time to get my newsletter out - sorry. We are trying to get out of town early to save taxpayer money. This we should do every year. The longer we are in session, the more state programs we establish, the more state jobs we create, the more money we spend. The legislature needs to do its share of responding to the revenue downturn. Let's hope there is still money in the bank when we leave.

Keeping Our Hands on the Wheel

Driving around Des Moines exposes me to a lot of driving situations. Most troubling are the inattentive drivers pre-occupied with their cell phones. I have seen too many near accidents where cell phones were involved. A "Hands Free" cell phone bill was moving through the Senate. This bill would not allow drivers to operate or use a cell phone, including writing, sending, or reading a written communication, while operating a car on a street or highway, unless the cell phone is used in a hands-free mode. Exceptions would be made for public safety agencies in the performance of their duties, the use of a cell phone to

make emergency calls, and the use of a cell phone when the motor vehicle has come to a complete stop off the roadway. Unfortunately this bill died in the House. I hope no lowans die as a result of using cell phones while driving.

Taking Our Eyes Off the Road.

Distractions from our intended purpose lead to consequences, whether it's on the road or at the state capitol. When we take our eyes off the road things happen. The Government Oversight Committee has been holding hearings looking into the recent IPERS fund loss. They are questioning whether there was a thorough investigation into the Westridge Capital Management of Santa Barbara, CA. prior to investing the IPERS money. The owners of Westridge have been accused of stealing as much as \$554 million from investing institutions (\$339 million of IPERS' funds). This loss makes up about 2% of the IPERS' fund.

Look at all the fraud and corruption running rampant through the investment world these days. Have Americans taken their eyes off the road? Let us all strive to do what is right. Let us all work with the benefit of others in mind. Let us remember the eyes of God are upon us. Let us keep our eyes upon His path. Doing so will keep us, and the robber inside us, in check.