

Under the Golden Dome, too

Week 12 is now history, and any hope for an early ending to this session in an effort to economize is quickly evaporating. It was a roller coaster week with a public hearing that got as much attention as the subject matter, on and off again bills on the repeal of Federal Deductibility, and rumors of big labor bills tucked into the Standings Bill...the last train out of town.

Recall the priorities the House Republicans set for the year. 1. Truth and Transparency...the bill is stuck in the Senate, and the concept is losing support of the majority party as the budget woes increase and the repeal of federal deductibility looks like a great revenue source. 2. Creating jobs and growing the economy...Nope. No jobs except a couple of new state employees. Repeal of federal deductibility does not drive economic development. It is a net tax increase. And recall the highest income tax bracket in Illinois is 3%, and South Dakota is 0%. 3. Creating Government Efficiencies...this could be a winner. The Majority party finally asked if we had found any savings as we dug around in every line of the budgets. We did!

On Wednesday, April 1st, (no foolin) House Republicans unveiled a list of proposed budget reductions for FY 2010. These reductions are meant to bring the FY 2010 budget into balance and reduce the size of government.

Here are a few of the suggested budget reductions:

- Eliminate "phantom employees". Unfilled Full Time Employee (FTE) positions - \$25,000,000
- Do something like the "Principal Plan" - require the Governor to negotiate a pay reduction for all employees - sliding scale of 2% cut for \$40K to 10% cut for over \$100K – then apply the same to all non-union workers. - \$72,500,000
- Charge state employees a monthly fee for health insurance premiums – Parents buying HAWK-I insurance pay \$10 per child per month. Many state employees pay zero. Charge state employees a minimum \$50 per month for health insurance - \$17,800,000
- Sell the fleet, outsource vehicle leasing – This is a one-time infusion of about \$18,000,000 and ongoing savings of \$18 million. So minus the \$2,000,000 for leasing vehicles, the saving is about \$34,000,000.
- Reduce office supplies, service contracts, and equipment purchases - \$10,000,000
- Combine all state information technology systems including combining the 6 different e-mail systems - \$20,000,000
- Sell or lease the Iowa Communications Network - \$15,000,000
- Reduce funding for Library acquisitions at Regents by 50% - \$13,500,000
- No DNR land acquisition for FY 2010 - \$5,000,000
- Eliminate funding for Just Eliminate Lies (JEL) - \$2,250,000
- Eliminate "extras" on existing state vehicle purchases including **Bug shields, Bose stereos**, GPS systems and other add-ons - \$87,000

While these are just examples of what we offered as possible savings, the total came to \$217 million in FY 2010. Since the Democrats' own budget targets show they are \$105 million above the expenditure limitation, accepting half of these suggestions would not only prevent the transfer of funds from the cash reserves but also nip in the bud any tax increases in order to balance their budget.

House Republicans will continue to fight for the taxpayers and work on a line-by-line analysis of the budget in order to make state government leaner and more efficient. There is much more information on my website at iowahouserepublicans.com/members/linda.upmeyer.

There were many visitors to the Capitol this week, including over 100 students, teachers, and parents from the Hampton Dumont School; Val Plagge and members of the Ag Urban Leadership group; Roy Arends with the Soybean Assn.; Ed Greiman and members of the Cattlemen Assn.; and others. Thanks for visiting with me and I encourage others to visit as well or contact me at 515-281-3221 or linda.upmeyer@legis.state.ia.us