

Under the Golden Dome, too

The sun is shining and spring is in the air. We are wrapping up week 11, and there is much discussion about when this body will complete its work. Recall Senator Gronstal has on every occasion said he planned to wrap up early April. I am hearing he is still planning to be done before Easter. While that is possible, it would require a willingness to leave many bills undone. For the most part that is fine. We need to focus on the BUDGET.

As I write this, we are waiting on the Revenue Estimating Committee report. I am expecting another decrease in the revenue projection, and those of us in the House Republican Caucus have been stressing the importance of fiscal responsibility. You can't spend more than you take in, and you can't spend one-time money for ongoing expenses. It doesn't work at home, at work, or in government.

Many are skeptical of the governor's request to borrow \$750 million through bonding, paid for with \$56 million of gambling revenue each year. According to the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, using the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF) would provide, in just a 3-year period, more than the \$700 million of bonding proposed by the Governor that requires a 20 year payback and over \$400 million in interest. The Governor is traveling the state "selling" his bonding plan. If Governor Culver's bonding plan is so good, he shouldn't need to travel the state, toting a shovel, to sell it.

The Senate has a "baby bond" plan that borrows \$175 million, but contains no money for roads or bridges. It doesn't identify any payback mechanism. Each year the legislature would have to identify a repayment plan.

What we need to remember is that this state doesn't have a revenue problem, we have a spending problem. When the General Assembly left town last session, we were already \$500 million short. They bet on the continued revenue growth and that didn't happen. Yes, there is an additional hit with the economic downturn, but if we ignore the spending part of the equation, we will never be able to manage the budget without massive tax increases. House Republicans offered savings totaling \$48 million to the appropriation adjustment bill, but all were rejected. We will continue to study the budget line by line and look for opportunities for savings.

I am already hearing accusations of "obstructionist". That all we ever say is "NO". Well, if that is the label associated with fiscal responsibility, with demanding truth and transparency, and with studying the budget line by line, then I guess we need to have that discussion.

Thank-you to everyone who came to visit this week. There were many school kids and families visiting the Capitol during spring break, home school families were on field trip, and my grandsons came for a visit! New pictures are posted on my website at www.iowahouserеспублиcans.com/members/linda-upmeyer. While you are there, be sure to **take my short survey!** Call me at 515-281-3221. Email at linda.upmeyer@legis.state.is.us.