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Senator John Cauthorn Gives Governor Second Golden Goose Egg This Month

Empty Space Costs taxpayers more than \$500,000

As former New York Yankee, Yogi Berra, once said, "It's like déjà vu all over again." Senator John Cauthorn, R-Mexico, today awarded Governor Bob Holden a Golden Goose Egg having done just that one week ago to the day. Holden's earned both notorious accolades for consistently billing taxpayers for overpriced and underutilized state office space.

The governor's willful disregard for the legislature's budget plan by siphoning money from various agencies to keep an office open in Washington D.C., warranted last week's egg.

"Not only did we cut that expenditure out of the budget," Cauthorn said, "but the Governor has robbed this money from other state agencies such as higher education to keep this office open."

This week's egg is courtesy of state leased office space located at 3101 Chouteau in St. Louis, where the corrections department leases some 32,000 square feet of space, of which 10,000 square feet is completely unused.

"Missourians are paying nearly \$20 a square foot per year for that lease," Cauthorn said. "And what do you know, you multiply 20 by 10,000 and you get \$200,000 that could be used for schools, healthcare or roads but is instead going up in smoke."

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Cauthorn noted that, left unchecked, the wasted revenue actually approaches \$3 million when the 14 remaining years of the lease are factored in.

“I’m thinking it’s sad but safe to say that this, and a whole lot of other state business, will be left unchecked by this governor. And the St. Louis and Washington offices are just the tip of the iceberg,” said Cauthorn.

Cauthorn, who chairs the Senate’s Government Accountability and Fiscal Oversight Committee, began delivering Golden Goose Eggs during the 2003 session for chart-topping occurrences of state government waste, mismanagement or combinations thereof.

While the “Goose Egg” insinuation is apparent, “The ‘golden’ part of the Golden Goose Eggs comes from Golden Fleece Awards once handed out by a U.S. Senator for federal gaffes, missteps and other egregious misuses of public trust and money,” Cauthorn explained. “You really don’t want a Golden Goose Egg on your resume...”

“Winners” thus far in 2004 include the head of the state’s elementary and secondary education department for a thoughtful, but taxpayer paid holiday card blitz. Holden’s consecutive Egg wins makes for two already this session, which he can now add to the Egg he earned last year for his “generous” use of flight time on state airplanes.

“Even I thought a single person collecting a dozen Goose Eggs was improbable, but now, who knows?” Cauthorn said. “Even after the November elections, his term still runs another two months.”

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Attached are pictures of the office space located at 3101 Chouteau in St. Louis, MO

Pictures of Office Space at 3101 Chouteau

