

For Immediate Release

April 29, 2010

# SHARING A VIEW OF THE STATE

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Issues and Comments – 33<sup>rd</sup> Senatorial District

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*Senator*

***Chuck Purgason***

Budget negotiations continued this week as conferees from both chambers met to reconcile differences between versions passed by the House and Senate. Following these meetings, the final budget bills were sent to the House where they were approved and forwarded to the Senate. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, our office has been receiving a vast amount of correspondence and calls regarding various programs. All are pleas to either save a particular program or fund at a larger amount. All the messages are passionate and some border on despair.

These past months have forced a closer look by the legislature as to what is and is not a core function of government. When times are good, no matter which party is in control, it is a desire of legislators to implement new programs. I cannot explain, nor do I understand, why even the most conservative of politicians will work tirelessly for passage of a bill that adds to the growth of government. It could be argued many of these programs exceed the basic responsibilities of what is expected from state government.

It should be no surprise that once individuals enjoy the benefits of a program of any type it is extremely difficult to remove or reduce. Never has this been more evident than now. As reductions are being made, citizens are convinced their particular project is bearing a disproportionate share. When Career Ladder was in danger of being discontinued, we were told to not balance the budget on the backs of teachers. When biodiesel subsidies were reduced, we were told it wasn't fair to balance the budget on the backs of farmers. When a bill that reduced the number of state holidays by two passed the Senate, we were told the budget should not be balanced on the backs of state workers. Every constituency group feels they are being unfairly singled out as we endeavor to balance the budget.

The budget presents a unique position. When the economy was more robust, our area benefited from the year to year growth. Now, with continually sagging revenues, reality is upon us. One person's idea of 'waste' is another person's definition of 'necessity'. Every reduction affects someone. The question rapidly becomes, 'Does this program qualify as a core function and responsibility of government or was it a product of better times?' Out of necessity, we are being reminded that if you depend on Jefferson City or Washington, D. C., for your happiness and satisfaction, you run the risk of disappointment.

As usual I can be reached at State Senate, State Capitol, Jefferson City, MO 65101 or 573-751-1882, or [chuck.purgason@senate.mo.gov](mailto:chuck.purgason@senate.mo.gov) for your questions, comments, or advice.

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