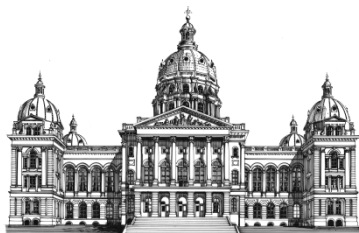


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On Wednesday, January 19, the House approved House File 45, also known as the Taxpayers First Act. The Taxpayers First Act is the first delivery on campaign promises to reduce spending and the size of government. The bill reduces state spending by nearly \$500 million over three fiscal years and sets the stage for eliminating the over \$700 million general deficit for fiscal year 2012.

HF 45 creates the Tax Relief Fund to capture any excess revenue that comes in above the official estimates on which the legislature is required to create a budget. I believe this is the people's money and the state does not have the right to automatically use it for additional spending. That practice is one of the reasons we are in the present difficult budget situation. These monies should be returned to the taxpayer in some form yet to be determined. For fiscal year 2012 alone this would mean over \$300 million returned to the taxpayers. This bill sends a clear signal that House Republicans are very serious about efforts to reduce the size of government. We'll see what happens to it in the Senate.

Another interesting issue that has come up is that of weapons permitting. As you know, last year new requirements were passed into law requiring the 99 counties to standardize the permit process so the state did not have 99 different procedures. Now the question is whether local governments and businesses can create their own policies about where handguns can be carried. While I agree that the law does not prevent local governments and businesses to do so, that was not the intent of the legislation. If it were, it defeats the purpose of standardizing the process for law abiding citizens to carry a firearm. I'm sure there will be legislation to clarify the situation.

This week the House will pass House File 95 which requires all voters to show photo identification in order to vote. I'm sure you will be hearing much more about this. Showing an ID is required to buy tobacco, alcohol and other items. Most state agencies require a photo ID before assisting citizens. Showing an ID to vote makes common sense and ensures better integrity of the voting system. I'll be supporting the bill.

This week the legislature heard from Governor Branstad and received his proposed budget. The governor appears committed to spending less tax dollars than last year and setting up a much tighter budgeting system that will help Iowa plan further into the future. The era of spending more money than the state takes in is coming to an end. Now it is the responsibility of the Legislature to take the governor's proposal and turn it into the actual budget. Much work remains.

Track what is going on at the legislature by going to <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/>
Contact me any time in the Iowa House by calling 515-281-3221 to leave a message, or by e-mail at royd.chambers@legis.state.ia.us Royd Chambers of Sheldon represents House District 5, which consists of O'Brien, Osceola, the rural parts of Clay, and 4 townships in Sioux County.