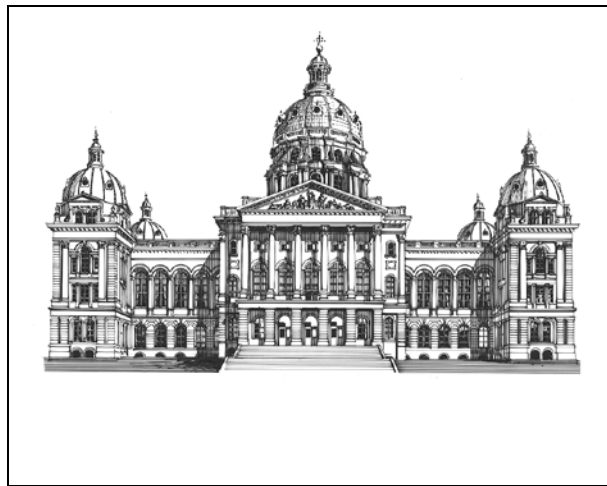


Iowa House of Representatives
State Representative Cecil Dolecheck
Dolecheck's Details

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**For the week of January 10th-January 14th,
2011**



84th General Assembly 2011

The 84th General Assembly gaveled in at 10 am on Monday January 10th. I was honored and privileged to be sworn in for my eighth term of representing the people of Southwest Iowa in the 96th House District. The first day of session this year was a little different than some have been as we have twenty-nine new freshmen legislators in the House of Representatives out of one hundred. Needless to say the seat selection process took up most of Monday afternoon. If you have the opportunity to visit your beautiful State Capitol while your legislature is in session, please stop by the House Chamber. My seat and desk remain the same, desk 65 on the south end of the back row of the northwest quadrant. You are always welcome in the people's House.

On Tuesday Governor Culver gave the annual State of the State Address. He stated that he felt the state was in good shape with what he referred to as a \$900 million surplus in state revenues. This statement is misleading as \$470 million of that amount is in our cash reserve fund, which we are required by law to maintain so that the state can pay its bills on time. These bills would include such things as our payments to schools, counties, and cities as well as payroll to all state employees. This amount is roughly 7.5% of our total State budget of just over \$6 billion dollars. The balance is roughly \$370 million which is revenue coming in over the Revenue Estimating Conference estimate for tax collections. Those two total \$840 million which the Governor then rounds up to say that we have "roughly" a \$900 million surplus.

The problem for the Iowa taxpayer is the fact that with the built in expenditures already in place for FY 2012, we still have a \$750 Million hole to fill. The \$370 million of the revenue the Governor refers to is only there because the majority party in the 2010 legislature did not backfill the 10% across the board cut to school districts and did not fulfill their commitment to counties for mandated property tax exemptions i.e. (homeowners, veterans, elderly and the like). Most schools and counties had no option other than shifting this burden to the property taxpayers. This scenario being the reason for the Republican majorities first bill in the 2011 Iowa House, the "Taxpayers First Act", House Study Bill 1.

This bill, HSB1, creates a Tax Relief fund, which will capture the general fund surplus to be returned to the taxpayer. It also contains DE appropriations from the FY 2011 budget and reductions in appropriations for FY 2012 and FY 2013. The bill eliminates programs and reduces expenditures on non-personal items. The bill provides for a supplemental for mental health and begins the process of re-writing the mental health delivery system.

There are 13 divisions in the bill and I am not going to attempt to cover all of them. I will highlight a few provisions.

To start, the bill requires the Executive, Judicial and Legislative branches to establish an employee premium for health insurance coverage, sets the premium at a minimum of \$100 per month. The majority party felt that in the current tough economic times these state employees should be willing to make this sacrifice. Remember we ask our lower income parents, whose children qualify for Hawk-I, to pay \$40 per month for their health care coverage.

Next, State Government agencies are asked to cut their spending for supplies, outside services, equipment purchases, information technology, printing and binding, and marketing by 50 percent for the rest of FY 2011 which ends on June 30th of 2011. The bill sets the stage for looking at department budgets, and going to a possible two year budgeting process, which is one of Governor Elect Brandstads recommendations.

Most of the rest of HSB1 seeks to set spending priorities for Iowa taxpayers and revamping the delivery system for some of those priorities. Most Iowans believe it is time for a smaller, smarter State Government and this is only the first step.

The Iowa House has scheduled a public hearing in the chamber for Tuesday January 18th from 6:30-8:30pm. If you would like to read the entire bill, it can be found on the state of Iowa website www.iowa.gov under the track legislation tab. The bill is House Study Bill 1(HSB1).

What do you think? Email me your thoughts. My e-mail address is : cecil.dolecheck@legis.state.ia.us

Information about my legislative forum schedule, past newsletters and biography can be found at www.iowahouserepublicans.com/members/cecil-dolecheck

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