



FROM THE DESK OF REPRESENTATIVE DE BOEF

January 12, 2012

The 2012 legislative year began Jan. 9 with all the usual pomp & circumstance. It is amazing to think this is the 12th time I have gaveled in at this glorious, historical building gifted to us by our fore fathers! Because of the results of the redistricting map, this will be my final year, so I am waxing particularly nostalgic about this year. One interesting tidbit-we gaveled in on a day that reached into the late 40's- with green grass surrounding the Capitol! Quite unusual for January! Probably has not happened in my lifetime. I know the day we reached 66 degrees – the Thursday prior broke a record set the year I was born – 1951.

One of the primary concerns Iowans express is the need to improve access to high quality jobs. The best way to help Iowa's employers begin to hire people and invest in their businesses is to do two things: address property taxes and control state spending. Property tax reform is essential for individuals and businesses because it provides certainty for all of us as we plan our budgets and growth of our businesses.

Controlling government spending by spending less than the government receives demonstrates the commitment to commonsense budgeting and economic health that employers deserve. The threat of higher taxes needs to be removed. One strong message that House Republicans are committed to is that we will not approve a budget that spends more than what we take in for a budget year. For too many years, creative budgeting has shifted expenditures from the general fund into other funds – many time one-time revenue sources to address ongoing expenses. This sets us up for budget problems in following years and does not follow sound budgeting practices.

Over the last ten years school rates have increased 60 percent... county rates 64 percent... and city rates are up 74 percent. Over that same time period, personal income only grew 46 percent. Iowa families and Iowa employers are struggling with this burden and furthermore, it is impeding job growth and hurting the economic health of our communities

Any property tax reform plan approved by the Legislature must make sure everyone benefits, homeowners and business owners, and that everyone is playing by the rules.

Democrats' insistence on protecting local government revenues continues to be the major stumbling block in achieving any level of real, genuine property tax relief. In fact, the plan approved by the Senate Democrats last year leads to increase in residential property taxes. We can do better than picking one set of winners in this effort.

Doing nothing is not an option. The rollback has turned into the roll-up and the burden on homeowners is growing at a substantially faster rate than what their incomes are growing. We must address this. The consequence of doing nothing is a huge tax increase on all Iowans. The benefit of achieving genuine reform is jobs, savings and certainty.

One of the disturbing news items that occurred in Iowa recently was a 22-year-old Huxley woman was charged with 2 counts of first degree murder in the death of her newborn twin daughters. There also was a 19-year-old who is being questioned because she apparently gave birth in a public rest room in Mason City to a baby that cannot be found.

These accounts frustrate me because I believe our policy of lenient abortions up to 24 weeks of pregnancy send these young women a message that we do not value these babies. In effect they have value if the parents want them and if they do not, they are expendable. No wonder confused young women dispose of them when they find it convenient!

As usual, I am planning on attending legislative forums, the first will be in Keokuk County on January 28 in the Keokuk Co. board room from 10:30 – 12 noon.

Visitors at the capitol this week: Brenda Edmundson a native of Thornburg.

I am always happy to deal with any requests you may have or any input you may offer! Please contact me at 515-281-3221 or betty.deboef@legis.state.ia.us.