

Sweeney from the statehouse March 30, 2010

The 83rd General Assembly came to a conclusion on Tuesday, March 30th, about noon. This has been a challenging session because of the state economic condition and the shortened session. That being said I would like to summarize some of the successes and shortfalls of the session.

Following is some of the positive legislation that was passed.

- Bipartisan passage of [SF 2088](#), the state government reorganization bill, which saved taxpayers \$71 million in general fund and \$50 million in other funds for FY 2011. This bill eliminated 14 boards and commissions.
- FY 2010 should conclude with an ending balance of \$100 million for FY 2010 and FY 2011 with an ending balance of \$165 million. These surpluses are necessary in case state revenue continues to decline. Making sure that the state can pay their bills on time by leaving \$213 million in the cash reserves fund.
- [SF 2388](#) sets up a system to allow maximum reimbursement for Medicaid payments to Iowa hospitals and will rebase hospital payments for future years.
- SF 2387 authorizes several sales tax exemptions for regional blood testing laboratories. This will be a benefit for the expansion of the Blood Center in the Quad Cities.
- [SF 2379](#), the Right-to-Carry Bill, established a uniform application process to receive your permit. This bill may disappoint some gun owners, but it was the only train leaving town.
- Personal highlight was HF 2148 the Veteran home loan bill that helped veterans use their local banks in obtaining loans. We passed it in the house 100 to 0!!
- In appropriations we worked hard in both houses to find funds for the Boys Training School in Eldora and succeeded!

Following are some of the major shortcomings of this last session.

- Even while increasing state spending the legislature underfunded Education by \$167 million that places on local school boards the decision to eliminate 2500 teachers statewide or increase property taxes.
- Using over \$728 million in one-time funds to balance the budget. These funds go to ongoing spending, the problem is that next year the money is gone but the spending remains. The total budget for FY 2011 is now over \$6 billion.
- Establishing built-in spending of over \$1 billion for FY 2012. It will take 20 percent growth in general fund revenue to cover this level of spending.
- Additional bonding for the I-Job program, as opposed to pay-as-you-go.

In closing, I want each one of you to know that it has been an honor to represent you in the Iowa House of Representatives this year and I will continue to work to represent the interests of my district.