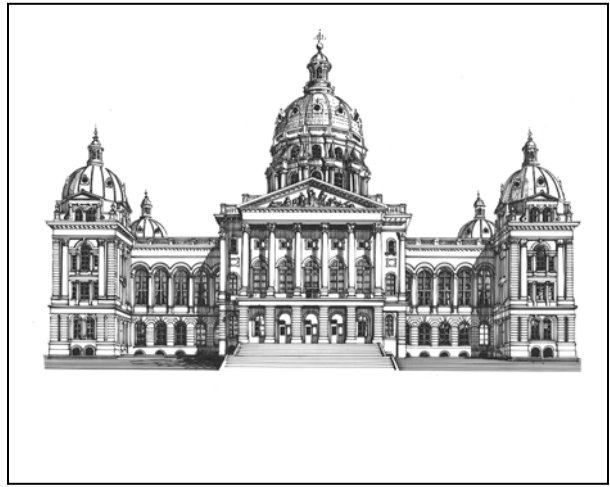


**Iowa House of Representatives
State Representative Cecil Dolecheck
Dolecheck's Details**

Address: State Capitol, Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: 515-281-3221 Seat 65
E-Mail: cecil.dolecheck@legis.state.ia.us

**For the week of March 8th-March 12th,
2010**



Budget Bills Begin to Move

The budget continues to be the main focus of the legislature this week as we move toward a scheduled adjournment by the end of March.

On Monday, March 8, the House Appropriations Committee approved the following budget bills:

- HSB 728 (Federal Block Grants),
- HSB 733 (Economic Development budget bill),
- HF 2502 (Pension bill) and
- SF 2366 (the second FY 2010 supplemental appropriations bill).

On Tuesday, the Committee approved:

- HSB 731 (Justice System budget bill),
- HSB 732 (Judicial branch budget bill) and
- HSB 733 (Ag and DNR budget bill).

The Committee is expected to debate the Health and Human Services budget bill and the Administration and Regulation budget bill on Thursday. Those two bills will appropriate roughly \$1 billion. Even when that is added to the total, it will mean the Committee has approved \$1.7 billion, or just over 30 percent.

The majority party continues to refuse to allow Iowans to see the entire budget picture. While some details have come out – including under-funding K-12 education by \$170 million, under-funding Medicaid by \$200 million, and using \$187 million from the Cash Reserve Fund for ongoing spending.

By not disclosing the full picture, we are depriving Iowans the opportunity to give legislators their opinions on what should be budget priorities. They are also hiding the amount of one-time money being used to balance the budget, which simply pushes off the problems until next year.

Constituents continue to demand that we be transparent with the budget process and explain to Iowans how we intend to close the \$1.1 billion general fund spending gap.

Teachers to Get Special Deal

Teacher salaries are exempted from across the board cuts – now and in the future – through an unprecedented move to include massive policy language in an appropriations bill.

In addition, Senate Study Bill 3248, the Ed Approp bill, makes teachers the only professionals in the state that will immediately get the name of a person filing a complaint against them. Iowa's 32 other licensing boards don't release the name unless it becomes a founded complaint.

The implications of exempting teacher pay from an ATB are far reaching. First, it creates a \$24 million statewide property tax liability because Iowa school districts will have to go back and pay teachers the \$24 million yet this fiscal year. With just three months left in the fiscal year, districts who spent the money elsewhere will be looking to the property taxpayer to pick up the cost.

Second, it creates morale problems in Iowa school districts. Teachers suddenly become the most important people in the school and in their community. The janitor, the food service worker, the teacher's aide and the principal's secretary take a pay cut but not the teacher they work beside. And its safe to say that the 110,000 unemployed Iowans, many in the private sector, would gladly take a pay cut in lieu of a layoff.

Third, exempting teacher pay from any ATB cut preferences teachers over public safety, over child support services, over seniors and child care workers. In doing this, Democrats are effectively sending the message that hard times shouldn't be shared by all and should never be shared by teachers.

Finally, passing a law exempting any one program from an ATB cut is a horrible fiscal idea. Iowa's governor doesn't have to order an ATB cut. Our state law currently allows the governor to call the legislature into special session at any time to do selected budget cuts. Carving out exceptions to an ATB takes elected officials out of the very decision making that Iowans elected them to do.

Domestic Abuse

Most of the debate Wednesday afternoon concerned a bill which came to us through the Public Safety Committee. SF 2357 prohibits a person convicted of domestic abuse or subject to a protective order from possessing firearms or offensive weapons and ammunition.

This was a difficult decision for me to make, as I am a strong supporter of our 2nd amendment rights to bear arms. After listening to the discussion I cast my vote in favor of protecting the victims of domestic abuse and to take the weapons out of the hands of the convicted abuser. That individual can have the weapons placed in the custody of a friend or relative and not have them confiscated by law enforcement. The individual could then gain access to the weapons when the protective order was terminated.

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

House Visitors include : Charla Schmit from Red Oak Schools and Barb Allen & Mindy Wookey from Stanton Friends in Montgomery County.

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

The number for the House switchboard is (515) 281-3221, Seat 65