



UPFRONT

May 16, 2011

Title: Ticket to Going Home

The House of Representatives has been empty the last week and a half. Once in a while a couple or three Legislators will be at their desk but, for the most part, this Legislature is at a temporary standstill.

The House met through Wednesday with no other debate scheduled for the rest of this week. The Senate went home for the week on Tuesday afternoon. As you may have read or heard from the media, all elected Republicans in the Capitol are on the same page with the amount the State of Iowa will spend during the next fiscal year. We are united on the fact that the budget will be less than \$6 billion, will not spend more than the revenue taken in, and we won't balance a budget on one-time money.

These philosophies are different from what tax payers have been able to count on in recent past years. House Republicans have continued to stand firm on these philosophies and we will continue to stand firm. This was the promise to the people of Iowa during the campaign, and we will follow through with this promise! What does this then mean for the 2011 session coming to a close?

It means that Senate leadership has some very difficult conversations and decisions to make as it relates to what they desire to spend. House leadership continues to meet with Senate leadership trying to move toward common ground that will meet the above stated goals from the House.

On Tuesday, May 3, the House and Senate Republicans and Governor Brandstad agreed to the total amount of general fund spending for FY 2012. The general fund budget will be just less than \$6 billion. This amount is 97 percent of ongoing revenue and over \$200 million less than the adjusted FY 2011 budget. It leaves over \$300 million in the ending balance and brings the budget back to FY 2009 levels.

The next step is getting the Senate Democrats to agree on the spending level. Once that is accomplished, the appropriations bills can be approved by both chambers and sent to the Governor.

I firmly believe that the budget agreement will be no higher than the number given to the Legislature and the Governor by the Revenue Estimating Conference that met in December. I also believe firmly that in the end, the Governor will sign no legislation that would go above that amount. There is room to move and compromise between the House and Senate, and in the near future, and I hope soon, an agreement will be reached.

Both parties and the Governor have pledged themselves to a budget that is fiscally responsible and sustainable. I believe that magic number is out there; it's just getting there that is the problem.

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If you have any issues or concerns, please contact me. Be sure to include your name and address with any communication to my office.

State Rep. Dave Heaton, R-Mount Pleasant, represents the 91st House District, which includes all of Henry County and the northern half of Lee County.
