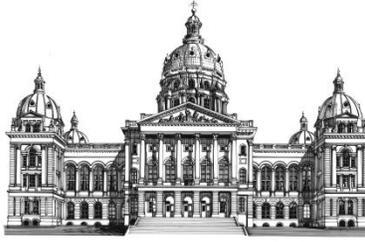


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The Senate
State of Iowa
Eighty-fifth General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, IA 50319

COMMITTEES
Rules and Administration
Labor and Business Relations

Dix's Diary
By Senate Republican Leader Bill Dix
January 17, 2013

The 85th General Assembly Convenes
2013 Legislative Session a Starting Point for Iowa

The 2013 Legislative Session kicked off this week with a lot of pomp and circumstance. Senate Republicans swore in eight new members who will look out for Iowa's best interest, be fiscal watchdogs and help reign in overreaching government.

We heard many speeches outlining priorities and Governor Branstad gave his annual Condition of the State address. The good news is that our state is strong and the Governor outlined his three-point plan to help Iowa grow stronger:

1. Provide property tax relief
2. Make Iowa schools the best in the world
3. Improve Iowan's quality of life

These three items are a great place to start for Iowa on the road to overall success. It's important to know the road we traveled down in order to know where we're going and Governor Branstad returned fiscal sanity to Iowa's budgeting practices. Our previous governor made across-the-board cuts to the state's budget and bit off more than Democrats could chew by bonding beyond our state's means. Times have changed and Governor Branstad, through sound fiscal leadership, has filled Iowa's coffers and continues to create a state budget that spends less than it takes in and protects our rainy day funds. Like Iowa families, Iowa government has tightened its belt and will continue to live within our means. That sort of responsible leadership is good for all Iowans.

These sound budgeting practices will enable us to focus on things like restoring our education system to top-notch status. We know that the education system needs to be reformed and student achievement levels need to be raised. It's time to move Iowa's education system forward and Senate Republicans are committed to working through that process to give our most important investment, our students, the leg-up they need to compete in the global economy. Restructuring the education system will help produce world class students and world class employees for Iowa jobs with Iowa employers.

While the condition of the state is growing stronger, Iowa is in a great position to capture economic success. That means lowering the property tax burden across the board. We have some of the highest property taxes in the nation. Senate Republicans know that Iowans have been feeling the property tax pinch for too long. We know we must remain focused on providing real tax relief that empowers hard working Iowans. Real property tax relief will embolden businesses and provide job creation. The ripple effect will be powerful.

The next step is putting these plans in action. Senate Republicans will continue to work with our fellow legislators to diligently examine any and all legislation and make sure that it helps our economy grow, creates jobs, and effectively educate our children. We've spent beyond our means and seen the disappointing repercussions. Now, we've tightened our belts and been successful. It's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. The best is yet to come.

Let's Make It Happen!