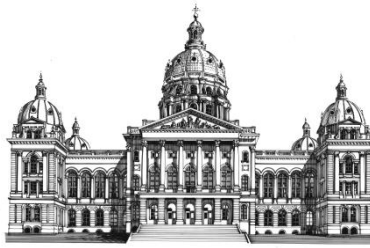


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## **The Senate**

State of Iowa  
*Eighty-sixth General Assembly*  
STATEHOUSE  
Des Moines, IA 50319

*Republican Leader*

COMMITTEES

Rules and Administration, *Ranking Member*

*January 12, 2015*

*Senate Republican Leader Bill Dix's opening day remarks as prepared.*

Madam President,

I am proud and honored to stand here today to speak with my fellow legislators and to Iowans.

A few weeks ago many of us began making plans for 2015. Speaking with friends, they began sharing their New Year's resolutions. Some spoke of cutting back on sweets, exercising more, spending more time with family, and saving up for a family trip. There was not a bad idea mentioned, and I thought about how to apply those ideas to myself and my family.

I have to admit, it probably would not hurt to exercise more, and I enjoy the time I spend with Gerri and the kids – and I know I should set aside more time to do exactly that. As I thought more about it, my family and friends are much like yours in this chamber. They are working hard to meet their financial obligations, provide a good home for their children, while trying to save for a family trip or rainy day.

Shortly after Christmas, having my morning coffee I kept thinking about these New Year's resolutions. I shared with Gerri my plans to get into better shape, spend time with her and the kids and come to the Capitol and fight for families like mine, yours and our neighbors and friends across the state to create a legacy of opportunity for every Iowan.

Speaking with my fellow Senate Republicans, we resolve again this year to be fiscally responsible with the taxpayers' money, ensure every child has access to a world class education, honor the commitments we have passed in this chamber, and lift up those with middle incomes. But even as I say that, I realize that some resolutions are simply more important than others. The treadmill may begin collecting dust in February, and the Kit Kat could return to the morning routine in March. But Senate Republicans are resolved – no, committed – to fight for what is right to move our great state forward. We have seen those successes in the past such as eliminating the state income tax on military pensions and social security and education reform.

Iowa's unemployment is near pre-recession levels. A billion dollar deficit is memory. Teacher pay has increased. Commercial property tax relief is now a reality. None of this occurred with a snap of a finger and hoping for the best. With foresight and collaboration, we made this happen.

It is vital we maintain this foresight and ability to work together to rein in spending and keep our state on a strong financial footing. Sitting around the table, Iowa families prioritize their spending to ensure they are not adding to their credit card debt. We face a challenging budget year, and Iowans expect their legislators also to prioritize – particularly when it comes to spending their money and passing debt onto their children and grandchildren.

As a legislative body, we face some tough decisions when it comes to prioritizing spending and making necessary cuts. I believe this body has the resolve to work together to rein in spending, make cuts and reduce the size of government and lift up all Iowans in the process by reducing their tax burdens.

We must be aggressive in our focus on growing our economy. A competitive tax structure is advantageous in expanding our skilled workforce and creating new career opportunities. Senate Republicans know we must reduce the regulatory and tax burdens on job creators. Significant tax relief emboldens businesses, which leads to job creation, bolsters Iowa's economy and leads to increases in state revenues.

With the reform packages passed in 2013, we must be mindful in our work when it comes to budgeting. It is important we maintain fiscally responsible budgeting practices while ensuring commitments we made to Iowans regarding education and property tax reform are met. Shirking this responsibility in favor of simply raising taxes would be a betrayal of the trust of the voters who elected us. Spending money we do not have would be worse: a betrayal of the next generation as we hand them the tab for our irresponsibility.

Senate Republicans pledge our resolve to work to create a legacy of opportunity for all Iowans. We are willing to work with Senate Democrats to make this vision a reality. After all, that is the government Iowans expect, the representation they deserve and the leadership they elected us to provide.

Let's make it Happen!