



2010

masw

legislative update



April 23, 2010

State Budget in Free Fall

Conference Committee Crafting Disastrous Budget for 2011

Facing a constitutional deadline of Friday, May 7, for enactment of the 2011 budget (for the 12 months beginning July 1, 2010), conferees from the House and Senate began work this week on resolving the differences in the two horrifying versions each chamber has already passed.

If your Senator or Representative serves on one of the conference committees, [you can contact them](#) about a specific budget item of concern to you, but the state revenue picture is so relentlessly bleak that help for one woefully underfunded vital service can only come by stealing from another woefully underfunded vital service.

The state budget is actually [13 separate bills](#) more or less encompassing related functions of state government. The Senate has the same 5 conferees for all 13 bills, headed by [Appropriations Chair Rob Mayer](#), with Senators [Scott Rupp](#), [Kurt Schaeffer](#), [Joan Bray](#) and [Tim Green](#).

On the House side, [Budget Chair Allen Ictet](#) heads the conferees for all 13 bills, joined by Representatives [Rick Stream](#) and [Ryan Silvey](#). Other House members...

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With Only 2 Months Left, Another \$45 Million Cut from 2010 Budget

It is often said that if one is in a hole, and desires not to be in a deeper hole, one must stop digging.

Yet, if one is in free fall, and desires not to fall any farther, is it really useful to advise that one must stop falling?

Whatever the answer to that question may be, the fact is that the revenue the state of Missouri is taking in each month, compared to what was expected, [continues to fall](#).

State tax collections this April are down 19% from April 2009. New tax breaks for wealthy retirees – enacted in 2008 over the objections of MASW and other tax justice advocates – combined with the terrible economic situation, have brought us to this:

The average income tax paid to Missouri is down nearly 30% from last year, while tax refunds are up about 8%.

So [Governor Jay Nixon](#) announced another \$45 million in cuts from this year's budget, with only two months and a week left in this budget year!

[Most of these cuts](#) are from education and health care related spending.

2011 Budget

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Other House members participate only on certain bills: [Rep. Sara Lampe](#) on HBs 2001, 02, 03, 04, 05, 08 & 13; [Rep. Chris Kelly](#) on HBs 2001, 03, 12 & 13; [Rep. Rachel Bringer](#) on HBs 2002, 05, 06, 07, 09, 10, 11 & 12; [Rep. Sam Komo](#) on HBs 2004 & 07; [Rep. Belinda Harris](#) on HBs 2006, 08 & 09; and [Rep. Kiki Curls](#) on HBs 2010 & 11.

The chief difference between the House version and the Senate version is that the House used some \$300 million in federal special assistance money that has not yet been appropriated by the U.S. Congress, whereas the Senate did not.

Gov. Nixon, who originally used that same \$300 million in the budget he proposed in January, now says that money, if it comes, should be saved for the state's 2012 budget. Nixon himself has said the legislature should budget for about \$500 million less than he proposed in January.

This means the budget worked on by the conference committees will make permanent the elimination of thousands of state jobs already cut or held vacant in a hiring freeze, and make significant cuts in travel by state employees.

Having already slashed direct services to the most in-need Missourians to the lowest level federal law will allow, the state must now steal from its own employees to balance the budget.

Certainly Missouri's hotels and restaurants will be helped by further cutbacks in travel by state employees. And everybody knows that the best way to put people back to work is to eliminate jobs and lay more people off.

[FIGHT THE INSANITY – JOIN MASW NOW](#)

Budget Always Balanced on Backs of Poor – Why Not Backs of Rich?

Year after year, Missouri pays a high price for its low taxes. People with treatable medical conditions are denied treatment. We all lose out on the contributions that would have been made by people who just needed a little help, but our state did not have the resources to help.

One widely used definition of insanity is, "continuing to do the same thing but expecting a different outcome."

So, since balancing our state budget year after year on the backs of the poor really is not working out, why not try something different?

One year, just to see what it's like, why not balance the budget on the backs of the rich?

Maybe, possibly, perhaps, it could just be that the backs of the rich are stronger, and could more easily bear the burden of balancing the state's budget.

Social Justice Advocate Recognized

[Rep. Jeanette Mott Oxford](#), sponsor of the Tax Justice for a Healthy Missouri bill ([HB 2034](#)), who was presented with the Elaine Aber Humanitarian Award at MASW's 109th Annual Conference last year, is in line for another well-deserved honor.

The [Eden Theological Seminary](#) will award Rep. Oxford an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters at its 2010 Graduation. Eden is recognizing her years of advocacy for social justice, both as a legislator, and in her prior work as Executive Director of the Reform Organization of Welfare (ROWEL) and other causes.