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Committees  
Joint Legislative Ethics Committee  
Legislative Service Commission  
Rules and Reference

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**William G. Batchelder**  
Republican Leader

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July 9, 2009

The Honorable Ted Strickland  
Governor, State of Ohio  
Ohio Statehouse  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Provided by  
**GONGWER**  
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Dear Governor Strickland:

As you know, we are currently more than a week past the deadline for the approval of a balanced state budget. As the budget process has moved forward, the challenging times we are facing have grown more evident. According to the Office of Budget and Management, the state is facing a \$3.2 billion shortfall, which by many speculations will continue to grow.

What has been most distressing is to see the constituents we are privileged to serve stuck in the middle of heated debates. In the past month my colleagues and I in the Ohio House have heard from those who serve the disabled and the elderly on proposed cuts that will hurt the most vulnerable among us. We have received numerous phone calls and e-mails from those who oppose your proposed cuts that will inevitably force local libraries to close, shutting down access at a time when these services are most needed.

We will not take lightly the responsibility we have to the people of Ohio to serve their best interests. We are entrusted to find solutions to the difficulties the state is confronting and improve Ohio. I know that you, as a dedicated public servant, have taken on this duty as seriously as my colleagues and I in the Legislature. It is a difficult time for all of us.

In light of this responsibility, I am writing to make it known that several House Republican proposals to correct the state budget and move Ohio forward have been silenced. My colleagues and I have brought forward numerous alternatives which would provide long-term answers to the economic and budgetary crisis in which the state finds itself. To date, these proposals have been shunned from the proper democratic process in the Ohio House.

Prior to the State of the State address, I stood with several of my Republican colleagues and offered a plan which would reorganize state government to run as efficiently as possible. This reorganization within our government has not happened in over half of a century. As Ohio's families are being forced to make budgetary decisions and be more efficient with their finances, it is time for their government to do the same. House Bill 25 would implement this plan to save the state nearly \$1 billion a year. Regrettably, House Democrats blocked this proposal as an amendment to the budget and failed to allow any committee hearings on the plan.



Additionally, House Republicans have offered yet another measure that when fully implemented would save Ohio nearly \$122 million a year. House Bill 240 would put into action many cost-saving changes to Ohio's Medicaid system, based on recommendations from a performance audit. Improving the efficiency of Medicaid will not only save Ohio money but will allow the state to continue to offer vital services to those who need them the most. Again, House Democrats denied this proposal as an amendment to the budget and have not allowed a single committee hearing on the bill.

House Republicans have offered two additional bills which would continue to provide performance audits and investigate the efficacy of state government spending. House Bills 65 and 66 have the potential to save the state hundreds of millions of dollars, while at the same time making Ohio's government work better for its citizens. These bills, which could be a part of the solution to our current problems, have been given no hearings before the Ohio House.

My colleagues and I know that there are inefficiencies in state government that are causing the misuse of tax dollars. These misused funds could be better spent to ensure that our libraries remain open for all Ohioans, especially those who need access to these services to search for employment. The savings realized by improved government operations could be spent to protect the services for those who need them the most – our children, elderly and disabled. The lack of discussion and consideration of these issues is putting the most vulnerable Ohioans at risk.

As state revenues have continued to decline, the state has repeatedly snipped away at government spending retroactively; relied on the use of one-time money; and instituted accounting maneuvers to keep the budget in balance. Each of these is a temporary fix. What has yet to be seen is a coordinated, proactive attempt to diminish the cost of government by improving the way it operates.

It is disingenuous to the citizens of this state to move forward with deep cuts to services and undeveloped proposals to establish new revenue streams when all cost-saving options have not been explored. As such, we are calling for a public conversation on how the state might make the elimination of wasteful spending a priority and develop long-term solutions to Ohio's budgetary problems. In addition, I am requesting that you consider the above mentioned proposals and any other cost-saving measures to assist with the current budget and beyond.

Sincerely,



William G. Batchelder  
Republican Leader  
Ohio House of Representatives

P.S. For your review, I have included a current newspaper column regarding the need to reduce government spending and three past editorials on the reorganization of state government.

Cc: The Honorable Bill Harris, President of the Ohio Senate  
The Honorable Armond Budish, Speaker of the Ohio House  
The Honorable Capri Cafaro, Minority Leader of the Ohio Senate