

State Representative Peggy Scott

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NEWS COLUMN EMAIL UPDATE: MARCH 6, 2009

Greetings from the Capitol,

With the announcement of the budget forecast, it's been a busy week in St. Paul. Here's a sampling of the highlights.

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1. Budget Forecast

This week the budget forecast in Minnesota became more bleak than before. The budget deficit our state is currently facing is \$6.3 billion. Because Minnesota will be accepting some money from the federal government with the stimulus package the deficit the Legislature needs to fill is \$4.5 billion.

Taking money from the federal government raises concerns for me. By taking money we will be unable to effectively get to the root of the problem which is spending. The strings with this money require the state to spend no less than we did in the previous biennium in the areas of health and human services.

The problem is, much of the growth in HHS is completely unsustainable. In fact, some of those who cried foul with the HHS "cuts" in the Governor's proposed budget weren't being totally honest. What the Governor proposed was to reduce the proposed HHS increases from the 20 percent it was expected to grow down to 10 percent. These programs were never in danger of being cut, but they were in line for some long overdue reform.

These tough financial times means our task of balancing the state budget will be extremely difficult. Tough choices will need to be made. We will have to look at the budget priorities and decide where the money needs to be spent. Just as families have to make decisions between priorities (like paying the mortgage, heating, and filling up the gas tank) and wants (like going out to eat, or to the movies).

Throughout the budget debate, I will continue to work with my fellow Representatives to make sure the state budget is balanced without raising taxes on the hardworking families of our area.

2. Meeting With Local Residents

So far this session I have had the honor of meeting with several people from our local communities at my office in St. Paul. It is one of the highlights of my day when I can sit down with local people and talk about the issues. Recently I've met with several student groups, nurses, and other professionals from our area.

If you are ever at the Capitol I would encourage you to contact my office so we can set up a time to meet. You can call my office at (651) 296-4231

And I would also encourage you to contact me on any legislative issue or questions you may have. You can reach me via email at rep.peggy.scott@house.mn, or by U.S. Mail at Rep. Peggy Scott, 225 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve you.

Sincerely,
Peggy