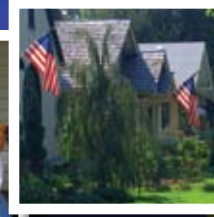




STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Dan Leonard
 200 W. WASHINGTON STREET • INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204

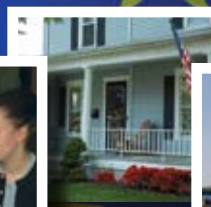
2009 Legislative Wrap-Up

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Legislative Wrap-Up



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What important issues are facing our community today, in your opinion?

Please feel free to e-mail your thoughts to me at h50@iga.in.gov, post your comments on my Web site at www.in.gov/h50, or return this card with your comments below.

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Taxpayers are Winners in New State Budget

I believe the new state budget, based on solid common-sense principles, is a success for Hoosier taxpayers.

The budget is a bipartisan compromise, receiving support from Democrats and Republicans alike. Sound fiscal principles and practical solutions remained an important influence.

The budget contains the state's fiscal roadmap for the next two years. Some highlights of the budget:

- No general tax increases.
- Maintains at least \$1 billion in state reserves.
- Uses one-time federal stimulus money responsibly, including statewide infrastructure and university construction projects.
- It does not deplete trust funds or other dedicated money for operating expenses.

My colleagues and I outlined those standards early in the process and did not waver. While many states are cutting overall education spending, raising taxes or both, this budget does neither. It even promises more support for education through additional funding. In addition, the "education trigger" would allot 50 percent of state revenue to education when income exceeds revenue projections.

Statewide public education receives what I believe is solid support:

- K-12 education gained an average increase of 1.1 percent in calendar year 2010 and 0.3 percent in calendar year 2011.
- The budget funds K-12 anticipated enrollment increases at growing public schools.
 - The state's higher education scholarship grants program receives increases of 6 percent in fiscal year 2010 and 3 percent in fiscal year 2011.

I believe this budget is the best we can do for Indiana right now, given the economic turmoil we are presently in; that's why I voted for it.



Rep. Leonard speaks with an Army National Guardsman.



Rep. Leonard talking with a page.

Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund

I could not support what I believe to be one of the largest tax increases on Hoosier businesses in state history. HEA 1379 raises taxes on 75,000 Hoosier businesses, large and small, by an estimated \$650 million over the next two years with the goal of shoring up the state's insolvent Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. However, this huge tax increase could cause employers to lay off employees – not to mention that estimates show this plan will not fix the fund's insolvency. The House Democrats, who unanimously supported the bill, have consistently said job creation is their top priority. I fear this new tax increase on those that provide jobs will only serve to put more Hoosiers out of work.

Access for Service Animals

Guarantees that a person with a disability is entitled to be accompanied by a service animal (instead of a guide dog) in places of public accommodations (buildings, parks, restaurants, shopping centers) without an extra charge. Requires that an employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor management committee allow an employee with a disability to keep a service animal with the employee at all times.

Huntington and Whitley counties making major moves

Huntington and Whitley counties have qualified for a number of grants to make infrastructure improvements to the area. More grants are being awarded every week. Check my Web site for the latest projects coming to our community. A few recent grants include:

- \$2.5 million to Huntington City for upgrades to Etna Avenue.
- \$2.9 million to Columbia City to upgrade S.R. 205. The upgrades will widen the road to four lanes to accommodate increased traffic around Morsche Park and the new Whitley Parkview hospital.
- \$129,000 to Huntington City for the clean-up of a leaking underground storage tank. The former gas station has fallen into disrepair and become an environmental hazard. This money will allow the site to be cleaned up and put to good use.

Military Family Relief Fund

Access to the Military Family Relief Fund was expanded to include all active-duty personnel and not just those in the National Guard or reserves. The fund now may provide education and employment assistance. This law should give military families peace of mind during a stressful time, when family members are serving overseas.



Dan Leonard

State Representative • House District 50

Important Contact Information for Representative Dan Leonard

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