



.....CHRIS Peace
SERVING THE
97TH District

Peace Progress

Session Update Week 5

Message From Chris

We started off this week with a marathon nine-hour floor session - the longest floor session this year. Thursday also saw an extended floor session as we debated proposed changes to the current biennial budget. By the time Friday rolled around, many legislators were ready for a chance to go back home to their districts to be with their families and constituents.

Spotlight On: The House and Senate Budgets

One of the most significant items left for legislative consideration is the state budget. In the House, we approved our plan to revise the 2 year state budget, and the State Senate approved their plan. These plans will be rejected by the respective houses and send the bill into "conference." The conference report of the budget is due before the close of session. As in most years there differences in the approaches each body took to meet the needs of Virginians. In crafting our budget we wanted to reflect the voters' wishes

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expressed in the November 2010 election, they want government to put fiscal discipline first.

On the House side, our primary objective was to limit new spending, reducing the amount of authorized debt, setting aside money in the state Rainy Day Fund, and reducing the burdens on small businesses.

In particular, the House budget addresses the overall structural imbalance by rolling back the accelerated sales tax for 98% of affected retailers, increasing our reserve payment to the Rainy Day Fund by an additional \$64 million above the required \$50 million payment, and reducing the state's authorized debt by \$120 million. The House budget reduces or eliminates funding for a number of programs.

In contrast, the Senate budget:

- Does not reduce the accelerated sales tax for a single retailer
- Provides only an additional \$20 million payment into the Rainy Day Fund, \$44 million less than was approved in the House budget
- Authorizes nearly \$700 million in new state supported debt, including nearly \$300 million to pay for the construction of a new government building in Richmond
- When you add it all up, the Senate's budget equals more spending, more debt, and no relief for Virginia small businesses.

As both budgets have passed their respective chambers, it is now up to members of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees to work together to put forward a final budget that both the Republican-controlled House and Democrat-controlled Senate can agree upon.

Visitors

This week were visited by a group of Realtors from the District, a group from Spotsylvania Medical Center, a group from Mary Washington Healthcare, and 4-H students stopped by to say hello. We were delighted to see Jo Ann Lankford of



Delegate Peace with India Johnson of Ruther Glen

Providence Forge, India Johnson, a J. Sargent student from Ruther Glen, John Shinholser of Hanover, Pastor Melvin Adams of King William, and Rebeccah Collins of Mechanicsville.



Peace visits with King William Supervisor Danny Wright and Rev. Dean Collings

I was honored to welcome Rev. Dean Collings to the Capitol to offer the opening prayer for our floor session on Tuesday, February 8. Reverend Collings is pastor at Freedom Fellowship Ministries of King William. Rev. Collings has served as Chaplain with the Henrico Police Department and the King William Sheriff's Department.

With such a heavy emphasis on extended floor sessions that are typical of Crossover week, the number of visitors to the General Assembly dropped off this week. While the number of visitors has dwindled, the enthusiasm of those who do visit always re-energizes me and reminds me that I am here to serve you.

As always, my staff and I are here in Richmond to serve you. We want to hear what you think about the legislation pending before the House, or if there's anything we can do to help you in dealing with a state government agency. My office can be reached at (804) 698-1097 or via the Internet at Delcpeace@house.virginia.gov. If you are planning to visit Richmond during Session, I encourage you to visit me in Room 527.

Thank you again for the honor to serve as your Delegate.

Chris Peace

Media

[Click to watch video of Delegate Peace speaking to HB 1465: a measure to prohibit illegal immigrants enrollment at taxpayer colleges and universities](#)

[Video of Rev. Dean Collings opening prayer](#)

Contact Me

My office takes the responsibility of serving seriously. My staff is available during the week to assist you with your concerns; I am also readily available. I encourage you to contact us. Please continue to contact me whenever you have concerns or issues of importance to our community and the Commonwealth.

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