



LETTER TO THE EDITOR: State Representative Avery Bourne

by State Representative Avery Bourne (R-Raymond)
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Two Years. Illinois has been operating without a budget for nearly two full years. This is unacceptable. Despite what is often said, the fact remains that Democrats have the votes to end it on their own – if they want to. Democrats enjoy large majorities in both the Illinois House of Representatives and State Senate. Yet, instead of working with us to pass a budget, or instead of passing one on their own; they'd rather point the finger of blame at the Governor for their own failure to do their job.

Don't listen to their excuses. The Governor presented a budget. Speaker Madigan has never, in his 32 years as Speaker, used a governor's proposed budget as a basis for his own budget. He has always done it his way. The responsibility to pass a budget lies with the General Assembly. The State Constitution is clear, "The General Assembly by law shall make appropriations for all expenditures of public funds by the State. Appropriations for a fiscal year shall not exceed funds estimated by the General Assembly to be available during that year." Not only must there be a budget, it must be balanced.

I have consistently made clear that I am ready and willing to work with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to find agreement on a balanced budget that fixes the long-term issues facing our state while respecting the priorities of both Republicans and Democrats.

However, Democrats recently proposed yet another "stopgap" spending plan; not a budget. A budget balances spending with projected revenue. A budget prioritizes the needs of vital social services, state universities, community colleges and other priorities without adding to the state's staggering backlog of past-due bills, currently more than \$12.9 Billion.

It is disappointing, but not surprising, that Democrats are trying to ram through another stopgap spending plan instead of passing a truly balanced budget. This shows us that House Democrats do not intend to get a budget done before 2019. That is unacceptable. Our community colleges, universities and social service providers and entire state deserve better. Their plan does nothing to address the state's long term challenges and simply strings them along a few more months.

Why are we not balancing our budget? Why are we doing nothing to grow the economy, create jobs and save our state universities and community colleges from the brink of collapse? Why are we continuing to push our problems on to the next generation? Why will the House Democrats not work across the aisle? These questions deserve answers from the Democrats who control the Illinois House and Senate.

We need to work together to pass a balanced state budget, period.

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