



Rep. Bourne calls on House to adhere to constitution by adopting revenue estimate

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LITCHFIELD - State Representative Avery Bourne (R-Raymond) joined her colleagues and House Republican Leader Jim Durkin (R-Western Springs) in calling on Speaker Madigan to begin a responsible budget making process. The first step in fulfilling this constitutionally-required process is to adopt a revenue estimate on which to base the state budget. Leader Durkin sent the letter this week and reiterated his desire to begin work immediately to create this vitally important foundation for the Fiscal Year 2019 budget.

Illinois currently has nearly \$8.3 billion in unpaid bills and a structural FY18 budget deficit of \$1.7 billion. The Illinois Constitution requires the General Assembly to pass a balanced budget that anticipates the amount of revenue throughout the year. The General Assembly has failed to do this for the past three years, instead only voting on a budget bill when finalized. Historically, a bipartisan revenue estimate that is based on projected tax revenue and funds owed to Illinois from the federal government is the foundation of such a budget.

Rep. Bourne stated, “For years, the General Assembly has failed to meet its constitutional responsibility of passing a balanced budget. This is unacceptable. We sent this letter to ask the House Democratic Caucus to come to the table and start this important work immediately. We want to work collaboratively in the General Assembly to craft and pass a balanced budget. This begins with an agreement on the amount of revenue we expect throughout the year - a revenue estimate. ”

A copy of the letter is below:

Speaker Madigan:

With nearly \$8.3 billion in unpaid bills and a structural FY18 budget deficit of \$1.7 billion, it is time for the General Assembly to get serious about working on a sustainable

and balanced FY19 budget to help put Illinois on a path towards fiscal solvency. We can no longer afford the uncertainty that wildly out of balance budgets bring to our residents, students and business owners.

As always, the House Republicans stand ready to work together on a balanced budget that respects the priorities of both parties but to do that, we must return to the normal budgeting process which begins with a revenue estimate.

At the most basic level, without a revenue estimate, our appropriations committees don't know how much they have to allocate for their assigned departments and agencies. But even more importantly, it is required by state law:

The House and Senate by joint resolution shall adopt or modify such estimates as may be appropriate. The joint resolution shall constitute the General Assembly's estimate, under paragraph B of Section 2 of Article VIII of the Constitution, of funds estimated to be available during the next fiscal year (25 ILCS 155/4(a))

It is also required by Subsection (b) of Section 2 of Article VIII of the Constitution of Illinois:

Appropriations for a fiscal year shall not exceed funds estimated by the General Assembly to be available during that year.

A revenue estimate also serves as an important form of taxpayer protection. By skipping the revenue estimate, as has become custom in the General Assembly, and just appropriate according to our wishes, we will likely continue to spend more than we have available, which will trigger even more tax increases. We must do better.

So today, we are ready to start the normal budgeting process which begins with working together with the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Revenue and the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability to generate a revenue estimate. In this process, our caucus will be represented by Rep. Keith Wheeler.