

Budget Committee Final Report 2010-2011

Committee Members: Kenneth Anderson, Stephen Ebbs, Michelle Kibby-Faglier, Mary Lamb, Douglas Lind, Ben Rodriguez, James Wall and Allan Karnes (Chair)

Although the Illinois Income tax was increased by 2%, the state budget picture remains grim. The Governor's budget proposed a flat budget for Higher Education, but that plan was contingent on an 8.5 billion dollar borrowing plan to liquidate the backlog of unpaid bills. It does not appear there is sufficient support in the legislature for the borrowing plan. As a result, state support for higher education is likely to go down once again.

In addition to the bleak prospect for state support, state pensions are under great scrutiny. Despite the protections offered in the Illinois Constitution, there are those who are of the opinion that benefits going forward may be legally altered. There is a plan to dramatically increase the employee cost of maintaining the defined benefit plan with a choice of opting out into a defined contribution plan.

The year has seen the failure of negotiations with four of the campus unions, resulting in a declared impasse and the imposition of one year contract language upon the affected bargaining units. Many of the issues the budget committee might consider have been wrapped into the labor negotiations. As a result, the committee offered just one resolution this academic year, and it was not approved by the Senate.

As Chair of the Budget Committee, I represented the Senate on the Chancellor's Budget and Planning Committee. Under the Cheng Administration, the Committee has evolved into a true policy making body. I served on two subcommittees, Budget Rules and Revenue Enhancement.