



PORKER OF THE MONTH

May '09

Ohio House of Representatives

Tuition freezes at state colleges and "free money" for road, water, and art projects. What else could you ask for? How about a future without paying back the debt of past generations?

Thanks to Ohio House of Representative Democrats a future of not paying back the debts of past generations is a dream; the possible reality for all Ohioans is a state budget that will be funded by money that does not belong to us. The first is also why the Ohio House of Representatives, specifically Ohio House Democrats, are the Porker of the Month for May 2009.

Ohio House Democrats approved a two-year state budget that will cost the state a whopping \$54 billion. What does the state need that much money for? According to the approved budget, the money will fund dozens of government programs ranging from schools and prisons to Medicaid.

Why the huge amount of spending? Democratic Representative Jennifer Garrison said, "we are investing in job creation, we are investing in education, we are investing in those hurt by this tough economy, we are providing more money for food banks; people need to eat when they lose their jobs."

Big chunks of the money are going towards what Garrison describes. Education is getting more than \$900 million dollars. Education is always a huge expense for states, especially Ohio; and almost everyone would agree that an investment in the education of future generations is important. But is spending money that does not belong to Ohio the correct solution?

More than eight billion dollars of the state budget the House passed is coming from Federal Stimulus money. That's almost 15% that does not belong to Ohio. This money is also not coming from revenue-generating businesses in the state.

If you are asking who cares, think about this: instead of making tough decisions about what programs to cut or what jobs to eliminate, Ohio is taking the easy route of accepting money that will only be around for the next two years. Politicians

in the state are refusing to decide between funding for soup kitchens and money for keeping companies in Ohio. Will there be Federal Stimulus Money for the next two-year budget? Most likely not — and then what? Programs will have to be cut and tax breaks and grants for businesses halted. By passing this budget, the House of Representatives in Ohio is just spending – spending money that does not belong to them, but belongs to future Ohioans.

Some people are taking notice though: Pari Sabety, Governor Strickland's budget director, has admitted that in order for

"Ohio House Democrats approved a two-year state budget that will cost the state a whopping \$54 billion."

Ohio to sustain the increased spending in the approved budget, the economy must make a recovery.

Republican Senator Jon Husted also sees problems with the passage of a huge budget consisting of so much stimulus money: "it's the worst of both worlds: dramatic cuts and huge tax increases. That is what happens when you pay all of your bills with one-time money."

Husted describes the stimulus money as "one-time" money that likely, will not be there in two years; however, the programs being funded will continue. By using one-time money to fund these programs now, the programs will likely be thrown by the wayside in the coming years.

Still, after four hours of partisan debate on the floor, the State budget for fiscal year 2010-2011 received 53 "yes" votes and 45 "no" votes. All votes for the bill came from Democratic representatives, while every vote against came from the Republican side. The Ohio Senate passed the bill as well, but not before first cutting out \$650 million dollars in general revenue funding; \$1 billion total was slashed. Now, the bill is off to a House-Senate committee. ☹

Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions
88 East Broad St., Ste. 1120 • Columbus, OH 43215-3506
(614) 224-4422 • (614) 224-4644 FAX • buckeye@buckeyeinstitute.org

