

04/09/2018

Greetings Fabulous Fortieth District,

In a case heard by the Supreme Court in 1819, Daniel Webster said, "An unlimited power to tax involves, necessarily, a power to destroy." Keeping taxes low is a fundamental principle for all levels of government. Less taxes means more money in your pocketbook. History tells us of the excessive taxes Britain burdened upon the colonies without their representation. The very reason they ventured across the Big Pond from Europe was due to the high discriminatory taxes that stifled economic growth and penalized certain groups of people. Free markets and limited taxes equals maximizing your wealth.

Tennessee has and continues to follow the formula of a low tax base. Currently, we are the lowest taxed and lowest debt state in the nation. By cutting taxes, we have boosted our economic growth due to years of strategic, fiscally conservative, and thoughtful investments across our great state. Because of you, the Folks of the Fortieth, you have afforded me the task to be vigilant and to ensure limited government remains contained. High Tax States like California, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and New York, could learn some lessons from our red state. Check out the website howmanytalks.com. The data will fascinate you!

A week ago the Governor Haslam introduced his amendment for the fiscal year 2018-2019 budget proposal that will be considered by this 110th General Assembly. With a 37 billion dollar budget, this includes additional improvements for broadband, higher education, opioid addiction, and school safety. This budget amendment will be introduced to us in the final weeks of the legislative session. The budget is the final thing we will vote on and that is expected to be sometime in the middle of April.

To have a job and provide for your family is a blessing indeed. It is paramount that folks can take care of their families and in return make their communities a better place to live. By instituting work requirements for those who receive benefits from the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and TennCare, approximately 58,000 able-bodied adults who are not meeting the work requirements but still receiving assistance, will now be able to take part in the overabundance of jobs. Incentivizing them to move from dependency to self-sufficiency, HB1551 seeks to meet that goal. This legislation will not apply to Tennessee's Seniors or disabled residents.

When touring all my K-12 schools this past fall, I was asked by many of our teachers and principals to help give us relief from the complicating methods of state testing. HB2247 is designed to not only save 6M dollars on the cost of testing but will simplify testing methods for students as well. Not only that, it will free up additional resources by restoring the time lost in giving the tests, so teachers can do what they do best, TEACH! I will continue to work to make the testing process as seamless as possible and continue work to identify other areas where we can improve. Some of the best news I've heard in a long time that I would love to share is that last fall, high school graduation rates for the 2016-2017 school year reached 89.1% - the highest in recorded state history! Salute to our students and teachers!

Our National Motto - "In God We Trust" can now be displayed in schools across Tennessee. With passage of HB2368, perhaps this will help future generations of students better understand the importance of faith and remind them that the very bedrock of our Nation was built on the principles of The God of the Bible.

Because He Lives,
Terri Lynn Weaver