

05/02/2017

Greetings, Fabulous Folks of the Fortieth.

With the first half of the 110th General Assembly only a few days away from standing in recess, to say that session has been a whirlwind is a tremendous understatement, indeed! No other time in my working for District 40 can I recall the enormous amount of tension on the backs of all who were involved in the political landscape in Nashville. Both of the committees on which I served, Transportation and Education, had TV cameras every week ready to report on such topics as: The GasTax, Seatbelts on School Buses, School Vouchers, and In-State Tuition for Illegals. Now that committees are closed until 2018, it truly is a little easier to breathe.

However, I confess to you, and ask your forgiveness for, the lack of weekly “LOOPS” that were to be in your inboxes during Legislative session. Many of you commented on the numerous news reports you saw in which I made my stance on those hot-topic issues of the day very apparent. The Coffee Conversations throughout the district also kept me on the same page with those whom I am honored to serve. But the halls of the Plaza are a little quieter today and thus, the opportunity to share with you my thoughts about the up and coming budget that we, as a legislative body, are required by our state constitution to pass. We are expected to vote on it as early as Thursday of this week.

Herein lies the rub. According to Article II Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution, it says, “In no year shall the rate of growth of appropriations from state revenues exceed the estimated rate of growth of the state’s economy as determined by law.” In other words, the State Budget cannot grow more rapidly than the Tennessee economy. We measure the Tennessee economy by the average personal income growth by the citizens of the state. The Copeland Cap is a fiscal restraint that will keep government spending in check, and I gave an oath—my word—to uphold the Tennessee Constitution.

I voted against the Gas Tax because I saw it as a burden on those whom I represent. The working poor to middle class (me included) who drive up to and beyond 600 miles per week in their cars will pay the brunt of this tax, not to mention the small businesses who deliver goods who will not be exempt from any of those “historic tax cuts” given to the big guys. The “biggest tax decrease in Tennessee history” gimmick only gives permission to spend without restraint instead of using the existing revenues to meet the needs of priorities. And Yes, transportation is and must be treated as a priority! There most certainly is an addiction problem in our state, and it is not just opiates, but government never having enough of the people’s purse.

So, I will stand in support of protecting the Constitution by upholding the Copeland Cap, because I gave my word to do just that, even if I stand alone!

Blessings,
Terri Lynn