

05/29/2016

Greetings, Fabulous Folks of the Fortieth,

As the Memorial Day holiday Weekend is here, it is the Weaver household's hope that you are reminded of the great men and women of our armed forces who have given all to protect and defend our liberties and our nation. While many of us enjoy backyard BBQs with our family and friends, camping, attending community celebrations, or perhaps are working to spruce up around the house, let us not lose sight that this weekend represents the price of freedom and that it is our duty NOT to forget.

Just a little over a month ago, the 109th General Assembly completed the People's business. Since sine die, my husband, Mike, and I have been working on projects here at the homeplace, doing due diligence just trying to get our house in order after a very intense legislative session. It amazes me how the cobwebs grow! The grandkids had their last day of school, and finished the year each making honor roll, and the younger one made citizen of the year! Papa's and GeGe's eyes are welled over with "wet joy." The summer months will fly by for sure. It is my intent to spend time with the boys, my parents, and family before digging into the race that is before me: re-election 2016 following the August primaries.

In order for you to have time to read "The Loop," allow me to recap, if you will, only a few of the highlights. But believe me, completing session could not have come quickly enough, for it was all-consuming and contemptuous, indeed. But you elected me to perform and protect values and principles that insure our liberties. You, the Fortieth, (plus my grandsons) inspire me to pursue and press hard and to NOT back down.

Our Constitutional Duty is to Balance a Budget. Revenues showed healthy trends collecting \$350M, revealing Tennessee is in a very stable overall fiscal position.

Some Star Highlights:

\$34.9B balanced budget with no new debt and all capital projects funded with cash. Projects for parks, veterans, military, corrections, and children's services

Historic investment in K-12 education the largest in state history, salary increases for Teachers, plus 12-month insurance benefits: fully funded BEP

\$1.7B for Higher Education: \$24M non-recurring for Drive to 55 Program Capacity Fund

TennCare's total budget if \$10.9B, \$54M to assist intellectual and developmental disabilities

Funding to increase the number of Drug Recovery Courts from 41 to 50

Funding to add 12 new Highway Patrol Officers, plus additional salary to our commissioned Officers ensuring troopers will receive 100% of their salary survey funding

\$37M Property tax relief for low income seniors or disabled veterans funded

\$142M repaid to HWY Fund, \$42M designated to counties for local road and bridge projects

\$18M Public Safety Act: help reduce state recidivism and efficiently sentence violent offenders

\$27M to reduce Hall Income Tax, a 17% reduction from last year. 2022 will see the total elimination of this tax. Record Revenues prove people energize the economy when taxes are low.

\$100M to State Rainy Day Fund: total balance to date, \$668M. Highest balance since 2008. Tennessee remains one of the lowest Debt States in the Nation, and we continue to reduce debt at a rapid rate, meaning lower debt translates into lower interest payments on money owed, which means more savings for Tennessee taxpayers. Fiscal policies implemented in our state are paying dividends to the People's purse! Salute!

You asked for fiscal responsibility to be a priority, looking forward. This budget is a good one--not perfect--but we can certainly count our many blessings one by one.

HB1772 made a strong step forward in strengthening asset forfeitures laws to prevent unfair seizures of property.

HB1545 increases the penalty of TennCare Fraud. Fraud hinders the state to serve those who need the services most. Those that steal from the welfare rolls should be removed and punished harshly! Imprisonment went from 1-6 years, to 2-12 years, plus higher fines.

HB1476, Pro-Grandparent Visitation, aids grandparents caught in a loophole when the child has been removed from the custody of the parents. This ensures that child is not forced into losing another loving relationship after losing his or her parents. Now the judge can grant visitation to both sets of grandparents, if they all meet the burden of proof and the judge deems both sides worthy of custody and visitation.

Again, there were many other good issues on education, Second Amendment, and criminal justice that were passed and

signed into law.

Members were awarded Top Conservative honors by the American Conservative Union (ACU), the nation's oldest and largest grassroots conservative organization. Your Rep holds a 100% scorecard rating which is the organization's highest and most revered honor available to lawmakers. It is an honor to serve beside other members who were awarded, as well. Tennessee General Assembly was also named the MOST Conservative Legislature IN THE COUNTRY! Because we are committed to fiscal conservatism, cutting taxes, increasing competition and attracting new business to the state CPAC, Conservative Political Action Conference, granted us that title.

Calling on Feds to respect State Sovereignty in accordance with the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the Bully Pulpit of D.C. is being challenged concerning the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP), and Tennessee is leading the charge. SJR467, which I sponsored in the House, is charting new waters, for we have seen unprecedented federal overreach during the Obama Administration. Now we seek clarity and definition concerning the relationship between the federal government and our state when it comes to violating our Tenth Amendment, mandating Tennessee to pay for a federal program from which we have formally withdrawn. Tennessee has no voice at the table, let alone the facts of risk it places upon the citizenry and our state due to these turbulent times. This lawsuit process will cost the taxpayer ZERO DOLLARS! It is a win-win-win! Really, my friends, we have a serious problem with states rights in numerous issues (education, 2nd Amendment, EPA, Healthcare, Department of Justice) concerning federal/state relationships. My colleagues and I are ready to start the process and that is to take back what in reality over the years the states gave up (liberty) just for the almighty dollar. This process is worth getting our Constitution back to its original intent and the values of our founding principles. Resisting the wrongdoing of decrees and edicts comes with a price, but if Tennessee can be the champion of doing the right thing, well, it is work worth doing. By far SJR467 has been a labor of duty, doing what I can do where I am. The folks of the Fortieth elected me to protect and fulfill my oath. Believing we have the greatest country afforded to us by the many sacrifices of years gone by, our Constitutional Republic, IF we can keep it, is the best place on earth to live. I mean really, where else would you live? Though not without our flaws, we must not lose sight of the value of doing good and the hope to which we are all called: the work of restoring lives, structures, and our communities.

I close with words of wisdom from a seven year old "Citizen of the Year", our grandson Wynn, who when asked, "What did you do to be awarded this honor?", replied "Oh be good at school and just do your work." I love the simplicity of a child.

I am looking forward to seeing you "Folks of the Fortieth" at a community event or coffee gathering somewhere where you are!

Blessings,
Terri Lynn