

Senate Republican Statements on 3%

Senator Bishop's statement is as follows:

We spent the better part of an hour debating whether or not we have the money to do certain things, and one of those is a pay increase for employees. And I'd just like to respond very simply by saying no, we can't. It's very obvious that we can't, yet we spend all this time debating and discussing, and we ignore the facts. In fact, for the past three years, we've been mired down in a discussion and a debate about diminishing revenues and what we should do about that; that is an unwinnable challenge for any of us. We have no control.

The harsh reality is we can't afford the government that we have, and as we sit here today, we continue in denial. The denial has reached a level that I have never, could never, predict. We are now at a point where we are looking at the perfect storm, and we are in the heart of the perfect storm.

Consider the facts. The *Wall Street Journal* listed them; many other papers have listed them as well. Consumer confidence is still down in this country and in this state. The poor continue to feel poor, and some of our friends and neighbors and many others feel poor as well. Most people don't see the end of this crisis—on the outside.

We're seeing record lows in light-vehicle production and sales. That's the bread and butter of this economy, and it's going to continue to get bad in this state until we resolve that. Retail sales are down and remain at record levels that we haven't seen since 1947. Housing starts and property values continue to plummet. Contractions in Michigan's economy have thrown 15 percent of our state residents into unemployment. We've lost almost 1 million jobs this decade; a full third of those happened in the past two years.

We are 55 percent higher than the rest of the nation in unemployment. And if you look at the city of Detroit, our urban center, it is about 30 percent unemployment. It's way higher than any other similar heavy manufacturing base like Pittsburgh, for example, which has a 7.7 percent unemployment, or Cleveland at 11.4 percent

Not to mention personal income continues to fall. That's a statistic we haven't seen since 1958. Michigan is one of two states that is actually losing population. And as people leave this state, guess what? It's less people contributing to our economic base, which means less dollars to this state—significantly less.

While these statistics are harsh, it's a reality. We can debate all day, but we can't change the facts. All of us have seen the impact on our families, friends, and neighbors. Everybody has seen the impact. Everybody is making adjustments, except state government. And we have the audacity to sit up here and debate this subject as to whether or not we can afford this.

As we debate this here locally, another storm looms larger nationally. The federal government since 1969 has spent more than it has. We've had to borrow to cover that. Our national debt has reached \$13 trillion. Our deficit is somewhere around \$3 trillion. And as we debate this in our state, we continue to ignore that fact too.

The U.S. dollar continues to lose ground globally. Inflation is soon to follow. The New York Stock Exchange is at a 60 percent rally for no apparent reason. Gold has reached new heights. As my colleague would say, hello.

We have a perfect storm here. And, if we are overly simplistic, we'll just address the symptoms and never address the real problem. You know, as we face the current crisis and that billion-dollar budget deficit that we have, we are talking about a \$400 million cut to our public schools, cuts to law enforcement, and local governments. As we decide what we do with that, we're all talking about paying our state employees more. So we are going to pass out pay increases while we cut public education and local government and law enforcement. How much sense does that make? It doesn't make sense. It does not sit well with me, and I do not support it.

The great President Ronald Reagan once said, "A leader once convinced a particular course of action as the right one, must have the determination to stick with it and be undaunted when the going gets tough." This may be a tough vote for some of you, but it's the right vote. Do the right thing.

Senator Cropsey's statement is as follows:

Though our state employees do a terrific job, they've been asked to do more with less for some time. If you take a look at the State Police, we all know we have fewer state troopers now than we have in the past. We know in some areas of budget, we'll actually have to beef it up because of the crime lab issue. The crime lab is full and overflowing and backlogged.

We have state employees there who are working their tails off, and it's just not enough. That's one area of the budget, I believe, we'll probably have to increase—in other areas too. I took a look at the judiciary budget, and I've been in touch with the

Court of Appeals judges and the Supreme Court justices, and taken a look at their staffs and many of their staff have taken several leave days in order to make their budgets balance also.

I have several prisons in my district. I always wonder how on earth do you pay a prison guard enough or a corrections officer enough for them to do the job that they do. The job that the State Police do and the job that the corrections officers do are priceless jobs, and we can never pay them enough. I think we all recognize that. Too often they are not appreciated. But they are doing a job, and they're doing a very good job. They're doing it under some tremendous financial stresses in these different departments.

There are jobs there that I would never want to do. I think of the people on the parole board. Even though these are not unionized jobs, they are jobs that I would challenge almost anybody here to say how they would like to go do that job, and then go home and try to sleep at night, knowing the pressure that they are under.

But I also have to take a look at the private sector, take a look at the jobs that have left, take a look at the tax base that is leaving, and take a look at the number people who are leaving. We just say we do not have the resources that we once had. We have not had the resources that we thought we were going to have; that the economy would sooner or later bounce back. We have been thinking that for the last eight years.

So we are really caught in a tough position. We are caught in a tough position of how to pay state employees adequately for the tremendous service that they do for the people of this state. But at the same time you say how do we make government run more efficiently and effectively and leaner, so that we don't have to continue to put more and more taxes on the tax paying public.

I appreciate the chairman of the Appropriations Committee and also the Democratic leader on Appropriations. But what I don't appreciate is when people get up and demagogue one way or another. I don't appreciate people getting up and saying hypocrisy when the Senate has taken this year a 23 percent decrease in our budgets. I don't appreciate people yelling hypocrisy when those very same people have been out there and have introduced a resolution to give an increase to their staff on the other side of the aisle. And, yes, a Senate resolution that was co-sponsored by the Senator across the aisle and co-sponsored by several of her colleagues, it would have given an increase to their staffs and only to their staffs, but yet, she gets up and cries hypocrisy. It is amazing the hypocrisy that I see. It is time that that person was called on it.

It was Senate Resolution No. 51, and everybody is going to be sharing the sacrifice, but the person crying hypocrisy is the one who wanted to make sure that her staff got

raises through Senate Resolution No. 51. People are losing their jobs and their homes. Our Democratic Governor has been pressuring state employees to give up more, and the private sector is asking to be paid more in taxes and in fees. Why on earth would anyone sponsor a resolution then to give their legislative staff salary increases when everybody is taking a cut?

Senator Pappageorge's statement is as follows:

Let's be clear about something at the very beginning. This is a subset of the state's public servants. I do not use the term "public employees." The Civil Service Commission has already cut the 3 percent pay increase for nonunion employees. This is not an antiunion vote. This is about sacrifice on the part of public servants.

In times of crisis, which everyone agrees we are in now, public servants should be the first to step up. That is why it is important in this instance to vote "yes" on this resolution. It's also fair. All public workers should be treated the same way, and therefore, I urge you to vote "yes" for this resolution.

I also give you the example of what happened with the State Police last fall. We told them that they were going to need to take a 5 percent decrease in pay. The answer from the top of the pyramid was, "No, we are not going to take a cut; we are going to send 82 troopers out the door"—troopers who were just graduated from trooper school. Do you know what was going on at the bottom of that pyramid? The 82 troopers said, "Sure, we will take a 5 percent cut, keep a job, and have health care." It is the same situation here.

The middle ground in all this talk about cuts and tax increases is to reduce the cost of government without sending anyone out the door. That is precisely what this resolution does. It reduces the cost of government without sending anyone out the door, and it is possible because public servants are going to have to sacrifice—a subset of those public servants will have to sacrifice.

Senator Jelinek's statement is as follows:

This is the real world and the real economy of 2010. Who in this body does not know of the economic crisis in this state and in this country? As much as we would all like a raise next year, it does not make sense in this economy. Private-sector employees

everywhere are taking cuts in pay and benefits. We are not proposing cuts in pay to state employees at this time; we are proposing to not raise pay by 3 percent.

It is our duty to provide a balanced budget in this state. This is a \$44 million General Fund part of that budget. There will certainly be more cuts to all people and departments in state government in the future. This is just a warmup. Come on, people, this is not a reflection on the good workers of this state. This is a necessity with more tough decisions coming. This is an effort to save jobs. Don't stand here and spew drivel about not making sacrifices ourselves. That's not true. We have made personal cuts. I have and I know all of my colleagues here have done the same.

We do care about and appreciate our state workers; so do the Michigan citizens. But those citizens are hurting, and they need us to help them by holding down costs. State employees know that as well. I have talked to several who understand and agree with what we are doing because they want to save their jobs and their fellow workers' jobs.

We have no choice. We must eliminate this raise, and ask everyone to join the effort to save jobs and balance our budget. We need a two-thirds vote to make this happen. So let's join together, work together, balance this coming year's budget, and save jobs by voting "yes" on this concurrent resolution.