



Senator Tim Sheldon

35th Legislative District

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2012 Budget Shortfall Survey

Dear Neighbor:

For two years, as the Great Recession has hammered households across our state, I've talked about how we've faced a fiscal crisis worse than any I've seen in my 22 years as a legislator. Well, revenues have continued to fall short and this year the picture is even worse. On top of the cuts we've made in public services in recent years, and despite the \$500 million we cut during the special legislative session in December, we still face a \$1.5 billion budget shortfall.

As we tackle this problem in the current legislative session, I want to hear your priorities and ideas. Here in Olympia, proposals range from steep cuts in public services, to a tax package, to a combination of the two. As we decide these difficult questions, I want to make sure your voice is heard and represented. Please fill out the attached survey and send your thoughts to my office. You can also fill out the survey online at my website, SenateDemocrats.wa.gov/Senators/Sheldon.

Sincerely,

Tim Sheldon

State Senator, 35th Legislative District

We need to prioritize the public services we need most

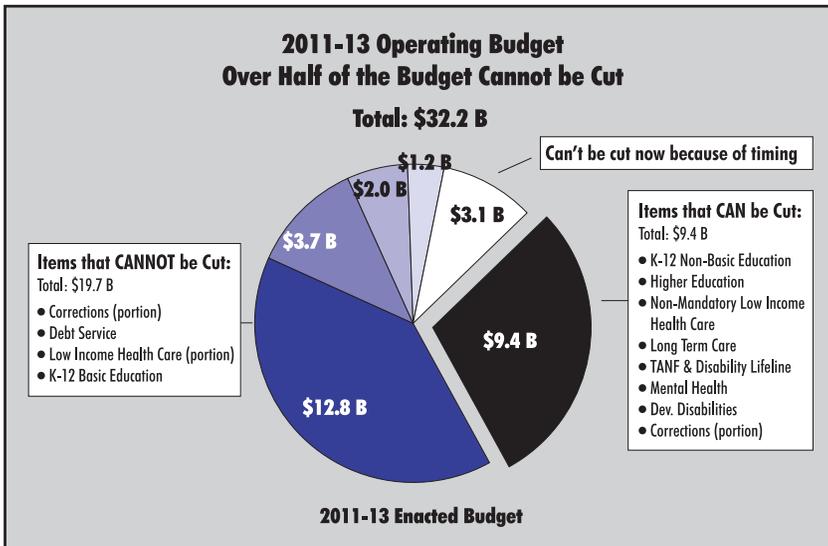
Of the state's 32.2 billion budget, \$19.7 billion consists of constitutionally protected services such as K-12 education, corrections, debt service and other areas that cannot legally be cut. Another \$3.1 billion consists of money that has already been spent during the front end of this bud-

get cycle. That leaves only \$9.4 billion in state funds from which we must make up the \$1.5 billion shortfall, assuming we want to leave a rainy day balance of \$500 for unanticipated future problems.

The question is whether we close the shortfall purely by cutting \$1.5 billion from our remaining public services, raise taxes to generate \$1.5 million in additional revenues, or settle on some combination of the two.

For instance, one proposal under consideration would be a tax package that lets voters "buy back" specific public services that would otherwise be cut if the package is not approved. I believe any "buy back" services should reflect the state's lowest priorities, not the highest — voters should not be held hostage by a proposal from Olympia that would cut their highest priorities if they vote not to increase taxes.

This makes survey question #2 particularly important. Please take a few minutes to help me make sure your preferences are heard as the Legislature makes the hard choices ahead.



Great progress on the sale of liquor; additional reforms to come

I'm happy to report that the state will finally be out of the liquor business as of June of this year.

As you know, I fought in the Legislature for this common-sense change every year since 1998. So I was delighted to see the voters of the state approve Initiative 1183 last fall and I credit the initiative organizers for giving the voters the choice. I love the initiative process because it can do what the Legislature couldn't.

Although the governor made a proposal to discontinue sharing profits and tax revenues from the sale of liquor with cities and counties — an action that would mean a budget cut of several hundred thousand dollars in Mason

County alone — I want to assure you that won't happen. I-1183, which is very similar to my past bills, expressly ensures the sharing of those revenues and guarantees our cities and counties their rightful distributions.

The sale of liquor is only one example of how reform can improve the way the state is run. I'm working with other moderate lawmakers on both sides of the aisle this session to identify and press for additional money-saving reforms in education, health care, government accountability and other areas. It's vital that we decrease spending to match revenue instead of spending more than the state brings in, and reforms are the best way to accomplish that.



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Survey Questions

Instructions: Record your responses by shading the entire circle of your answer using a blue or black pen.

Shade circles like this:

Not like this:

Or this:

1. Given the state's \$1.5 billion revenue shortfall, how do you think we should balance the budget?

- | | Voter 1 | Voter 2 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Cut spending, with no new taxes or fees | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Raise taxes, don't make any more cuts | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A combination of spending cuts and tax hikes . . | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

2. Realizing that 70 percent of the budget is protected, which of the remaining services would you cut? (Please rank from 1 to 8, with 8 as the service you least want to see cut).

- | | Voter 1 | Voter 2 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Early learning (pre-grade-school education) . . . | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| "Non-basic" K-12 education | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Higher education | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Health care (including senior services) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Social services | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Corrections | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Parks and natural resources | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| State agency staffing cuts | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

3. If the Legislature were to raise taxes, how do you think it should be done?

- | | Voter 1 | Voter 2 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Property tax | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Sales tax | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A targeted sales tax, such as for alcohol or cigarettes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A personal income tax | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

4. Have you or someone in your family been laid off or had your hours cut due to the recession?

- | | Voter 1 | Voter 2 |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| No | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

5. Do you think the state should legalize same-sex marriage?

- | | Voter 1 | Voter 2 |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| No | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

6. Do you think same-sex marriage should be decided by the Legislature or by the voters in a statewide referendum?

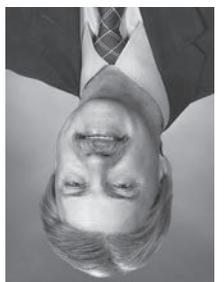
- | | Voter 1 | Voter 2 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Legislature | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Statewide voter referendum | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Additional comments on these or other issues:

Return mail: Fold mailpiece with my return address panel showing, tape edge and affix a first-class stamp.

Respond online: You can also answer this survey online, at SenateDemocrats.wa.gov/senators/Sheldon

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