

## Opening Week of 2010 Session News

The first legislative week started with a bang. At the beginning of every Session, the work begins at the committee level. Thirty-nine bills were heard the first week.

On opening day, Senators heard Governor Henry's State of the State speech, which dealt directly with the budget challenges facing us in 2010. We are working to finalize and pass the revised 2010 budget and will move quickly to negotiating the 2011 budget with the Governor and the House of Representatives.

I do have concerns with Governor's proposed budget, including his proposal to spend most of the Rainy Day Fund, and leave only \$43 million in the account for the next Governor and Legislature. I will not agree to draining the Rainy Day Fund.

Even Governor Henry spoke of coming to office in 2003 (during our last budget crisis) with the fiscal cupboard being bare. He said during his State of the State address:

*“When we faced our last revenue shortfall in 2003, the Rainy Day Fund was virtually depleted. We were caught in a down-pour without so much as an umbrella.”*

The facts are – this current fiscal crisis could last for several years. It would irresponsible to leave the “cupboard bare” for 2011.

As the Chairman of the Retirement and Insurance Committee, I will require each bill heard in my committee give full disclosure of any fiscal impact to our state. Every legislator owes financial responsibility to the taxpayers in their district, while maintaining the most important services necessary.