

CIVITAS INSTITUTE PORK REPORT

August 22, 2005

As we continue to review the final budget, we, like so many others across the state, are shocked at the special provisions (pork spending) that are included. We found over \$150 Million Dollars. This is more than the budgets for many Departments in state government including, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Crime Control and Public Safety, Justice, Cultural Resources, Insurance, Revenue, Secretary of State and the State Treasurer!

It is puzzling to us that the Legislature continues to operate without a sense of priorities for state spending. This budget increases spending by \$1.4 Billion, an 8% increase over last year's budget, with over \$629 Million in new taxes and fees.

We've often heard that liberal leaders misdirect the budget debate and talk about how any cuts would take services away from educating our children, and harm the blind, disabled and elderly. We agree priority services – education, human services, roads and public safety — should be funded first, but any special provisions that require a tax increase should be closely scrutinized.

It's all a matter of priorities. It's that simple. Set priorities and fund the state's top ones first. Top priorities are educating our children and caring for those who cannot care for themselves. With a revenue increase of \$775 Million without raising taxes and a total budget of over \$17 Billion, there is plenty of money to fund North Carolina's needs. There is not money to pay for every want. Low priorities are a Teapot Museum in Sparta, an ACC Museum in Greensboro, Queen Anne's Revenge boat dredging, and pet project funding to hundreds of non-profit organizations.

We went through *The Joint Conference Committee Report on the Continuation, Expansion, and Capital Budgets* dated August 8, 2005 searching for low priority spending using a two prong analysis. First, we picked out any line item that benefited a single non-profit organization, town, county or entity. Second, we asked, is this provision a high enough priority to justify raising taxes? We believe the lack of prioritizing our spending has resulted in unnecessary tax increases.

We've identified the program, the county where it is located, whose district it is located in, and the amount of funding. You can sort this list by any of the criteria to see where and who is getting the pork. We understand that, particularly in metropolitan areas, just because an agency or non-profit is located in a district, that member may or may not have requested the allocation.

Attached is a spreadsheet of provisions we've identified as pork or special provisions. You may not agree with everyone listed, and you may even think we missed some. This represents what we located in the Committee Report, does not include anything from the Continuation Budget or anything that may show up in the Technical Corrections Bill. Here are some answers when the liberals try to defend their budget and ask, where would you cut?

*NOTE: Even in the final hours, they just won't stop. The House will vote Monday night (08-22-05) on an additional \$50 Million for construction and renovation of the NC Museum of Art. The House Finance Committee, on Tuesday (08-23-05), will consider giving an additional \$50,000 to the non-profit Washington Town Community Assn., Inc. for the Oak Grove School in Forsyth County at the request of Reps. Brown, Parmon, Womble and B. Allen, which already got \$50,000 in the budget.

It's not just that the spending won't stop, the taxing won't stop either. The House Finance Committee on Tuesday (08-23-05) will consider raising sales tax in Lee County (per request of Rep. Sauls), Pitt County (per request of Reps. Warren, McLawhorn, and Williams) and in Haywood County (per request Reps. Rapp and Haire).

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