



WILLIAM J. HOWELL
SPEAKER

TWENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
RULES (CHAIRMAN)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Speaker Howell Announces \$35,448 in Savings from Delegates & Legislative Staff for 1-Day Furlough

- \$35,448 in New House Spending Reductions Returned to General Fund to Help Balance Budget --
- Latest Savings by House on top of \$1.1 Million to be Returned in Current Fiscal Year 2010 --
- Virginia Now Ranks 46th in *Per Capita* Spending on its Legislature, Improving from 40th in 2003 --

RICHMOND, VA – Continuing efforts to cut spending so Virginia state government lives within its means just like taxpayers, families and business are doing, Virginia House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell (R-Stafford) today announced that the House of Delegates has returned \$35,448 to the state treasury for Fiscal Year 2010 ending June 30 as a result of salary reductions for delegates, legislative assistants and House staff from a one-day furlough on May 28, 2010. [House Bill 29](#), the Appropriations Act for the biennium that ends on June 30, 2010, contained a provision requiring a one-day furlough for all state employees. The \$35,448 in savings announced today by Speaker Howell are in addition to not only the \$1.1 million to be returned by the House to the General Fund by June 30, 2010, but also another \$1.0 million to be returned by the House to the General Fund by the end of Fiscal Year 2012.

“Virginia taxpayers, families and businesses continue struggling to make ends meet and balance their finances due to the stubborn and lingering effects of the economic recession and, therefore, it is completely appropriate that members of the House of Delegates share in necessary belt tightening to reduce state spending,” said Speaker Howell. “The one-day furlough for House members, their aides and legislative staff will save Virginia taxpayers a total of over \$35,000. With state employees throughout the Commonwealth being impacted in similar ways, I believe it is important that elected officials and their staffs actively participate in helping state government live within its means.”

The Republican-led House of Delegates, under Speaker Howell, has taken many steps over the last eight years to hold legislative spending down, reduce costs and increase efficiencies, while at the same time neither compromising the House’s institutional integrity nor inhibiting fulfillment of its important constitutional duties. For example:

- In 2003, the House economized and returned \$800,000 to the General Fund to help balance the budget;
- In 2004, due to additional operational efficiencies and cost-cutting measures, the House was able to revert an additional \$900,000 to the General Fund;
- Between 2005-2007, continued budget-saving strategies enabled the House to return \$2.0 million to the General Fund in June 2007; and
- This year (2010), beyond the \$1.1 million to be returned to the General Fund by the end of next month, the House saved \$341,600 by keeping the Session expense rate at \$135 for delegates instead of the IRS-authorized rate of \$191. The House also saved another \$94,300 by reducing temporary personnel hired during Session.

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Beyond the \$35,448 in one-day furlough savings by the House of Delegates highlighted above, there are other noteworthy and on-going House budget-reduction strategies that demonstrate how the Republican-led House continues to lead by example when it comes to cutting its own spending and generating state taxpayer savings:

- Delegate Pay Cut: The current and reduced delegate salary level of \$17,640 annually remains in effect. Prior to 1991, delegates and senators were paid \$18,000 annually. In May 1991, delegates agreed to reduce House members' salary by 2% to its current level. Over the past 19 years, that delegate salary cut and lower amount of pay than state senators has saved the Commonwealth a total of \$684,000 to date.
- Delegate Reduced In-Session Expenses: Beginning in 2003 when he became Speaker, Speaker Howell began setting the daily in session meeting – or “per diem” – expenses paid to each delegate conducting legislative business during Regular Sessions at rates substantially lower than the amounts authorized by the United States Internal Revenue Service. Over the past 7 years, this fiscal restraint by the House has saved Virginia taxpayers more than \$1.1 million to date.
- Reduction in Full-Time Clerk's Office Employees: The Speaker oversees the House Clerk's staff. Since 2003, six legislative staff positions have been eliminated, which represents a 16% reduction.

Since 2003 when Speaker Howell was first elected to his current legislative leadership position, Virginia has improved its national rankings – dropping from 40th to 46th in the nation in *per capita* spending on its legislature, while remaining the 12th largest state in population. This data is compiled by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

For the current fiscal year (2010), the budget for the General Assembly and all legislative agencies is less than one-half of one percent – or 0.46% – of the total General Fund budget of \$14.8 billion.

“I have long made it a priority to aggressively reform House operations and reduce costs wherever possible,” concluded Speaker Howell. “Governor McDonnell and the General Assembly closed an historic \$4.2 billion budget shortfall earlier this year through spending reductions and not tax increase. Likewise, the record shows that the House of Delegates has done – and is continuing to do – its part to identify legislative branch savings, return taxpayer dollars to the General Fund, and contribute to balancing the state budget without tax increases.

William J. Howell is the 54th Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates. First elected a delegate in 1987, he represents the 28th House District which includes parts of Stafford County and the City of Fredericksburg. For more information regarding Speaker Howell, please visit his website – www.williamjhowell.org .

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NOTE: On June 8, 2010 at 10:00 AM, the Joint Rules Committee, which Speaker Howell chairs and whose membership includes senior members of the House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia, will meet to approve additional spending reductions by all Legislative Branch agencies, such as the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA), the Division of Legislative Services (DLS), the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC), the Division of Legislative Automated Systems (DLAS), the Joint Commission on Health Care (JCJC), the Crime Commission, the Commission on Youth, and the Joint Commission on Technology & Science (JCOTS).