

State Representative Rich Morthland's First Year Review

Written by Rich Morthland

Tuesday, 27 December 2011 11:29

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Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your State Representative. I have been working to restore confidence in Illinois through fiscal responsibility in our State budget and through promoting sound policy in the Land of Lincoln. I look forward to our continuing partnership on the challenges that face our State and the 71st District. Here is a quick recap on some of our first year accomplishments.

Firearms Legislation

I passed House Bill 3500 in response to a ruling by Attorney General Lisa Madigan that declared the names of FOID cardholders to be public information subject to public release. The Illinois State Police, which oversees the program, opposed the Attorney General's ruling. The National Rifle Association also opposed releasing the names and addresses of FOID Card holders. This legislation that I sponsored protecting the privacy rights of Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) Cardholders received overwhelming, bipartisan support and has been signed into law by Governor Pat Quinn.

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I also sponsored or cosponsored several other measures in support of your Second Amendment freedoms. Three passed the House. I promise to continue these efforts, with the priority being passage of concealed carry legislation.

Jobs Package

During the lame duck session in January, when the previous General Assembly increased our income taxes by 67%, they also let the Research and Development Tax Credit expire. We restored that tax credit for five years with an additional five year carry forward. The R&D Tax Credit is an important tool for Illinois manufacturers such as John Deere and Caterpillar.

I am committed to repealing the job-killing 67% income tax increase. I have co-sponsored House Bill 175 to repeal the Democrats' tax hike.

We worked hard to raise the estate tax exemption to \$4 million in an effort to protect small business owners and family farmers. Under the current law, when estates pass from generation to generation, they are hit with a huge estate tax if their assets are worth more than \$2 million. Family farm and small business assets are generally invested in equipment and fixed assets

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like land, leaving tight cash flows and little ability to pay penalizing taxes. This provision was strongly supported by the Illinois Farm Bureau.

Dawn's Law

I passed HB 3522 out of the House, increasing penalties associated with fatal accidents for those driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

My legislation was in response to the death of Moline resident Dawn Murrillo, who was seven weeks pregnant when she was killed in a hit and run collision by a serial drunk driver.

"Dawn's Law" increases the penalties for repeat drunk drivers involved in fatal accidents and provides for 85% truth in sentencing. This is a clear message to habitual DUI offenders that their actions endanger others and if the worst happens, the consequences will be severe.

10% pay cut

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As my first act in office, I introduced House Bill 110, a 10% pay cut for all state legislators.

Looking Ahead

My wife of 32 years, Betsey, and I entered the political realm in 2007 because we understood the importance of bringing balance to our local political environment. We have helped restore political balance to our area, have taken more balance to Springfield, and have helped create the environment that produced a better Illinois budget process. We have seen successes both locally and in the General Assembly, but this work is far from completed.

We must continue to fight for responsible budgets that don't spend more money than the State takes in. We must improve the jobs climate to get Illinois working again. And we must continue the effort to reform Springfield, and restore the people's trust in their government.

If you have any questions or comments about the items I've discussed here, please call our office at [309/762-3008](tel:3097623008) or email me at repmorthland@gmail.com.

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Best Regards,

Rich Morthland

State Representative

71st District

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