

Handel even suggested spending \$15,000 on chairs for the Governor's Office while the state was in "the worst state budget crisis since the Great Depression"

June 2003: Handel Suggested Spending "About \$15,000 - \$18,000" On "Some New Chairs For Our Folks."

-----Original Message-----
From: Tanenblatt, Eric
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2003 1:39 PM
To: Handel, Karen
Subject: RE: Budget

[Go forth on the chairs as long as you give mine to someone else and get me a better one.](#)

-----Original Message-----
From: Handel, Karen
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2003 11:22 AM
To: Tanenblatt, Eric
Subject: Budget

E -

We will end up somewhere around \$600,000 surplus in our budget - perhaps a bit more if there's anything else unexpected that comes up. In talking w/ Kaye Carter, she tells me that this is not all unusual - that virtually every Governor has turned money back in at the end. She also said that in the past no one has issued a press release since the books don't close officially until July 31 and the official audited numbers aren't released until October sometime. Also, I'm told it should not impact our budget opportunities for FY05 since FY04 will be used as the base for that.

With this surplus, I suggest that we consider purchasing some new chairs for our folks - the ones we have are universally horrible and we're getting a lot of feedback from people about sore backs, etc. I'd say we'd be looking at about \$15,000 - \$18,000 to get just about everyone new chairs - maybe less since I might be able to strike a volume deal. If you are okay w/ this then I'd like to get going on it in order to get the expense in this year. The other option is to get some under FY03 and then an additional batch w/ FY04 monies. Obviously we want to be careful re perceptions and I think the actual expense would run through GBA w/ GBA billing us. Thoughts?

Karen

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Even Though Her Boss At The Time Called It "The Worst State Budget Crisis Since The Great Depression." In a 2006 TV ad, Gov. Sonny Perdue's campaign said, "3 Years ago Georgia had the worst state budget crisis since the Great Depression. We were losing jobs, our deficit was \$640 million." [2006 [Perdue Campaign Ad](#)]

Atlanta Journal-Constitution (2/19/03): "With the mid-year budget facing a \$640 million shortfall and next year's spending plan an even bigger mess..." [Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 2/19/03] - *See Article 4 Below*

ARTICLE 4

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

February 19, 2003 Wednesday Home Edition

LEGISLATURE 2003: Assembly break to crunch numbers

BYLINE: RHONDA COOK, JAMES SALZER

SOURCE: AJC

SECTION: Metro News; Pg. 4B

LENGTH: 496 words

Two days into the work week and the General Assembly already is taking another break.

Once again, it's all about the budget.

With the **mid-year budget facing a \$640 million shortfall and next year's spending plan an even bigger mess**, House and Senate members adjourned for a week after Tuesday's session to figure out how to balance the state's books --- without a tax increase if possible. It's the third such break since the session opened Jan. 13, and it won't be the last.

The House already has passed the mid-year budget, doing little to a spending plan recommended by Gov. Sonny Perdue. But it didn't fully answer where the money would come from, because it hasn't considered Perdue's proposed tobacco and cigarette tax increases. Senate committees, which are expected to offer more spending cuts, are finishing up work on the mid-year plan this week.

Once the Senate approves the mid-year plan, possibly by the end of next week, leaders of both chambers will haggle over the differences between their proposed budgets, setting up a final vote in early March.

Meanwhile, House members are reviewing budget plans for fiscal 2004, which starts July 1. Perdue's proposal calls for almost \$400 million in new taxes.

Lawmakers traditionally take several breaks during their annual session to work on state budgets, but with tax collections slow, it probably will be harder than ever to complete spending plans. Legislators say that will lead to more recesses, and probably a very long session.

Senators got a preview of the partisan fiscal debate ahead Tuesday when the chamber approved a bill cutting the pay of the governor, lieutenant governor, legislators, all other constitutional officers and agency heads by 10 percent.

Senate Majority Leader Tom Price (R-Roswell) said the 10 percent cut in pay would save \$1.2 million a year, of which \$409,000 would come legislators' salaries. The House is considering similar legislation.

The Senate debate quickly degenerated into arguments over who is responsible for the state's financial woes.

Price criticized Democrats for not proposing similar cost reductions in previous years when they were in control of the chamber, and he blamed them for the budget shortfall. "Over the past four years, we've had over \$2.3 billion in surplus," Price said. "If we had been fiscally responsible in just one of those years, we wouldn't be in this mess."

Sen. Nadine Thomas (D-Ellenwood) shot back that Republican Gov. Sonny Perdue has proposed that the state borrow \$1.3 billion for projects in the 2003 mid-year and 2004 spending plans. She said that contradicts the GOP contention that Republicans are more fiscally responsible. "I hear the senator talk out of both sides of his mouth. We have been very responsible with our spending. As a Democrat, I am very proud of what we've done. For the senator to come up like he just invented this thing on saving money, it is appalling."