



K A N S A S

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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The following is a column by Governor Kathleen Sebelius:

Sharing the burden, working together

Six years ago we faced a billion dollar deficit, but by cutting waste and finding efficiencies, we balanced the budget without raising taxes. Today, businesses pay millions less in taxes to the state than they did just a few short years ago, and we have fewer state employees than when I first took office.

When schools were underfunded, we invested millions into their classrooms without new taxes. We shored up our bedrock industries of aviation, oil and gas, and manufacturing. We have been named a top ten business friendly state and a national leader in the Biosciences. We brought the Big Red One home, we are the future site of NBAF and we will work to become a national cancer research designation.

All of these achievements began as challenges. But we did not back down or retreat behind reckless budget cuts. Instead, we approached each problem carefully and worked out strategic solutions. We protected our vulnerable citizens, kept our commitment to our children for quality education, and strengthened our safety and security. We can, and we must, do so again.

On January 13th, I delivered to the Legislature budgets that balanced, without raising taxes. Under my proposals, no Kansan, no business, no one in this great state will pay a penny more in state taxes.

My budget called for an historic level of state spending cuts, \$900 million over the next two years, and will require every Kansan to share in the solution.

Public schools were asked to go without the \$165 million increase they were hoping to get. In this time of shared struggle, our schools will have to make it through 2010 with the same amount of money they received this year.

The disabled community also joins us in this struggle. And while no Kansan currently receiving in-home disability services will lose their services, our revenue shortfalls mean that we won't be able to provide services for new clients or take on new cases until the end of 2010.

Unfortunately, a majority of the Senate Ways and Means Committee has chosen a different approach to address the state's budget challenge. Their approach carelessly cuts key state commitments and services; breaks our promise to Kansas schools; forces cuts to services which thousands of disabled and senior citizens depend on daily; makes it more difficult for Kansas students to afford college; and puts the progress we have made in recent years at risk.

Why should we follow that path when we can balance the budget without inflicting harm on thousands of Kansans and their families? The more than \$900 million in cuts I made to the budget is the largest reduction in state spending ever introduced by a governor – but I did it in a way that best protects

our citizens. While my budget is based on tough choices, it strives to keep the promise we made to our school children for the third year of school funding, protects our most vulnerable citizens and maintains public safety.

I urge the Legislature to join with me in working toward a strategic and responsible approach to successfully meet the budget challenges we face as a state in these difficult economic times. Collaboration, not confrontation, is what Kansans expect and deserve from their state leaders.

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