

Senate budget balances basic needs, business growth

Sen. Gary Daniels Granite State Debates

WHILE WORKING WITH GOV. CHRIS SUNUNU, the House Finance Committee, and House and Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle, the Senate Finance Committee addressed the needs of Granite Staters and produced a fiscally responsible budget that only increases general fund spending by 1.4 percent in the first year and 1.1 percent in the second year. The Senate Finance Committee built supporting job growth through business tax relief, growing the state's Rainy Day Fund and providing funding to meet the needs of those suffering from addiction or abuse.

In the last budget, we reduced business tax rates for the first time in more than 20 years, and we saw business tax revenue grow 12.1 percent ahead of projections for fiscal year 2017. We also had one of the lowest unemployment rates of any state, and the fourth fastest growing economy in the nation. Continuing to reduce taxes would result in additional revenue growth and a competitive economy for small businesses in our state.

In addition to reductions to the Business Profits Tax and the Business Enterprise Tax, the Senate Finance Committee increased the deduction on capital investments that small businesses can take. This targeted deduction will encourage small businesses to invest in growing their companies, creating jobs and sending the message that this state supports small business efforts to reinvest in our state and their workers.

In this budget we are making great strides to increase the state's Rainy Day Fund by raising the balance from \$9 million prior to the last budget to \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2018-19, putting the state on a responsible path to greater financial stability while also improving our state's bond rating.

Gov. Sununu made it a priority in his budget to focus on ending the heroin and opioid crisis in New Hampshire. Under his leadership, this budget creates a new youth inpatient and outpatient drug treatment center at the Sununu Youth Services Center and doubles the funding for the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery. Expanded youth treatment services at the Sununu Center will bring in a much needed, safe place for our children to receive the help they

this budget adds a fourth mobile crisis unit to help divert hospitalizations for mental health treatment, while establishing 60 additional beds for community-based treatment options. Making these changes has been a priority for Gov. Sununu, Senate President Chuck Morse, and Sen. Jeb Bradley. I commend them for strong, pointed leadership on this very critical issue.

Finally, in an effort to improve the safety of children under the state's guidance and care, this budget also makes major changes at the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). Working with the governor, we added new caseworkers to DCYF to help meet the caseload demand. A new Office of Child Advocate, independent from DCYF, will help ensure cases no longer slip through the cracks and result in tragic consequences for our children. The Senate's budget also requires the lead DCYF attorney to be supervised by the Attorney General's office, ensuring enhanced effectiveness in prosecutions and a new, positive direction for the division.

Countless hours went into crafting this budget and senators on the Finance Committee deserve praise for ensuring every voice was heard throughout the process. Great work was done in order to balance existing needs and protect our state's most vulnerable citizens, increase funding to the state's Rainy Day Fund, and create economic incentives to spur job growth in the Granite State.

We stand ready to work with the House and Gov. Sununu to make sure we produce a budget that lives within its means and puts our best foot forward for the people of New Hampshire.

Sen. Gary Daniels, R-Milford, chairs the Senate Finance Committee.



a budget that we can all be proud of.

desperately need, while ending the pattern of substance abuse early on. It includes

It has become clear that far too many friends and neighbors in need of mental health care have been waiting for days and often weeks in hallways of emergency rooms for care. In order to improve treatment options,

