

Lack of Courage Leads to Lack of Budget Action

This week the Governor once again sent budget extender bills to the Legislature in lieu of an actual budget. Unfortunately, this has become common practice during this session's shameful stalemate. However, as unrest among legislators swells at the Capitol, the Governor added another twist to this already disgusting process: extortion. This week's extender included provisions to cut \$800 million from health care. Fearing a "no" vote and a government shutdown resulting from this shortsighted budgetary attack on health care, the Governor included \$125 million in road and bridge construction for upstate. As you might guess, the extenders passed because many legislators did not want to vote against these construction projects. The message from Albany is clear: this budget is about politics and not about the greater good. Don't get me wrong, we need to cut spending. But why should we cut spending to health care while increasing spending on construction? This shortsighted thinking is the very reason we face this deficit. Lack of leadership from the Governor coupled with lack of action from legislators is destroying our state's ability to do anything meaningful in this year's session. I continue to vote against these extenders because it is clear to me that so long as they keep being passed, the sense of urgency to craft a responsible budget that cuts spending across the board passes along with them. Therefore, I will continue to encourage my colleagues to vote against next week's extender as I am convinced that the only resolution to this budget mess is to shut down state government, which will hopefully force this legislative body to do their job.