

It has been a privilege serving as your District 8 Senator and I thank you for placing your confidence in me. The 2009 Session was both challenging and rewarding for me personally. As in the past years I have served in the Legislature, the past 39 days brought forth winners and losers.

The winners of the 2009 Session were all the programs that were funded and advanced during a tough year as the House and Senate passed a \$3.9 billion state budget. We were approximately \$85 million short of hitting \$4 billion.

The budget for 2010, which begins in July, was balanced with the blessing and curse of a massive infusion of federal money from the stimulus measure passed by the U.S. Congress.

I think it's important to keep in mind that as a body we cut \$36 million in government spending. Spending must be kept in check so we, the legislature, can figure out a way to balance the budget when the federal money is gone in two years.

You will hear from the minority who voted against the final budget that they did so because it didn't include an inflationary increase for nursing homes, hospitals and other facilities that provide medical care for poor people. The Senate Appropriators voted to give the long term care providers an increase, but the House rejected that effort and voted it down.

The unfortunate reality is that in today's economy, not everyone will receive increases. In the revised budget, the Governor proposed that the legislature reduce funding for many programs and cut the funding all together for others. I am sure those weren't easy recommendations to make and during the past 39 days our body weighed each of those recommendations carefully, passing some and rejecting others.

The good news is that the 2010 budget boosts state aid to schools by 3%, keeps the South Dakota School for the Deaf operating in Sioux Falls, saves the State Fair as well as the Arts, Birth to Three and many other valuable programs.

In case you were wondering, the House voted 42-28 to pass HB1300, the budget measure. The Senate then passed the budget with a vote of 25-10.

I invite you to keep in touch with me and advise me of issues that you have by contacting me with any questions or concerns. You can reach me at Sen.RussellOlson@state.sd.us or (605) 256 3899.

I am proud to have the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully,

Russell Olson, SD Senator- District 8