

Virginias Governments Are Drunk

Virginia's Government spending numbers since the '04 Chicken Little 'The infrastructure is failing' Tax Surplus are overwhelming. Now, it looks like another Billion in tax hikes for transportation business-as-usual 'fixes'. But, it doesn't matter. You can cite the billions in the surplus, the billions of new spending, the per cent increase, etc and the Democrats, their Republican lackeys, and their Liberal Media allies will call you names, like 'flat-earther' and 'free-luncher', etc. Their final retort, given with 'j'accuse' fingerpointing, arched eyebrow and elevated chin to better look down the nose, is, "What would YOU cut from the budget?"

Okay, how about cutting the \$1 billion that Democrat Governor Mark Warner's commission found on waste in government spending? If the tax-and-spenders stare back like that's not good enough, then how about this?

Cut out the alcohol from the Virginia Department of Education. The Virginia Department of Education spent \$67,870.93 on alcoholic beverages already in the First Quarter of FY 2006.

See for yourself. Go to the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts (<http://spirit.apa.virginia.gov/index.cfm>) then click on 'State Government' below Expenditures to open the menu and click on 'Secretariat'. Click on the 'O' box (for Objects) to the left of Education. Then, click on 'Supplies and Materials' and the third item in the matrix will be 'Alcoholic Beverages'. Yes, Virginia, \$68k for booze. For just the Department of Education. For just one quarter.

If you click on the dollar figure you find that only Tech, JMU and CNU billed the Commonwealth for their alcohol in this report. Where did the other colleges and universities report their drinking? If you drill down on the 'P' (programs) and 'F' (funds), the money is divided into different categories like food services and other enterprise functions. Accounting, apparently, can be creative like art and politics.

Let's say the three colleges spent about \$3 @ for retail alcoholic beverages from a caterer for about 22,000 servings of beer, wine, or the hard stuff. Virginia's voters wouldn't want the scholars and staff of academe to buy it wholesale and have to bartend for themselves. That's over 7,000 drinks a month. In just 3 Virginia universities. So, how much booze did the Good People buy for all of Virginia's universities for the whole year? How much are we spending next year?

There's no way to know – now – really. The Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts is making a good start. Yet, clearly, the full accounting is not there in sufficient detail and with ready visibility. Meanwhile, the General Assembly is going to pass a \$72 billion dollar budget.

The liquor account in Virginia's Department of Education is indicative of several problems the People should hold the legislators and the Governor accountable.

1 Don't ever ask a voting citizen, "What would you cut?" Resign immediately if

you're so incompetent or lazy that you can't figure something out. The booze bill was found in minutes – on-line – without a legislative assistant or committee staff to help.

- 2 Give the Public Auditor a bit more money to expand the detailed outlay of the budget. I'd like to see how much is spent by each university and college (not to pick on 'poor me' Higher Education) for staff whose jobs are based on race or sexual behavior. I'd like to see how much is handed out to guest speakers – loony Left and Right – all of them by name, conferences and trips – by name.
- 3 Create a macro-economic model of the Commonwealth. You'll see how much tax cuts will increase state revenue, even if you don't understand the economics.
- 4 Go over the budget with a fine-toothed comb in committees and look for real cuts. Follow up on Gov. Warner's commission's recommendations to get over a billion dollars worth of savings.

The governments of the Commonwealth of Virginia, one state and 134 localities, are drunk with our dollars. The '04 Chicken Little Tax Surplus created a state-wide spending binge. The cities and counties have the money for a bender with hyper-rising property taxes. Yet, any call for spending restraint is mocked like children would tease the town drunk. Talk of tax relief is worse. But, who – the People or the governments and their elected servants – is really drinking too much alcohol?

If the General Assembly doesn't cut spending, hold them accountable in the 2007 elections. That means some Conservative Republicans have to actually get bills for spending cuts to the floor of the House and Senate for a vote. Get serious. Get past the House Republicans' list of gimmicks and the Senate Republicans' absence of any written agenda. Vote on spending cuts.

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