



Big-spending budgeters were 'California Dreamin' during session

By Jim Waters

The 1960s pop band the Mamas & Papas only needed to add one word to their song lyrics “broke, busted, disgusted” in order to turn it into a tune about the [2010 session](#) of the Kentucky General Assembly: “budgetless.”

It might not fit the rhythm, but it describes the song and dance typical of Frankfort’s recent budget sessions.

Kentucky is near broke; incumbents likely will join the unemployment line after a TEA (Taxed Enough Already) Party turnaround gets them busted in the election. And the governor is “disgusted” that lawmakers failed to pass a budget. At least that’s what he said after the Legislature concluded its business — as mandated by the [state Constitution](#) — on April 15.

It was not a good time for Frankfort’s big spenders, who used the final hours of the General Assembly for finger-pointing and grandstanding in front of cameras on Tax and Tea Party day — while trying to lay blame on fiscal conservatives who held the line on spending.

Gee, Margaret, I wonder: “Why do these TEA partiers seem sooooo angry?”

They turned out in droves to express their displeasure with unwarranted, unconstitutional and unfunded policies.

Up jumps Rep. Harry Moberly, D-Richmond — the personification of bloated government — to display unmitigated gall on the House floor by lashing out at the state Senate, claiming it didn’t want a budget.

What the Senators don’t want — other than more of the likes of Moberly in the Legislature — is a budget adding \$1 billion in debt for construction projects. The state already faces an estimated \$1.5-billion shortfall and no money for the growing \$30 billion-plus pension liability. Plus, House Democrats are unwilling to even consider eliminating a union-dominated wage policy that needlessly costs taxpayers an additional \$130 million a year on schools and courthouses.

Moberly is retiring. When he does, he will collect hundreds of thousands of hard-earned taxpayer dollars thanks to changes in how legislators’ pensions get calculated — a scheme for which he voted. (“The only one getting fat” isn’t only Mama Cass.)

Is anyone else ticked off that longtime Frankfort perchers like Moberly enrich themselves with big publicly funded pensions and lifetime health care benefits while more than [600,000](#) Kentuckians have no health care coverage at all?

Has anyone from either party offered to forego those benefits? Didn't think so. Perhaps it's time for a "Silence is Golden" remake.

Maybe we can "retire" Moberly's big-spending policies that keep taxes high, Kentuckians broke and the informed thoroughly disgusted.

House leadership's grandstanding involved a late offer to support "continuation budget."

This would have given Gov. Steve Beshear excessive control of the state's purse strings, spent recklessly on the budget's front end and would have resulted in cuts of more than 8 percent in the second year of the budget biennium. The Senate's proposal likely would have resulted in cuts of less than 2 percent each year.

The credibility of those who claim cuts hurt the poor would be greatly enhanced if they had supported legislators, especially Senate Republican leaders, who tried to lessen the pain. So far, they are mum on supporting Senate President David Williams' budget leadership.

But we did hear from Beshear, who chirped that "the people of this Commonwealth and I are disgusted by the total inability of the General Assembly to reach a budget agreement."

Actually, the inability to reach a *responsible* agreement generated the disgust.

They are "disgusted" with a governor proposing a budget that counted on \$780 million in additional gambling revenue, even though lawmakers opposed it. Beshear knew his budget was DOA, and that forced legislators to start over.

In fact, they're "disgusted" that Beshear or any of the other big-spending political opportunists made any statements at all.

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