

PRESS RELEASE

... from the Illinois House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2008

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Rep. Karen May

(847) 433-9100

Suburban Representatives Host Hearing on State Finances and the Budget

Legislators take government to the people to close state's budget deficit and identify funding priorities

NORTHBROOK, IL— State Representatives Julie Hamos (D-Evanston), Lou Lang (D-Skokie), Karen May (D-Highland Park), Elaine Nekritz (D-Des Plaines), Kathy Ryg (D-Vernon Hills) and Eddie Washington (D-Waukegan) hosted a regional hearing on the state budget last Monday at the Northbrook Village Hall.

“It is important that we give our constituents an opportunity to see exactly what is in our state budget,” Nekritz said. “We must take whatever steps are necessary to give individuals a voice in the process and make sure we work together to pass a balanced and efficient budget.”

“Too often we hear how individuals feel they are left in the dark when the state discusses and approves their funding,” Lang said. “Today, we are here to make sure our constituents are included in the process and give them the opportunity to voice their concerns on what they feel the state needs to include as priorities in the budget.”

In the face of a \$750 million deficit for the current fiscal year and challenging economic conditions forecast for the next, the hearing was designed to give community leaders, business owners, labor officials, service providers, advocacy organizations, health care facilities, school districts, colleges and local residents an opportunity to learn more about state finances and to weigh in with their own views about what lawmakers should make the budget's funding priorities. The hearing also sought advice for ways to increase government efficiency and reduce costs.

"This hearing demonstrates that our constituents have real concerns about the impact of budget cuts on their programs," Hamos said. "More than any other year since I've been a legislator, it will be difficult to balance all of the competing needs without either budget cuts or new revenues."

“Lawmakers and the governor will need to close a significant budget shortfall and this it is why we are holding statewide budget hearings,” said Washington. “My goal is to make sure the budgetary process is done in a way that is transparent, insightful, and most importantly, provides a forum so that my constituents can express their concerns about state spending.”

House members will use the information gathered at the Northbrook hearing and 18 similar events throughout the state during March to help direct their efforts to construct a fiscally responsible and balanced budget. The Northbrook hearing attracted over 200 citizens, 96 of whom testified during the 5 hour span of the hearing.

“The state budget affects funding and services for all of us locally, including schools, public safety agencies, and community service providers,” May said. “We will use the information gathered here to guide our work in drafting next year's budget.”

For more information, contact Rep. May's constituent service office at (847) 433-9100.

###