

Legislative Update

By State Representative Danny Ford
Budget shows emphasis on education, House works on other issues as Senate gets budget
 After working over the weekend and through the early part of the week to hammer out differences and reach a compromise, the House passed the budget after a four-hour debate on Wednesday, March 13. Basically a two-year spending plan for the Commonwealth, the General Assembly is responsible for passing the budget during even-year sessions like this one. It is always a difficult task, but as a result of the economic slowdown that the entire nation is experiencing, we were particularly challenged. Our goal this year was to renew our commitments to education and to be able to provide consistent service through other state programs. The end product was a budget that continues to provide funding for Bucks for Brains, allocates 50 percent of the Tobacco Settlement monies to expanding agricultural alternatives, and places people and not concrete and steel first. For example, we cut \$7 million from a maintenance fund for state buildings. The budget, filed as HB 507, is the House version and now goes to the Senate for consideration.

As I mentioned, education was our highest priority. Since last session, members of the Interim Committee on Education have worked to develop areas that we can address to strengthen our schools. One of the most obvious areas is providing more adequate compensation for teachers to keep our quality teachers in the classrooms and attract more qualified individuals to the profession. Last week I wrote about the proposed raise for teachers and other school employees. When the governor gave his January budget address he requested a 2.7 percent raise, however the entire burden for this raise was passed along to local school districts. Although smaller, the budget provides \$34.6 million to provide a 1.63 percent raise. If financially possible, local school districts have the option of adding to that pay increase. We addressed future teacher pay issues with the passage of a bill that would require teacher pay raises to be the same proportion as the pay raises received by state employees. This bill, HB 402, would take effect during the next budget cycle. This year's budget also provides an additional \$5.3 million during the 2003-2004 fiscal year for family resource centers. These centers reach

out to Kentucky children throughout the state to ensure they have the support and basic resources they need to take full advantage of their educational opportunities.

Health care was also high on the agenda. The budget includes an allocation for a program that provides medical treatment to low-income women who suffer from breast and cervical cancer. The \$1.2 million allocation will match \$4.8 million in federal funds. These two types of cancer claim thousands of lives each year and have rarely in the past received this level of attention.

Last year two Kentucky infants died after being abandoned. That was fresh in the mind of legislators as we passed HB 76, a bill that would allow parents to give up infants in the 72 hours after birth without criminal repercussions.

The House approved the measure 100-0. We also took action on a Senate Bill that came into consideration after September 11. The initiative, SB 70, allows the state to presume that cancer claim thousands of lives each year and have rarely in the past received this level of attention.

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The Family Room

By: Dr. Roy Don Whitehead

Postpartum Depression affects New Mothers

The man called me out of concern for his wife. "She is tired all the time," he told me, "but then she can't sleep at night. She tells me she is not a good mother, but I know that she is. We haven't been out of the house for a month because she doesn't want to go anywhere. She doesn't care if she takes care of herself but she is a fanatic when it comes to taking care of the baby."

This bit of information caught my attention. "How old is the baby?" I asked. "She is almost two months old," the father replied. "When did your wife begin showing these symptoms?" I wanted to know. "Soon after the baby was born," he answered.

Many women experience a mild form of depression called the "baby blues." This usually occurs a few days to a few weeks after birth and usually goes away within a few weeks. During this time new mothers may have feelings of sadness, anger, anxiety, irritability and incomprehension. Some mothers are surprised to have some negative thoughts about the new baby and may interpret this as being a "bad" mother. It may be comforting to know that these feelings are normal.

The "baby blues" can be helped if the new mother takes good care of herself. This includes getting adequate rest, eating a nutritious diet, exercising in moderation and having a social support system. The mother will know she is not getting enough rest when little things begin to upset her more than they normally would. Obviously getting enough rest while caring for an infant is no easy task. Enticing others to care for the baby while mom has some time for herself will help.

A more serious problem called postpartum depression occurs in approximately 10 percent of women of childbearing age. It strikes soon after the baby is born and can last for many months. Possible symptoms include all those of the "baby blues" listed above plus constant fatigue, a lack of joy in life, withdrawal from family and friends, a lack of concern

for self and baby, severe insomnia, excessive concern for the baby, loss of sexual interest, a strong sense of failure or inadequacy and severe mood swings.

There is no reason for Mom to be ashamed because she is depressed after the birth of her baby. The depression is not a sign of weakness. Most likely it is the result of hormonal changes that occur in pregnancy and after childbirth.

Treatment for postpartum depression is similar to the treatment for

other types of depression. Counseling, antidepressant medication and hormone therapy may all play a role in bringing Mom quickly out of depression.

Counseling allows the new mother to express her feelings in an accepting atmosphere. She will find that her feelings are normal and that almost all mothers have had similar feelings. Antidepressant medication and hormone therapy help to correct the chemical imbalance brought on by pregnancy and childbirth.

Sometimes the family realizes Mom is depressed before she does. Since early intervention may mean a more rapid recovery, they can encourage Mom to seek help before the problem worsens. They can encourage Mom to see a doctor or a counselor so that she can begin to enjoy her new baby.

(Some material for this column was provided by the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota.)

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You are invited to attend
The Bible Baptist Church
Easter Cantata
"On a Hill Too Far Away"
This musical/drama will be presented by the Bible Baptist Church Choir on
Saturday, March 23rd at 7 p.m.
Sunday, March 24th at 7 p.m.
Bible Baptist Church is located on U.S. Hwy. 25 south on the hill above Super Test.

Fish Fry
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Lil's Place
 444 N. 1st St. • Lexington
Saturday, March 23rd
 Begins at 2 p.m.
 Everyone Welcome.

LEADING THE WAY...

We know it's hard to face the facts about colon cancer, but here they are:

- Colon cancer claims 55,000 lives every year—enough to fill Rupp Arena twice.
- Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S., just behind lung cancer.
- Your chances of developing colon cancer increase as you get older.

Early detection increases your chances of surviving colon cancer as much as 80 percent.

That's why Rockcastle Hospital and Respiratory Care Center has declared March "Colon Cancer Awareness Month."

... for better health.

So stop by the hospital or your local pharmacy, to pick up a free colon cancer screening kit, courtesy of us. The results are confidential and mailed directly to your doctor.

ROCKCASTLE
 HOSPITAL AND RESPIRATORY CARE CENTER, INC.
Accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

Free Colon Cancer Screenings.
Just another example of how we're leading the way to better health in our community.