

Jim Hackworth State Representative



Meet the Hackworth Family

Rep. Jim Hackworth - House District 33 **2007 Accomplishments**

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 19, 2007

Rep. Hackworth Releases Summary of Accomplishments for the 2007 Session of the Tennessee Legislature

2007 Accomplishments

We moved directly into our business and achieved a great number of accomplishments, some of which I have highlighted below:

- Passed a fiscally responsible, balanced budget that invested heavily in the future of our state; (\$27.8 billion dollars of which \$13.7 billion is State dollars)
- Invested \$429 million in new dollars for our K-12 schools and related educational components bringing our total investment up to \$3.82 billion in the coming fiscal year;
- Invested an additional \$25 million to fund 250 more Pre-K classrooms with the total investment in Pre-K now standing at \$95 million which can fund over 750 classrooms statewide;
- Put in place new accountability features for K-12 education to make sure the taxpayers are getting the most for their dollars;
- Passed a new simplified BEP 2.0 formula that takes into account changes that have occurred since it was first implemented in 1992;
- Reduced the sales tax on food from 6.0% to 5.5%; (estimated \$38.8 million dollar tax cut)
- Provided additional property tax relief for the elderly with low incomes;
- Provided additional property tax relief for veterans who suffered a service related disability;
- Instituted a sales tax holiday for March of 2008 as well as funded the recurring sales tax holiday in August of 2006;
- Passed legislation allowing local governments to freeze property taxes on certain senior citizens;
- Increased the tax on cigarettes by an additional 42 cents with about \$200 million from that increase going to K-12 education. \$21 million going to agricultural enhancement grants

- and approximately \$10 million going to our state's trauma centers;
- Raised the HOPE lottery Scholarships from \$3,800 to \$4,000 per year for four year schools; Raised Scholarships at two-year institutions from \$1,900 to \$2,000; Raised Wilder-Naifeh Technical grants from \$1,500 to \$2,000;
 - We passed the most sweeping crime package that Tennessee has seen in over a decade. This package includes:
 1. Jessica's Law which provides for a mandatory 25 years in prison for certain child sex crimes and GPS monitoring of every child predator in TN.
 2. We increased penalties for those who commit crimes with guns as well as those who are in possession of a gun when they commit a crime.
 3. Added sexual exploitation of a minor, aggravated sexual exploitation of a minor and especially aggravated sexual exploitation of a minor to the offenses that are ineligible for probation or judicial diversion.
 4. Provided for 32 new positions for assistant district attorney generals to ensure that we have the prosecutors needed to indict and convict those who break our laws.
 - Implemented a work-place smoking ban with some exceptions – hailed as the strongest ever enacted in a tobacco producing state;
 - Implemented a new drivers license law so only citizens and those lawfully here can get a drivers license, thereby enhancing homeland security protections; no more driving certificates;
 - Fought against illegal immigration by penalizing employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants;
 - Increased protections for the elderly by raising to a Class E felony the willful abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an adult;
 - Protected the state against future economic downturns by putting additional \$250 million new dollars in our rainy day fund, bringing it to a total of \$750 million. This is our savings account for the taxpayers;
 - Helped retain and attract jobs to Tennessee by giving tax credits to companies which make major capital investments in industrial machinery.

In summary, we have made our government more efficient and accountable. We invested in making our children more educated and competitive. We have provided tax relief by reducing the sales tax on food, giving additional property tax relief for low-income elderly citizens and veterans with service related disabilities and putting in place a March 2008 sales tax holiday. And, we have passed laws for the health and safety of our citizens.

Thank you for all of your support.

Jim Hackworth