



# Representative Barrett Rich Weekly Wrap

April 19<sup>th</sup> – April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

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## House Republican Leadership denounces \$85 million tax increase



### IN THIS WEEK'S WRAP

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The House Republican Caucus leadership this week denounced a tax increase proposal floated by Governor Phil Bredesen as a way to balance the budget. The administration proposed an additional \$85 million in tax increases by increasing the sales tax on single article sales.

Last week, Bredesen and his senior staff outlined a plan to remove the sales tax cap on single article sales. At present, the value of individual items over \$3,200 are taxed at seven percent. The governor wants to increase this to 9.75 percent.

Republican leaders expressed their disappointment in the Governor for showing what they called "blatant disregard for the challenges small business owners and average Tennesseans face," and added that small businesses would be the driving force behind an economic recovery.

The \$85 million tax increase would be in addition to \$50 million the administration has called for by increasing taxes on cable television, cable television boxes, business telephone services, and free hotel breakfasts. In total, Bredesen has proposed over \$130 million in new taxes this year alone.

## Republicans' Long-Term Care overhaul proven successful

The TennCare Oversight Committee heard an update on Monday regarding the Long-Term Care and Community Choices Act of 2008, a proposal that was championed by Republicans and overhauled the state's previously fragmented long-term care system. The plan aimed to increase options and choices for those who needed long-term care support, expand access, and better utilize existing funding.

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The plan was designed to promote independence, choice, dignity, and quality of life for the elderly and/or people with physical disabilities who need long-term care support and services from the state's TennCare program. The legislation included consumer-directed options that offered more choices regarding the kinds of long-term care services people need, where they are provided, and who will deliver them, with appropriate mechanisms to ensure accountability for taxpayer funds. In 2008, 98 percent of all long term care dollars went to nursing home care, the most expensive option. Lawmakers anticipated saving money by moving funds to home and community-based care for those who were able to live at home with some assistance.

The committee heard from Pattie Killingsworth, Chief of Long-Term Care. Killingsworth reported that TennCare CHOICES, the long-term care system created by the legislation, was successfully implemented in Middle Tennessee in March of this year. The transition was seamless, and 8, 624 enrollees were transitioned to the new program. Even more Tennesseans are taking advantage of the home and community based services since March, including about 450 brand new enrollees. Killingsworth reported the department is currently working on implementing CHOICES in East and West Tennessee.

## State to begin offering rebates for Energy Star appliances

The State of Tennessee, in conjunction with the Tennessee Valley Authority, will begin offering rebates to Tennesseans who replace old appliances with Energy Star® qualified ones. Portions of the rebate funding were made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The total funding for the rebate program is just over \$5.9 million, and rebates will be granted until the funds are depleted.

Rebates of \$250 will be available for central air conditioners, \$40 for room air conditioners, and \$250 for heat pumps. Because there are certain specifications that the appliances must meet in order to be eligible in addition to being Energy Star®, consumers are encouraged to [check](#)<sup>1</sup> the requirements before purchasing. To apply, please click [here](#)<sup>1</sup>.

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development reports that the estimated energy savings for delivery and installation of qualified heating and cooling products statewide will be approximately 16 million kilowatt hours per year. A reduction in energy use of that size translates to a yearly savings of almost \$1.4 million in energy costs for Tennesseans and reduces the amount of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere by 32 million pounds annually.

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## **“Super speeding” bill granted approval by House Transportation Committee**

The Transportation Committee approved House Bill 2544 Tuesday afternoon after a long debate. The bill creates the offense of “super speeding” when a driver speeds at 75 miles per hour or more on any two-lane highway or 85 miles per hour or more on any public highway or interstate. The penalty for super speeding would be a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a \$200 fine.

The bill will be heard next in the Budget Subcommittee. Instead of costing the state money, the legislation actually has the potential to bring in \$3.7 million. Under the bill, the funds would be directed to the state’s Trauma Center System established in 2007.

### **The Week Ahead**

**HOUSE SESSION:** 4:00 p.m. Monday, April 26, 2010 in the House Chambers  
**HOUSE SESSION:** 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 28, 2010 in the House Chambers  
**HOUSE SESSION:** 9:00 a.m. Thursday, April 29, 2010 in the House Chambers

#### **Tuesday, April 27**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Room</b>	<b>Time</b>
Calendar and Rules	Legislative Plaza 16	8:00 A.M.
Health and Human Resources	Legislative Plaza 16	9:00 A.M.
State and Local Government	Legislative Plaza 16	11:30 A.M.
Finance, Ways and Means	Legislative Plaza 16	1:30 P.M.
Judiciary	Legislative Plaza 31	3:30 P.M.

#### **Wednesday, April 28**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Room</b>	<b>Time</b>
Calendar and Rules	Legislative Plaza 16	8:00 A.M.
Consumer and Employee Affairs	Legislative Plaza 29	8:30 A.M.
Budget Subcommittee	Legislative Plaza 29	10:30 A.M.
Industrial Impact Subcommittee	Legislative Plaza 16	1:00 P.M.
Government Operations	Legislative Plaza 30	1:00 P.M.
Commerce	Legislative Plaza 16	3:30 P.M.
General Sub of Agriculture	Legislative Plaza 29	3:30 P.M.
Agriculture	Legislative Plaza 29	After Sub

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