

LT. GOVERNOR CASEY CAGLE'S COMMENTS TO TAX COUNCIL

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I appreciated the opportunity to work with you, Chairman O'Neal and others in the House in constructing this legislation. I'd like to also thank the members of the Senate—Pro Tem Williams, Chairman Chance, Majority Leader Rogers, and Caucus Chair Bill Cowsert—who helped push through this legislation and who will (continue to help) by working with you over these next months to ensure that your recommendations will be able to pass through the General Assembly next winter.

To the council members, I want to thank each and every one of you for agreeing to be a part of this distinguished council. You have no easy task ahead of you. This task will take:

- a fair amount of time and commitment to the process
- careful and thoughtful deliberation
- most importantly, a continued commitment to make our state a better place to live and create jobs

Over the remainder of the summer and into the fall, you will hear from many different and diverse constituencies. They may be some of the multi-billion dollar companies we are fortunate enough to have in Georgia, they may be small mom and pop storeowners, or it could be a general contractor who is trying to stay afloat during these challenging economic times. While each of these folks will have different parts of the tax code they may want to speak to you about, you will hear a common message from each of them; jobs, jobs, jobs.

We are proud of the work we have accomplished over the years to make Georgia a shining light, but, as we deliberated over the formation of this council, we knew we could do more so that our citizens could prosper in an environment that welcomed job creation. We knew we had to make changes to our tax code as it is

- arcane
- outdated; and
- in need of being better streamlined and more fair for our state's citizens

However when you move forward on this challenge, I hope you listen and take into consideration other external factors affecting our state. Factors such as, the potential impact tax code changes may have to our outstanding AAA bond rating, which the General Assembly, along with the Governor, has so diligently worked to protect and which has saved our tax payers millions and millions in carrying costs. Factors such as the effects of changing things “mid-stream” for individuals, farmers or companies who have set up shop in Georgia under one set of rules only to have those rules to changed on them overnight—this could cost our state jobs and confidence.

Again, you have a very challenging but welcomed adventure ahead of you. I encourage you bring your own assets to the table, ask us for any help in ascertaining state assets which could help you in your efforts but most of all when you deliberate over your final recommendations, ask yourself

- (1) is this a fair and equitable tax structure for our fellow citizens
- (2) will it enhance the state’s economic prosperity and create job growth; and
- (3) will it have minimal impact on the services we provide our state’s citizens.

Governor, I appreciate your time and willingness to serve on this committee and turn it now over to you.