

## Democrats Try To Muzzle the Taxpayer's Watchdog

Posted By [Craig Robinson](#) On April 2, 2009 @ 4:49 am In [Iowa](#) | [9 Comments](#)



Iowa Democrats are cutting State Auditor Dave Vaudt's fiscal year 2010 budget by an astounding 26.6%. Vaudt warns that such a drastic cut could jeopardize Iowa's AAA bond rating, put the federal stimulus money at risk, prevent local governments from using the Auditor's services, and open the door for another scandal like CIETC. The move comes on the heels of Speaker of the House Patrick Murphy's historic decision to remove the public from a public hearing this past Tuesday night and puts into question the majority party's commitment to government oversight.

While Auditor's office is facing a 26.6% budget cut, the Secretary of State's budget will only be cut 8.1% and the State Treasurer's budget is being cut by just 10.8%. In fact, the entire Administration and Regulation Appropriations Subcommittee budget, which includes these three offices, averages an 11% cut for all offices in their proposed budget. Vaudt, the only Republican office holder out of the three offices under the jurisdiction of this Committee, recently sent a letter to the respective chairs in the House and Senate to voice his objection to the plan.

Vaudt's letter read, "I must register my strong protest of the Administration and Regulation Appropriations Subcommittee's adoption of a 26.6% reduction in the appropriation for the Office of Auditor of State (AOS) for fiscal year 2010 (FY10). Coupled with the 3.5% reduction already imposed for this year, our FY10 appropriation would be more than 30% less than when we began FY09. This drastic reduction, along with other language included in the appropriation bill to control AOS operations, would not only hamstring AOS's ability to serve as the taxpayer's watchdog, it would also result in several extremely detrimental consequences for Iowa."

Muzzling the taxpayers' watchdog at a time when the federal government is sending in billions of dollars to Iowa for disaster relief and federal stimulus efforts is inconceivable. Vaudt warned lawmakers that, if the Auditor's office is unable to audit federal funds (which is mandated by the federal government), those funds may be put in jeopardy.

Auditor Vaudt closed his letter by telling lawmakers, "President Obama has pledged 'unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability' over the expenditure of federal funds. In addition, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has selected Iowa as one of 16 states which will be reviewed to ensure federal stimulus funds are expended appropriately. Considering the federal government's efforts to ensure its funds are expended appropriately, state government should be no less diligent in its efforts to ensure state and local government funds are properly received and expended."

Iowans are fortunate to have a professional like Dave Vaudt as their State Auditor. At a time when money is tight, we need to make sure that no government agency is misusing taxpayer dollars. It is also imperative that the federal stimulus and disaster relief monies go for their intended purposes. More importunately, since Governor Chet Culver and the Democrats are asking Iowans to go into debt to the tune of \$750 million,

Iowans need to know that their State Auditor has the ability to make sure that every dollar is accounted for.

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