



## **NEWS:**

# **Republican Leaders React to Governor's Address**

Governor John Carney delivered his annual [State of the State Address](#) to a joint session of the General Assembly on Thursday afternoon, broadly outlining his administration's accomplishments and providing a peek at its goals for 2020.

The governor briefly re-capped proposals he made earlier this week which seek to dedicate a combined \$100 million in one-time spending in the upcoming FY 2021 capital budget. Half the total would be dedicated to water improvement projects statewide, with the remaining \$50 million targeted to build a new school in Wilmington and conduct major renovations to two others. All three schools are in the Christina School District.

State House Minority Leader Danny Short, R-Seaford said the latter proposal, while well-intentioned, is likely to generate a lot of questions. He said other school district officials want to know if the school spending will require a local contribution by Christina and, if so, if a referendum will be needed to finance the projects.

Rep. Short took issue with a separate aspect of the governor's remarks in which he called for support of pending legislation to [ban firearms' magazines capable of holding more than 15 rounds of ammunition](#). "We need to focus on folks that are using guns for committing crimes," Rep. Short said, adding that prosecutors need to stop using gun-related offenses as chips to be discarded during the plea bargain process.

The governor's speech also cited the state's continuing work to expand high-speed internet access to rural Delaware. State House Minority Whip Tim Dukes, whose Laurel-are district is largely bucolic, said he has been pleased by the initiative. "I wish it

had been a little quicker, but I'm glad broadband connections are coming to lower and western Sussex and that they'll provide new opportunities for our residents."

However, Rep. Dukes said he was a little disappointed the governor did not use his State of the State to emphasize the needs of the small business community. While the governor noted that Delaware small businesses are "the engine of our economic growth," he did not highlight any new initiatives to help such enterprises succeed, other than an expansion of the [EDGE grant program](#).

"We've got to do more things for small business," Rep. Dukes said. "We should be doing what we can, like provide tax incentives, to create an atmosphere that encourages small businesses to grow."



State Rep. Tim Dukes

The governor teased one new initiative in his speech, saying his administration would propose \$50 million in capital investments to "further strengthen our economic infrastructure."

The latest state revenue estimates on which the governor's budget will be based show a \$200 million surplus. Three new proposals the governor referenced this week -- the water fund, Wilmington school spending, and economic infrastructure -- total a combined \$150 million.

Some of the missing details will be provided on Thursday when Gov. Carney unveils his proposed state operating budget and capital budget at an announcement scheduled for the Delaware Public Archives.