



Gov. John Carney speaks to citizens regarding Delaware's budget issues at meeting held at Sussex Central High School Wednesday evening. The event was hosted by State Reps. Rich Collins, Ruth Briggs King & Ron Gray and State Sens. Brian Pettyjohn & Gerald Hocker.

## **NEWS:**

# **Budget Writers Told to Halt Work Trimming Spending**

**JUNE 2, 2017** – Speaker of the House Pete Schwartzkopf, D-Rehoboth, and Senate President Pro Tempore David McBride, D-Hawk's Nest, this week told members of the Joint Finance Committee to stop their work aimed at cutting state expenses.

"We understand that JFC already has completed a first round of budget cuts, which drew on Governor Carney's recommendations," read the joint statement issued Wednesday. "Yesterday, the committee began a second round of deep cuts that could have serious long-term consequences for Delawareans. ... We heard loud and clear from legislators, community stakeholders and affected residents about these potential cuts and we understand those sentiments. For that reason, we have asked JFC to take a step back and give legislative leaders the opportunity to meet and see if there is room for compromise to raise additional revenue so that we can balance any cuts we might have to make to the budget."

Gov. Carney and state lawmakers are grappling with closing a \$382 million gap between projected revenue and expenses. For the last several months, the governor has been meeting with citizens at community meetings throughout the state to frame the issue and tout his plan for balancing the budget using tax hike revenue and an equal amount generated through budget cuts and cost-shifting.

State House Minority Leader Danny Short, R-Seaford, said with the budget needing to be implemented by June 30th, he is a little confused as to why legislative budget writers have been asked to halt their work.

"Under the governor's plan, half the gap, or roughly \$200 million, is supposed to come through cuts," Rep. Short said. "But the JFC has voted on only about \$80 million in spending reductions thus far, so they are not even half way there. It needs to be stressed that the JFC's reduction proposals are not law. The General Assembly needs to approve anything that group does.

"So what message is being sent by this work stoppage?" Rep. Short said. "That we are unwilling to explore the possibility of fulfilling our obligation to bridge half the gap with less spending? If that is the case, are Speaker Schwartzkopf and President Pro Tem McBride saying they are looking for tax hikes in excess of the \$200 million already proposed by Gov. Carney? At this point, I don't know."

Rep. Short said he is looking forward to the General Assembly returning to work Tuesday. "I think we can resolve this, providing there is a dialogue and not a monologue," he said.



**State House Minority Leader  
Danny Short**