

# House Democrats Break Rules, Fail in Attempt to Ramrod Tax Hike

**JUNE 30, 2017** -- House Democrats broke numerous rules late last night in an attempt to bully minority Republicans into passing a personal income tax hike.

In a peculiar move, House Democrats introduced a Grants-in-Aid Bill late Thursday night that also included a personal income tax increase. The maneuver came just a day after House and Senate Democrats that control the budget-writing Joint Finance Committee choose to cut all funding for the annual appropriation that provides state assistance to fire departments, senior centers, and dozens of non-profit community service organizations,

In a press release issued Thursday afternoon, State Senate Minority Whip Greg Lavelle, R-Sharpely, predicted the politically motivated action. He said with full control of the entire budget process, Democratic legislators would attempt to resurrect the Grants-in-Aid Bill so they could congratulate themselves for avoiding the crisis they created on Wednesday.

But the way in which they did it shocked Republican leaders on both sides of the capitol.

“Just when you thought the Dover Democrats had reached the bottom of the barrel, they surprise again,” Sen. Lavelle said. “First, they wanted to eliminate the ability for Delawareans to deduct their charitable donations. Next, they took all Grant-In-Aid funding away from nonprofits. Now, they’re holding nonprofits hostage once again.”

State House Minority Leader Danny Short said the bill was filed around 11 p.m. and immediately sent into a meeting of the House Appropriations Committee, violating the House Rule mandating a 24-hour public notice before such consideration. The measure was released in minutes, without giving lawmakers a chance to read the bizarre 28-page hybrid bill and without taking public comment.

Before leading House Republicans out of the chamber in protest of the breached protocols, Rep. Short made some brief remarks to the chamber, lambasting House Democrats for their sleazy tactics:

*“This is a pathetic attempt to establish a false equivalency. The money exists to fully fund a Grants-in-Aid measure, yet you are linking it to a tax bill that will not stand on its own merits. House and Senate Democrats entirely control the budgetary process and are fully responsible for defunding Grants-in-Aid during yesterday’s action. This is the epitome of everything we should not be doing – establishing major public policy initiatives in the dark of night.”*

Without the 16 members of the Republican Caucus of the 41-member House of Representatives, there were not sufficient votes remaining in the chamber to pass the bill that requires a super-majority of at least 31 members. Democrats still pressed ahead with the futile vote, which failed.

Speaker of the House Pete Schwartzkopf said he will bring the bill back for another vote today.

Rep. Short said House Republicans would offer their own Grants-in-Aid Bill today that maintains the current fiscal year's level of funding for the non-profit groups. He said the bill would be financed with a mix of budget cuts and funding sources Republicans would also be introducing later today.