

Concerned about state cuts

Local area legislators recently held a budget briefing with citizens in Brainerd to discuss the recent omnibus bills passing through the Minnesota House of Representatives and the future direction of our state. Over 25 people attended and made their voices heard.

Those who attended expressed their deep concerns about the all-cuts and hidden fee approach pushed by the Republican majority and the devastating negative impacts it could have on our community. People are worried that Minnesota's schools and universities will no longer deliver the great education that our children need. They're concerned about deep cuts to nursing homes and other programs that help keep our seniors independent and in their homes, like Meals on Wheels, and transit operations. They're concerned that cuts to aid to communities will result in reduced services and continued increases in property taxes.

Fundamentally, they're concerned that the great state that they love will no longer be the same if these Republican budget bills become law. One constituent in particular bemoaned the rhetoric hiding the true picture of these bills. Others asked why Sen. Gazelka was unwilling to work with me in obtaining the funding for a Brainerd Veterans Nursing Home. This is a project that would help our area veterans and deserves serious consideration.

We all know that cuts have to be made, but they must be made responsibly and aided by some revenue. Cuts alone will decimate our economy, cause job losses, drive up property taxes even further, and reduce services that people rely on every day. We need a balanced approach, and a responsible budget solution that protects the middle class, seniors, the disabled, and students.

Rep. John Ward

DFL-Brainerd