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A tease on the Governor's State of the State address

The Governor is just about to give his State of the State address for 2008, and we will have more details (and the full speech for you later). Until then --- knowing that all of you are just waiting with baited breath to hear this --- the Governor's Office released a 'teaser' on the SOS address. In that case, they provided the media with some selected language they want to emphasize. Without our editorial comment yet, here is what they handed out:

January 08, 2008

*Excerpts from the State of the State speech, posted at Capitol Alert,
<http://www.sacbee.com/static/weblogs/capitolalert/latest/009901.html>*

The governor's office has teased out a few key paragraphs of what's scheduled to be a 30-minute speech.

The governor talks about ending autopilot spending and implementing education reforms this year, even though "this is not the year to talk about money."

Here are the excerpts:

In any number of areas, we've tackled politically risky things that no one in the past wanted to touch. To me, this is progress. And now, we must make progress on another problem that's been put off for many years.

...

The problem is that, while revenues are flat, automatic formulas are increasing spending by 7.3 percent. Even a booming economy can't meet that kind of increase. So the system itself is the problem.

...

We need more stability.

...

The first year I was here, I tried to get the legislature to pass a constitutional amendment to limit spending—but I failed. Then, in 2005, I tried to convince the voters to pass a constitutional amendment to control the budget—but that failed, too.

So, for several years, we took actions that balanced the budget as long as the economy was booming. For several years, we kept the budget wolf from the door . . .but the wolf is back.

It used to be that Sacramento plugged deficits by grabbing money everywhere it could—pension funds, local governments, bonds, gas taxes meant for transportation. But we tightened the noose by taking away those options. We passed Proposition 1A, Proposition 58 and Proposition 42. We now have no way out . . . except to face our budget demons.

To address next year's \$14 billion deficit, in two days I will submit a budget that is difficult. It does not raise taxes. It cuts the increase in spending. And it cuts that spending across the board.

...

We cannot continue to put people through the binge and purge of our budget process. It is not fair. It is not reasonable. It is not in the best interests of anyone.

So I am again proposing a constitutional amendment so that our spending has some relationship to our revenues.

...

It makes me proud as governor that a recent survey found that 23 out of the top 100 public schools in the nation were in California. I would like to congratulate the teachers, principals, administrators and all who are responsible for these remarkable schools. There are other good things, too.

The number of high school students taking advanced math and science courses has increased 53 percent since 2003. That's terrific for our hi-tech future. And we have other good education news, but as you know, it is not all good.

Our dropout rate is between 15 and 30 percent. We don't even know. This is not just a statistic. These are children lost in a black hole of ignorance, poverty and crime. Our schools have 30 percent fewer teachers and half the number of counselors than other schools in the U.S.

Everyone knows that to dramatically change our education system we have to undertake reforms, and we have to fund those reforms. In light of the current budget situation, this is not the year to talk about money. I do believe, however, we still must undertake reforms right now in the schools that need our help most.

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