



Senate 9 Town Hall

2009 General Assembly  
Legislative Update

# Introductions

**Senator David Schultheis**

**Senate District 9**

Rep. Amy Stephens

House District 20

Rep. Kent Lambert

House District 14

# 2009 Session in Review

- Ruling Party Fails To Lead
- Flurry of Fees Grows Government
- Clear Contrast on Crime

# One Step Forward-One Step Back

Gov. Ritter labeled transportation "Job 1" before session. He signed SB-108 (FASTER), a new car tax, for the purpose of providing transportation with a long-term funding stream to address dangerous roads and bridges.

Gov. Ritter signed Senate Bill 228 to eliminate the only long-term General Fund revenue source for transportation and maintenance needs.

# One Step Forward-One Step Back

Gov. Ritter implemented a state hiring freeze in October of 2008 to achieve cost savings for the state. According to the governor's office, the freeze saved approximately \$12 million because 436 positions/contracts were frozen.

Gov. Ritter signed SB-259 (the budget), lifting the hiring freeze and adding 1400 new employees. Adds 30% more positions to state government than were temporarily 'frozen' by Gov. Ritter. Each additional FTE costs the state on average \$46,000 a year. 9

# One Step Forward-One Step Back

Gov. Ritter's budget office, issued optimistic forecasts through the end of 2008. In January, the reality of the national recession finally hit. In presenting recommendations to the JBC, the governor emphasized the difficult choices necessary to address the budget shortfall.

Gov. Ritter's office spent more than \$80,000 in travel expenses for a taxpayer-funded junket to China for himself and 10 others. Gov. Ritter's office continues to defend the expenses.

# One Step Forward-One Step Back

On opening day of the 2009 session, Gov. Ritter and Democrat legislative leaders focused on the need to address jobs and the economy.

Democrat leaders introduced a limited package of economic proposals but passed many proposals on environmental policies, social issues and other special interests. Gov. Ritter signed onerous new oil and gas rules into law that opponents argue drive companies and jobs out of the state.

# Fees for Families-Fat for Government

Overall, Democrats proposed increased taxes and fees of more than \$1 billion for Colorado families over the next two years.

Democrats passed Senate Bill 228, eliminating a long-standing limit on state spending and allowing for the expansion of government programs and bureaucracy.

# Fees for Families-Fat for Government

Democrats introduced numerous proposals to increase vehicle registration fees. Two proposals passed, SB-108 and SB-2, costing Coloradans more than an additional \$200 million a year.

Gov. Ritter and Democrat leaders increased government bureaucracy by more than 1400 employees just this year. The total number of new government employees added to the payroll since Gov. Ritter came into office is now <sup>13</sup>4400.

# Fees for Families-Fat for Government

Democrats passed what opponents argue is a new “sick tax” on patients (HB-1293). The bill imposes new hospital charges of more than \$330 million a year.

Democrat leaders attempted to bring government-run health care to Colorado with HB-1273.

# Fees for Families-Fat for Government

Democrats increased fees for the purchase of a marriage license. SB-68 would result in almost \$1 million per year in additional taxes on marriage licenses.

SB-88 expands taxpayer-paid benefits to same-sex partners of state employees, at a potential cost to taxpayers of \$350,000 per year.

# Fees for Families-Fat for Government

Democrats passed SB-276 to increase property taxes for seniors by almost \$100 million a year by temporarily suspending the Senior Property Tax Exemption.

Senate Bill 291 would financially punish districts that vote to lower property taxes for families and seniors.

# Fees for Families-Fat for Government

Democrats proposed several fee increases for tire disposal, despite the creation in 2007 of a well-financed agency to address the issue. Together, SB-31 and SB-289 would have charged Coloradans an additional \$4.8 million a year.

Senate Bill 180 allows government public safety workers to strike, and eliminates home rule rights for Colorado Springs and ten other cities in order to force mandatory collective bargaining.

**Colorado families continue to pay more because of Gov. Ritter's \$342 million property tax increase, which he passed in 2007 without a vote of the people.**

	2007 Session Fees In Millions of Dollars	2008 Session Fees In Millions of Dollars	2009 Session Fees* In Millions of Dollars	Totals In Millions of Dollars
FY 2007-09	\$18.5			\$18.5
FY 2008-09	\$14.7	\$20.6		\$35.3
FY 2009-10		\$20.8	\$562.8	\$583.6
FY 2010-11			\$641.8	\$641.8
				\$1,279.2

## Republican and Democrat Efforts on Crime

Republicans sponsored House Bills 1132 and 1163 to protect children from sexual crimes initiated using text messages or the Internet, and to strengthen Colorado's child pornography laws.

Democrats killed HB-1144, a Republican attempt to bring Jessica's Law to Colorado to deter sexual predators who target children, and severely limited HB-1163.

## Republican and Democrat Efforts on Crime

Republicans sponsored SB-241 to bring Katie's Law to Colorado to prevent already-identified suspects from slipping unnoticed through the system if they are arrested on charges for another crime.

Democrats sponsored HB-1274 to repeal the death penalty in Colorado without a vote of the people. HB-1274 was killed in the Senate on the last day of the session.

## Republican and Democrat Efforts on Crime

Republicans sponsored Senate Bill 231 to continue the state's fight against methamphetamine.

Gov. Ritter publicly announced his support for bringing Guantanamo terrorists to be housed in Colorado.

# Republican and Democrat Efforts on Crime

Republicans sponsored House Bill 1081 to extend the time investigators and prosecutors have to solve vehicular homicide cases.

Democrats sponsored Senate Bill 286 to reduce prison sentences, allowing criminals back on the streets, in order to cut prison costs.

## Republican and Democrat Efforts on Crime

Republicans sponsored Senate Bill 135 to improve the accuracy of reporting on the number of parole releases.

Democrats sponsored SB-288 to limit the number of criminals sent to prison each year by limiting the number of beds available in those prisons.

# Other Observations

- Full scale assault on TABOR
  - Key provisions cancelled by Supreme Court
  - Allowed billions in new property tax increases
  - New attacks of tax deductions and credits
  - “We shirk our duty if we allow a vote of the people”
- All efforts to control illegal immigration lost
- Corrupt and partisan election procedures
  - Killed Rep. Stephens’ proposal to make it a crime to bribe or extort initiative sponsors
- “Social networking” has good potential
- Pastors Day at the Capitol
- April TEA Party
- Charter schools and gun rights did pretty well

# Swine/H1N1 Virus

- [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#)

[www.cdphe.state.co.us/epr/H1N1.html](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/epr/H1N1.html)

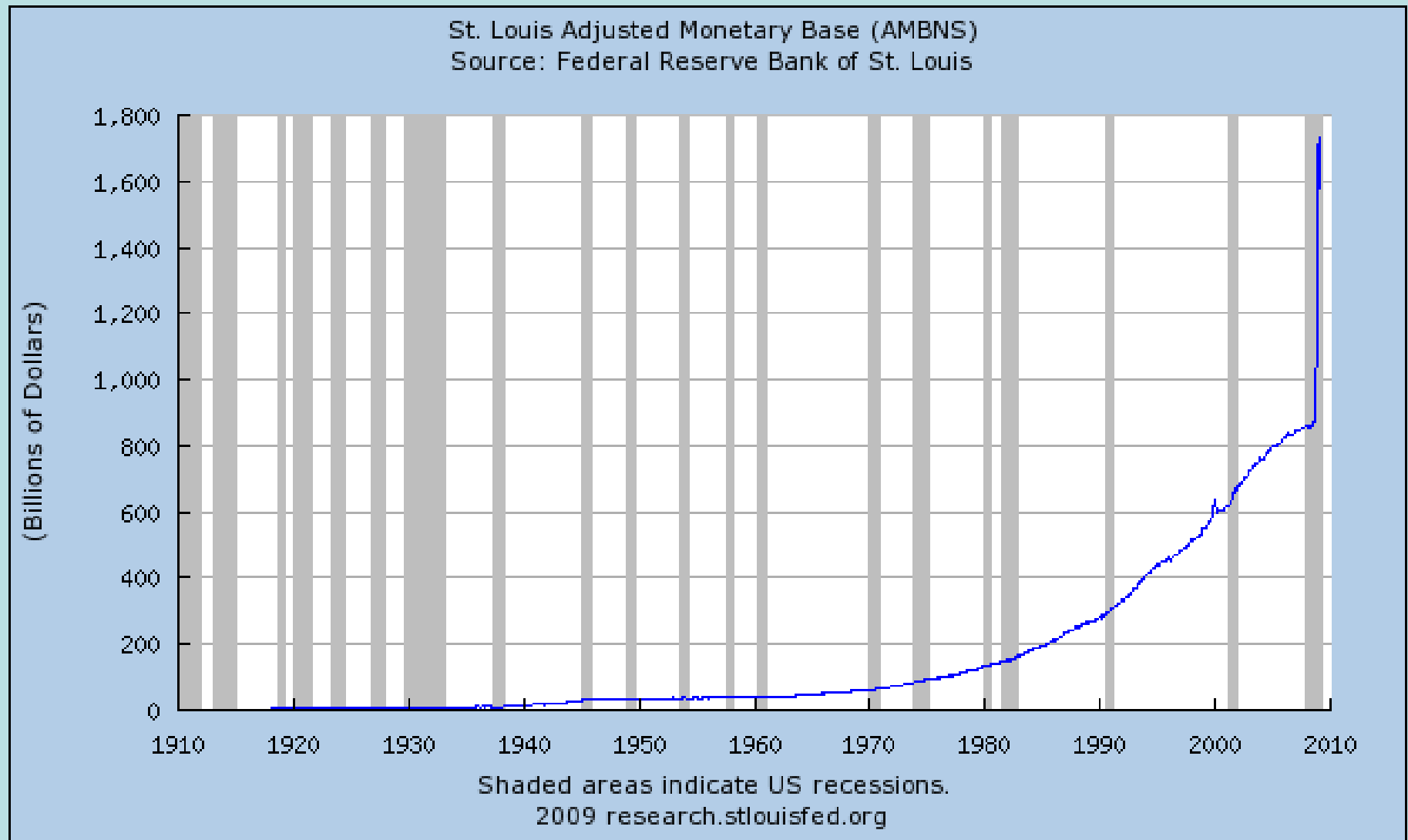
- [Center for Disease Control](#)

[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu)

# The Economic Crisis

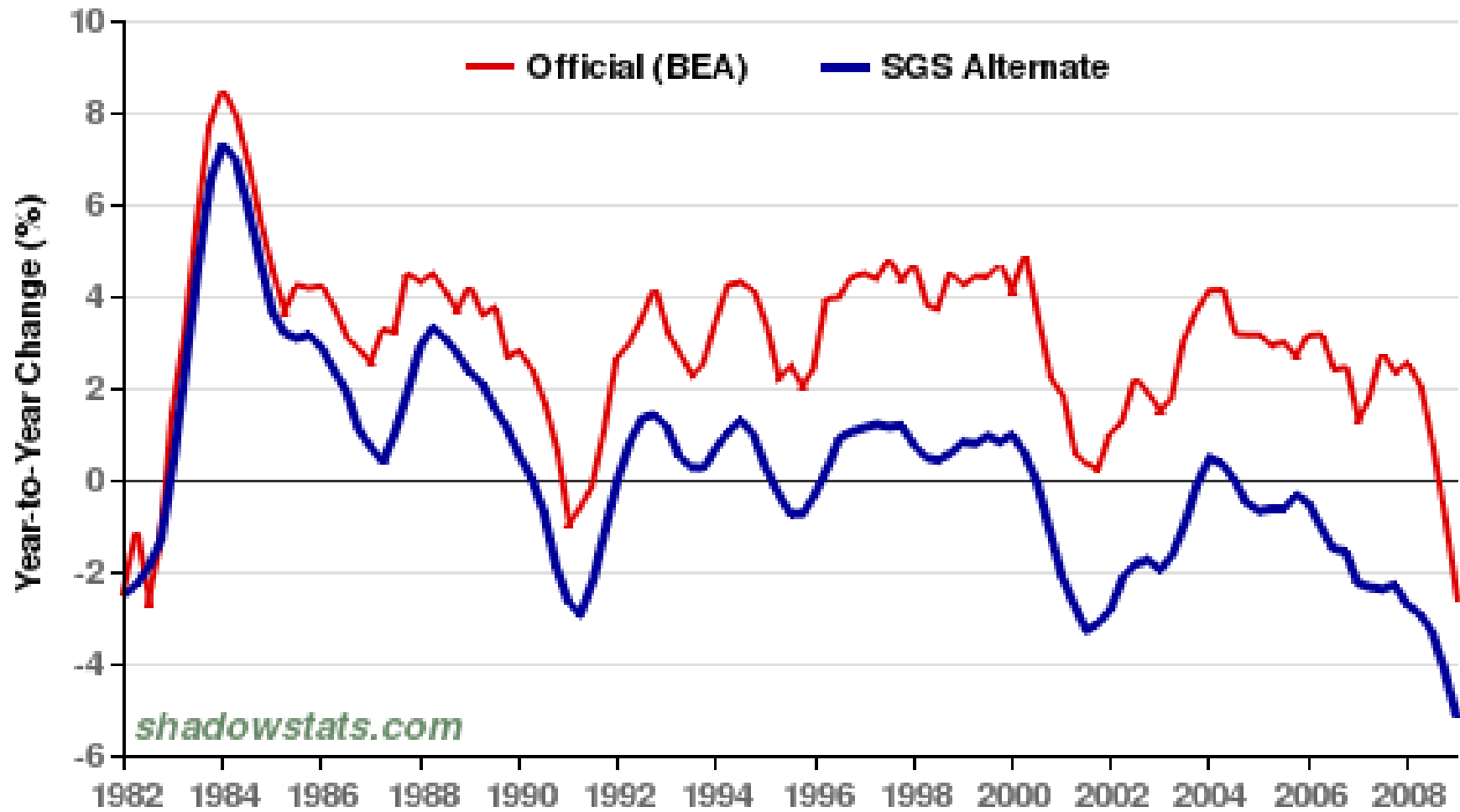
The reality driving the budget

# Series: AMBNS, St. Louis Adjusted Monetary Base



## GDP Annual Growth - Official vs. SGS

Through 2009Q1 (ShadowStats.com, BEA)



## Unemployment Rate - Official (U-3 & U-6) vs. SGS Alternate Monthly S.A. through April 2009 (ShadowStats.com, BLS)

