

## Stepping up

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By: ed

Of the 14 Republicans in the state Senate, only two had the courage to show up Tuesday to present their budget proposal to a joint hearing of state lawmakers -- Sen. E.J. Pipkin, of the Eastern Shore, and Frederick's own Sen. David Brinkley.

The rest chose to stay home with their ball, proving to us and a wider audience, that national-style extremist partisanship is now the political norm in Annapolis.

The senators have developed their own budget bill proposal with a series of measures to trim about \$1 billion from Gov. Martin O'Malley's more than \$13 billion budget and eventually bring revenue in line with spending. It doesn't entirely wipe out the \$2 billion deficit, but it's a fine start.

"Our challenge as a legislature is to be forthcoming," Brinkley said Thursday. "The mantra will be: We've run out of money, we've run out of time and we've run out of excuses."

Presenting the budget measures as a bill will allow full and thorough analysis and debate. Its merits will be put to the test.

Brinkley and Pipkin's proposal drew a cautious but positive response from the powerful chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Delegate Norman Conway, a Democrat from the Eastern Shore.

"If there's things there that we can utilize -- and I think there are -- we'll use them, we'll incorporate them," he told The Gazette.

Much of the burden to even the financial slate in Brinkley and Pipkin's proposal will fall to the counties. Bigger jurisdictions that receive the most state money will be hit hardest. [Frederick](#) County's share will be \$25.8 million, according to figures obtained by The [Frederick](#) News-Post from the governor's office.

No doubt the most outcry will come from areas that would be hit the hardest -- Montgomery, Prince George's and Baltimore city together would be accountable for about \$350 million.

This is only fair -- they have enjoyed the state's largesse in the boom times. It's only fair they should repay the favor in the bust. According to Brinkley, it is that aid to counties that is breaking the state's back.

Apparently the state's Republican senators, with the exception of Brinkley and Pipkin, have failed to understand the national mood.

We wrote last week about a CBS News/New York Times poll that reported 81 percent of voters feel incumbents in Congress should be kicked out of office.

That could happen here at all levels of government -- remember the clean sweep at [Frederick](#) City Hall last year? If the election were a coal mine, some canaries should be getting pretty nervous right now.

Voters have lots of reasons for wanting to oust so many sitting officials. To that list we hope they will add "sitting on their hands" in an economy when real work and real compromise were required.