

Hargrove floor statement on Republican caucus committee structure

Local News

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OLYMPIA ‐ Sen. Jim Hargrove, D-Hoquiam, made the following statement on the committee structure proposed by the Republican caucus:

“I was very excited a couple of years ago when the Senate started moving in a bipartisan direction. Senator Murray and Senator Zarelli came up with what was the first real bipartisan budget in my 29 year career. In the past, we had seen examples of one or two members going along with the votes of the other party, but this was the first time the Senate as a whole acknowledged that working together was the only way to pass a two-year spending plan that took into account the diverse opinions of the body. In the Human Services and Corrections committee I chaired for years with Senator Carrell and Val Stevens, it was so bipartisan that I think that nearly every bill came out unanimously. One of my press people has actually confirmed that. In fact, I am so bipartisan that sometimes my party wonders if I’m in my party or the other party.

“That brings me to today and the question of whether this is bipartisan or not? It depends on how we go forward from here. So far we are not off to a great start as far as negotiating the rules and working together. But, I am hopeful that we will move forward in a bipartisan manner. The majority has 25 votes and it is up to you as to whether this is going to operate in a true bipartisan manner or not. A bipartisan fashion is not one or two in my opinion. I think we have misused that term, even as bills have been passed over the years. I don’t think one person from the other party voting for a bill makes it bipartisan. In my committee, Senator Carrell and I negotiated every bill in such a way that having that open communication and that give and take allowed almost everything to come out unanimously. It is my hope that that is where we are going to go from here. As I said, we’re not off to a great start, because we didn’t have that communication. But the proof will be in the pudding. At the end of this session we will see if we have a majority of the policies on the budget, on education, on these larger issues; if they come out with 35 votes, or whether they come out with 25 votes and that will be the proof.

“I stand ready, as I think everyone here does, to work in a true bipartisan fashion, because that is what it is going to take to finish our work and get out of here.”