

Young Candidate Seeks to Unite Citizens Over AZ Budget Crisis

By Houston Barnett-Gearhart

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After adjournment around 7:30 this morning on the 171st day of the legislative session, the Arizona Legislature pushed through a nine-bill legislative package that included \$8.4 billion in general fund spending.

However, what the House and Senate approved budget plan did not include was the 1-cent-per-dollar increase in the state sales tax that Governor Brewer referred to as the cornerstone of an agreement she had reached with GOP legislative leaders. As a result, Brewer signed the budget but issued line-item vetoes on select provisions that will allow her to add back spending for “vital services and public safety.” Nonetheless, Brewer claims the state still remains short on cash to cover its obligations, and consequently called a special session a mere 5 hours after lawmakers wrapped up this morning's session.

While the intra-GOP fight that marked the brunt of Thursday's budget negotiations grabbed headlines, legislative Democrats bewailed their exclusion from months of budget talks, a comment on the multifaceted and far-reaching partisanship many are saying lies at the epicenter of the current budget crisis. Senator Minority Whip Linda Lopez stated that “it was sad the Democrats were never included in the negotiations ... if they had been, I think we'd have seen a better outcome for the state of Arizona,” while to the same partisan tune, Senator Ron Gould characterized the months-long tax fight as a “battle for the heart and soul of the Republican party.”

Although having been at war with her own party, Brewer asked in a formal statement on the budget released today “that legislators re-dedicate themselves in a bi-partisan fashion to crafting a budget that reflects favorably on the future of Arizona,” while at the same time grandstanding that due to her actions, state government services will continue to function, paying no dues to the Arizona Legislature's efforts. It is for this reason that Independent candidate for Arizona's 2010 gubernatorial race, John Paul Mitchell, has called upon the citizens of Arizona to “either recall all legislative leaders responsible for the budget crisis [along with the governor] or unify the House and Senate,” with both political parties ensuring that the events of the last couple of days never happens again. It is under the latter theme of partisanship that Mitchell claims to function as not only an individual, but as a man running for political office.

“Although, I cannot say I blame Governor Brewer for calling a special session over this budget crisis,” Mitchell stated, “she should have been more proactive in working with all legislators from both parties over the last six months. The Arizona Legislature as it is now is a dog-eat-dog power struggle for control. It is this power struggle that got us here in the first place.” In recent statements, Mitchell sought to evoke hope in Arizonan citizens, stating that “we can make it through these challenging times when we are willing to bring citizens and officials together in a unified assembly,” something he has been relaying to his followers on Twitter, a free social messaging utility for staying connected in real-time. It is on Twitter that thousands have been sharing their thoughts, opinions, concerns and questions with regards to the budget crisis under the hash tag #azfails; many of which have begun to rally under Mitchell's “bi-partisanship or recall” sentiments. There is no question that many are frustrated, confused, disillusioned or downright infuriated with the incapability of the Arizona Legislature and Brewer to reach a budget deal. In a response to a question from a follower on Twitter, Mitchell reaffirmed “that as the people, we have the ability to recall our elected and appointed officials.”

Due to all of the above, Mitchell had this to say, “I would like to deliver the Arizona Legislature an ultimatum on behalf of our angry, disheartened citizens of this state. Fix the budget without cutting

spending on education, necessary social services like child protection, and other state necessities. If our elected officials are not able to get along long enough to draft and propose a responsible budget, then the people's only action will be a recall election for every seat in the House and Senate. I call upon the people of Arizona to unite in this effort to demand our elected leaders do the right thing, or else face a total recall of the legislative body."

John Paul Mitchell is an Independent candidate for Arizona's 2010 gubernatorial race. As a fiscal conservative and young businessmen at 30-years-old, Mitchell believes government should be run like a business. This belief stems from the irresponsibility of politicians, from both the executive and legislative branches of our state republic, to balance a responsible budget. Additionally, Mitchell has authored a book titled "No More Taxes," a historical and spiritual book on the ethics and morality of money and taxes that lies down the fundamentals of why America was founded, why it was necessary for international bankers to start a centralized banking system, and how the 16th Amendment to the Constitution was never legally ratified. Mitchell is available for interviews and additional comments. For additional information, please visit <http://www.aznextgov.org>.

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