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Subject: Government Restructuring

The senate session began at noon yesterday, and I watched the proceedings from the opening until about 3:30. Several relatively minor issues were addressed during the first 30 minutes, the H.3066 came up. Several minor amendments were offered and approved, most by voice vote. Then a Tom Davis amendment to procurement was introduced, which led to a debate that was still going on when I left. Tom's amendment was to move the State Engineer and IT services to the DOA. Apparently the bill came out of committee with these 2 offices in the DOA. A Leatherman amendment, approved last week, moved them to the Procurement Oversight Committee that Leatherman wants. At one point, Tom was challenged as to why he wanted to split up procurement. He stated that he did not and that his goal was to have all procurement under the executive branch, but he introduced this amendment thinking that at least that part might pass now. No way! Leatherman is a craft old man is totally full of bs. He presented arguments like:

1. Having the procurement under a 5 member board means that there are 5 sets of eyes looking at procurement to make sure nothing bad is done. He ranted on this for 15 minutes. The other senators and we are to believe that he, the governor, the state treasurer, the comptroller are looking over bids and purchase orders? Yeah, right. Tom Davis later made Leatherman look like the idiot he is over this issue.
2. He claimed that a 5 member board would prevent money being spent incorrectly, that cannot then be recovered. He pointed out several examples, like the DSS overrun. According to him, under his board, that would never happen. He failed to mention the fact that the DOT could not pay bills last year, that the retirement system has \$13 billion or so in unfunded commitments, and that we still owe the federal government several hundred million for unemployment compensation, etc.
3. He argued that if the procurement director is pressured by one board member to do something wrong, he has 4 other people he can go to. Hugh has obviously never run a business. How would you like to report to 5 people?
4. At one point, Leatherman complained that someone wanted procurement badly, but that he did not know who or why. He would lead you to think that there is some dark force out there trying to take away his power. It never occurs to him that we the taxpayers and citizens of the state want real representation.

I won't bore you with the other absolutely ridiculous arguments that were made by Leatherman and McConnell, with strong support from Alexander, Malloy, and Ford. Leatherman and McConnell do a tag team routine that is interesting to watch, and both are obviously very comfortable with their power. Malloy and Ford can talk indefinitely without really saying anything, and every time I have seen them, that is what I see. Frankly, I was embarrassed to see that these are the kind of senators we have in this state. Tom Davis stood tall and strong, and exposed most of their bs for what it is, as tactfully as possible. He got some support from Senators Gregory and Massey, but no one else. I checked this morning and found that Tom's amendment was tabled. The votes were close, typically 23-19. I came away with the feeling that we are not going to get anything accomplished until we replace more senators with true conservatives, and get rid of some of the fools.

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