



Sen. Damon Thayer a Champion for Taxpayers in the Senate

Kentucky ranks poorly on many lists. An article from *Forbes* last year listed Kentucky as the worst-run state in the country. The *Institute for Truth in Accounting* calls Kentucky a 'Bottom 5 Sinkhole State' due to nearly \$30 billion in unfunded debt and obligations, largely from the state pension system. Every dollar of debt is pressure for future tax increases, and \$30 billion is equivalent to \$23,800 for every Kentucky taxpayer.

Every year, the Kentucky Club for Growth compiles a scorecard ranking our legislature according to how they have voted to address Kentucky's challenges and protect Kentucky's taxpayers. In the history of our scorecard, no Senator has opposed unnecessary spending and held the line against tax increases more often than Damon Thayer.

A few years ago in an article about our rankings, Sen. Damon Thayer noted that after receiving a low ranking in our initial scorecard in 2007, he "rededicated [him]self to fiscal conservatism."

While Thayer ranked 25th in the Senate in 2007, he has become a leader for fiscal conservatives since. His ranking rose to 2nd in 2008, and he received the top ranking in the Senate in 2009 and 2010.

But votes don't tell the whole story. Thayer has also become a dependable sponsor and champion of legislation to protect the Kentucky taxpayer.

He has sponsored legislation to eliminate the unnecessary office of State Treasurer and written bills to exempt school construction projects from artificial prevailing wage requirements.

When he discovered that citizens and businesses were paying storm water taxes to a storm water system that didn't serve them, he introduced legislation to correct the problem. He also crafted legislation that would close property tax loopholes and require all taxing authorities to adhere to the 4% property tax cap.

This year, he was lead sponsor on SB 2, a bill that would address Kentucky's largest financial challenge. SB 2 would reform the state retirement system and reduce the state's \$30 billion unfunded liability.

For years, Thayer has introduced legislation to require the government to post spending online. This year SB 7 finally passed and Kentucky taxpayers will have a resource to find out exactly how state government is spending our tax dollars.

He created new accountability for regional sanitation commissions – like SD1 in Northern Kentucky – by requiring them to post expenses online and requiring rate increases to be approved by fiscal courts that are accountable to the voting ratepayers.

His record isn't perfect, but his commitment to government transparency, low taxes and controlled spending is unmatched in the Senate.

Andy Hightower is the Executive Director of the Kentucky Club for Growth, a bipartisan advocacy organization dedicated to economic freedom, limited government, lower taxes and less regulation. To find out more about the scorecard and the Club, please visit our website at www.kyclubforgrowth.org, or email andy@kyclubforgrowth.org.