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Monday, April 19, 2010

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Rep. Gene Ward's totally awesome budget game

April 16th, 2010 by [Stephen Downes](#)

With the Legislature nearing the finish line, there are still plenty of tough choices to be made to balance the state's sorry budget. Should we raise the barrel tax? Deny tax credits to job-creating high-technology companies? Eliminate general excise tax exemptions for those who enjoy them now? Raid special funds? Take away the counties' share of the transient accommodations tax? Raise taxes and fees on liquor, banks, insurance transactions, traffic abstracts and other specialized targets? Have you given up yet? No?

Then have we got a game for you. It's called "Balance the Budget Without Raising Taxes," an Excel-based exercise in budget balancing courtesy of Republican Rep. Gene Ward. You can make some of the same choices facing your legislators, and see the results on the bottom line. You can get it [here](#). You'll need Microsoft Excel on your computer and a wonkish fascination with subjects ranging from conveyance taxes to generic trials for psychotropic medications. It's no [Halo 3](#) — as you might surmise by the title — but it's still an interesting way to get an idea of what's being debated in the Capitol.

And naturally, "Balance the Budget Without Raising Taxes" is not just a game, it's a [Facebook](#) page for fans of fiscal conservatism (or the inexplicably fascinating Rep. Ward).

We'll be writing about the budget next week, looking specifically at tax proposals. We welcome your thoughts on the subject, on this blog, our website, our Letters to the Editor e-mail, Twitter, etc. etc.

Tags: [budget](#), [Excel](#), [Gene Ward](#), [Hawaii](#), [taxes](#)

This entry was posted on Friday, April 16th, 2010 at 12:05 am and is filed under [1](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.

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- 1 (113)

• Archives

- April 2010
- March 2010
- February 2010
- January 2010
- December 2009
- November 2009
- October 2009
- September 2009
- August 2009
- July 2009
- June 2009
- May 2009
- April 2009
- March 2009
- February 2009
- January 2009
- December 2008
- November 2008
- October 2008
- September 2008
- August 2008
- July 2008
- June 2008
- May 2008
- April 2008
- March 2008

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- One Doctor's Opinion
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- The Pipeline
- Prep Talk
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