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## Gibbons' performance earns "B" grade from Libertarian think tank

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LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL CAPITAL BUREAU

CARSON CITY -- Lame duck Gov. Jim Gibbons received a "B" grade Thursday for his performance as governor from the Cato Institute.

The Libertarian think tank gave Gibbons a good grade largely because of his efforts to cut spending and prevent tax increases since 2008.

Four governors, led by Mark Sanford of South Carolina, received "A" grades. Gibbons was one of 15 governors given "B" grades. His 61 score tied him with several others as the eighth best governor.

"Nevada is enduring tough economic times, and government tax collections have fallen substantially," stated the Cato Institute in its report. "Governor Gibbons has generally refused to increase taxes to make up for the shortfall because that would make the economic situation even worse. In proposing spending cuts rather than tax increases to balance the budget, Gibbons noted, 'It is not the role of the state government to put people out of work.' "

Gibbons, 65, remained hospitalized at Renown Regional Medical Center in Reno on Thursday as he recovers from a broken pelvis suffered when he was thrown from a horse on Sept. 21.

His spokesman, Daniel Burns, said the governor will be informed of the report.

He said Gibbons is reading newspapers, keeping track of news events and talking with his staff on state matters.

Gibbons has declined phone interviews.

"A lot of things he tried to do are starting to have an impact," Burns said. "Sales are up in certain areas. The one thing he wished would not have happened is the increase in the business tax. He thinks that is a big contributor to unemployment."

Burns said Gibbons is receiving limited therapy and working to get out of bed and into a wheelchair. He still is suffering from pain.

The doctors have not told him when he can leave the hospital, but the governor intends to return to the Governor's Mansion in Carson City when he is released.

While Gibbons fought tax increases and endorsed more spending cuts, he largely was unsuccessful in his dealings with a Democrat-dominated Legislature.

Over Gibbons' veto, legislators nearly doubled the payroll tax paid by employers to the current rate of 1.17 percent of each employee's wages. Unless reauthorized in 2011, the rate will drop to 0.63 percent after June 30.

Gibbons vetoed a record 48 bills in 2009, including the bills that increased taxes.

Then in June, he became the first governor in history to lose a primary election when he was defeated 2-to-1 by Republican Brian Sandoval.

The Cato Institute gave Republican governors an average score of 55, while Democratic governors got a 47 score.

Only one Democratic governor, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, received an "A" grade. Two other Republicans, Bobby Jindal of Louisiana and Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, received "A" grades..

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger received a "D" score. Eight governors receive "F" scores. All but one were Democrats.

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ON THE INTERNET:

Cato's "Fiscal Policy Report Card on America's Governors: 2010": <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/PA668.pdf>

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