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## New Branstad? Foes intrigued, allies miffed

By DAVID YEPSEN

Register Staff Writer

Calvin Hultman and Donald Avenson were dipping snuff at the rear of the Iowa House chamber last week before Terry Branstad arrived to give his budget message.

Word was out. The Republican governor was going to propose a massive tax revision that would kill a policy long-cherished by the GOP and fought by Democrats: the deductibility of federal income taxes on state tax returns.

"I'm going to give him a change-of-party registration card," laughed Avenson, the Democratic speaker of

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the House. Hultman, leader of the Republican minority in the Iowa Senate, just worked his quid in silence. "Cal thinks the only thing that's missing in the speech is repeal of right to work," Avenson joked.

Later, Hultman said, "I wouldn't say we've been betrayed, but . . ."

The proposals made to Iowa lawmakers in the past two weeks have shuffled Iowa's political deck, turning enemies into allies and friends into foes. There are some indications the changes will continue.

Beyond the intrigue, the new spirit of compromise changed the political

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## Branstad tack branded 'flip-flops' or 'flexibility'

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forecasts at the Statehouse and are likely to have an effect on the way lowans live. For example, it is now likely they will pay higher state income taxes to pump more money into local schools.

Just as the hard economic times are changing the way many lowans do business, they are changing the way statehouse politicians do business. For example:

\* Branstad has struck an alliance with the Iowa State Education Association to spend \$151 million more on schools next year. For years, the two were bitter political foes.

\* David Stanley, head of lowans for Tax Relief and the man who ran as the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in Iowa in 1968 and 1974, was criticizing Branstad at Statehouse press conferences. Democrats were praising Branstad.

\* Branstad, who defeated Democrat Lowell Junkins for governor by running on a program attacking tax increases and borrowing money through bonding, has proposed a 4-cent increase in the gas tax, a cigarette-tax increase, and an increase in the amount lowans pay in state income taxes. He has also proposed to borrow \$65 million to build a laser facility and a molecular-biology facility at two state universities.

Branstad appeared to be borrowing so many of Junkins' ideas that, after the speech, Democratic wags like Senate Majority Leader C.W. "Bill" Hutchins, an Audubon Democrat, were handing out Junkins campaign literature with Branstad's picture taped over it.

\* Perhaps the most telling evidence of the new spirit was how Branstad got a standing ovation from many Democrats during the speech. The ovation was arranged, Avenson, who personally walked to the House floor before the speech to organize it. The scene of Avenson grabbing his colleagues to stand up for Terry Branstad — who Avenson once called a "little twerp" — spoke volumes about the improved climate at the Capitol.

There were also indications that this "strange bedfellow, strange enemy" game of politics will continue at the Capitol.

For example, Democratic leaders were talking privately about taking some money away from education and putting more into programs for poor people. "Who will complain if teachers get \$150 million instead of \$150 million?" asked one Democratic leader. "Where do they have to go?"

Branstad aides were taking note of the same posture toward the

GOP critics. Time will heal their wounds, particularly as they look at the tax program. Besides, the GOP critics have nowhere to go.

Most of what Branstad proposed will be approved, but with Democratic "spins" to them. "He gave us all the right headings," Avenson said.

\* The income tax proposal will be approved but with changes. Democrats are talking about taking Branstad's two-bracket proposal and making it a flat proposal.



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