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"Where the Spirit of the Lord Is, There Is Liberty"—II Cor. 3:17



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Star Photo

JOSEPH DIOGUARDI

"We don't have a quarterback"

Ex-Lawmaker: U.S. Lacks Financial Direction

By TOM DAVIES

Star Staff Reporter

Adding a position to the federal government could do more to cut the federal deficit than all the work of this past session of Congress, according to a former congressman.

Joseph DioGuardi, a former Republican congressman from New York, said Monday the federal government lacked the financial direction required of even small businesses.

The federal government needs a chief financial officer to oversee the government's internal finances

after elected officials make the political decisions on budget policies, DioGuardi said.

"We don't have a quarterback when it comes to government financial matters," DioGuardi said.

DioGuardi, an accountant who was in Congress from 1985 to 1988, is at Ball State University as part of the College of Business's executive in residence program.

DioGuardi said during a news conference that much of the federal deficit came from mismanagement because several offices, rather than just one, were involved in financial management.

"That's not the way to run a business, much less a government," DioGuardi said.

As a conservative Republican, he does not like to criticize the military, DioGuardi said, but he pointed to the defense department as the source of much of the financial mismanagement.

He said the armed services spent about \$100 billion a year on equipment, much of which is stolen, lost or sold while still useful to the military.

"I think you could probably cut tens of billions of dollars" from the military budget through better

management, DioGuardi said.

DioGuardi is chairman of Truth in Government, a self-described federal watchdog organization.

DioGuardi said he opposed the budget agreement approved by Congress because it would do little to improve the economy.

He said the budget plan would have little success because it did not include the multibillion-dollar savings and loan bailout, because it continued to drain money from Social Security revenues and because it raised taxes.

"We need a lot of different things to change around in the budget

process before I'm going to be happy," DioGuardi said.

The budget agreement also pushes back to 1995 a balanced budget deadline set at 1990 only a few years ago, he said.

"When we started with Gramm-Rudman it was at least an attempt to put the brakes on government spending," DioGuardi said.

But by moving the deadline back, Congress is making it less likely that the Gramm-Rudman goal will be met, he said.

"It's like going halfway to the wall," he said. "You never get there."