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5, 2020, 4:50

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state aid programs which translates into significant property tax increases.

There will be Federal assistance in the billions of dollars to partially offset the loss of revenue but the major burden inevitably will fall on state government.

While Murphy has avoided recommending specific steps at this stage, he has raised the idea of billions of dollars in bonded indebtedness to supplement a belt-tightening austerity the likes of which hasn't been seen.

It will be on the fiscal battlefield that the partisan war will be fought. Some agreements may be reached, but many other money-saving proposals will generate significant controversy. Bonded debt in the billions of dollars will be particularly unpalatable and likely the subject of litigation on the question of whether such debt can be used constitutionally to finance ongoing operations.

As the pandemic hopefully wanes over the coming weeks and months, attention will turn to economic recovery and the path the Administration charts to regain fiscal stability.

The recent preliminary heel-nipping will increase in frequency and volume as the politically charged 2021 election year draws closer.

Murphy may well emerge from the public health crisis in a strong position, but it will be the fiscal crisis which will soon become dominant.

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