

House Republican Press Release

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Reps Hamzy, Burns: House Republicans Thwart Democrats' Tax Hike Plans



2008-09 Budget Averts Threat To CT Economy, Jobs; Increases Education Aid to Bristol by \$6,309,383

The 2008-09 budget approved by the state House of Representatives early Saturday avoids major tax increases, benefits Connecticut taxpayers, and shows that House Republican legislators had it right when they offered their 'No Tax Increase' alternative budget April 24th, state Representatives William A. Hamzy and Ron Burns said today.

"The budget that passed the House today is a victory for Connecticut's working families and a plus for the state's economic future," said Representative Hamzy, R-78th District, a Deputy House Minority Leader who helped negotiate the compromise package. "The \$1.7 billion overall tax hike the majority Democrats had proposed to pay for a 13.4 percent increase in spending would have stunted economic growth in our state. It would have chased more employers out of Connecticut, dried up the job market and forced more people to move to low tax states in the south and southwest whose economies are booming and jobs are plentiful."

"The 'No Tax Increase' budget we proposed earlier this year showed the people of Connecticut that there was a responsible and fiscally sound alternative to the Democrats' proposal which called for one of the biggest tax increases in over a decade," said Representative Burns, R-77th District, who serves on the budget-writing Appropriations Committee. "It enabled the Quinnipiac University poll to offer three budget choices to the voters they contacted in early May – the governor's proposal, the Democrats' package, and our alternative budget – and our proposal came in well ahead of the competition."

"The Quinnipiac Poll findings would not have been possible without our 'No Tax Increase' alternative and I'm very pleased that we were able to help avert major tax and spending hikes that could have had disastrous consequences for Connecticut's economy," Representative Burns said. "Although, I'm pleased that we were able to do our job and pass a budget that does not add to the tax burden Connecticut residents have to bear, I believe we have an obligation to restrain state spending as well. To do that, we need to evaluate current programs to determine whether they are accomplishing what they originally were proposed to do. Similarly, as state employees retire, we need to determine whether or not those positions are still necessary and either eliminate or redeploy those positions to understaffed departments or agencies."

"When we offered our alternative budget, we looked at previous budgets going back almost 20 years and found that in most of those years, state surpluses had been underestimated – often by wide margins," Representative Hamzy said. "We concluded that the 2007 surplus would once again significantly exceed projections – and we were right. The surplus is now approaching \$1 billion, which gave us the resources we need to provide the services the state really needs without raising taxes."

The 2008-09 budget increases Bristol's Education Cost Sharing grant from \$35,390,494 in 2007 to \$39,942,411 in 2008; and to \$41,699,977 in 2009 for an overall increase of \$6,309,383, the legislators said.