

House Republican Press Release

January 10, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

HOUSE REPUBLICANS CALL DEMOCRATIC POWER GRAB BAD FOR TAXPAYERS



HARTFORD – House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr. today accused Democrats of a “blatant political power grab” for trying to usurp the governor’s ability to control borrowing taxpayer money for pet local projects and attempts to set the agenda for bonding authorizations.

Cafero pointed to two proposed Democratic bills that would allow the majority Democrats to take away the governor’s authority to set Bond Commission agendas and permit towns and cities to get around the panel’s constraints on appropriating money for local projects.

“This legislation represents a drastic departure from the way we have always run the process of borrowing for large capital items,” said Cafero, the Norwalk Republican. “This is a blatant power grab that the Democrats want to break down any checks on the majority party’s quest to spend every available tax dollar.”

Cafero said the legislation clearly shows that the Democrats were not serious when they campaign on pledges to act fiscally responsible. This also sets up a show down with Republicans and Gov. M. Jodi Rell over how the legislature will work together. “The Democrats said they wanted a bipartisan effort in Hartford. They have the votes to do whatever they want and I don’t believe this is a good sign for the session,” Cafero said.

Until 1978, lawmakers did not even own a seat on the Bond Commission; only the state’s constitutional officers did. The Governor alone currently sets the agendas and calls the meetings. At least one out of every nine taxpayer dollars goes to pay for bonding projects and Republicans have said that they are concerned about Connecticut’s bonded indebtedness.

Cafero said the proposed bill to give towns and cities final authority to access Small Town Economic Assistance Programs funds “troubling.” He said local officials could simply deem a project “ready to go” and then access appropriations that may not have been officially authorized at the state level. “This is unprecedented in the way we do business in the legislature and would eviscerate the executive branch’s authority,” Cafero said

Cafero promised to work top defeat the bills and hoped that they would not come up for votes.