

House Republican Press Release

March 12, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

HOUSE LEADER CAFERO PUSHES FOR FLEXIBLE SCHOOL BOARD PUNISHMENT



SAYS LOCAL DISTRICTS, STUDENTS WOULD BENEFIT

HARTFORD – Local school boards would have greater latitude in disciplining students under a proposal promoted today by House Republican Leader state Rep. Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., of Norwalk who testified before the legislature’s Education Committee today.

Both the students and the schools would benefit from the more flexible rules Cafero has proposed, he said. Cafero’s proposal would allow districts to impose more productive penalties than simply kicking a student out of school for a period of time. First-time offenders could draw a creative service or task that would wipe their slate clean if there is no second offense.

“I believe we need to give local professional educators greater flexibility in disciplining students and the ability to create something good out of a negative situation. Right now, we don’t have that option at the local level, and this legislation would address that,” said Cafero.

Cafero also serves as the Norwalk school district’s expulsion hearing officer, a position he has held for more than 14 years. “A student simply being out of school for 10 days, I’m not sure that benefits anyone. The statutes do not allow some schools to consider better options, better choices,” Cafero said.

He said punishments should better fit the “crime” so that students come away with a better sense of right and wrong, and what it means in their daily school life. “We, of course, want to instill a sense of responsibility and show that there are real consequences for their actions. But we need to be more creative,” Cafero said.

Cafero also said that first-time punishments should be erased from a student’s record if there are no second incidents. He said that that young people who learn from their mistakes should be afforded a second chance.