

## House Republican Press Release

July 15, 2008  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### HOUSE REPUBLICANS PUSH FLEXIBLE STATE WORKFORCE HOURS; TEST TELECOMMUTING FIRST



#### *INNOVATIONS TO YIELD 'GREENER, LEANER GOVERNMENT,' MILLIONS IN GAS SAVINGS and CLEANER AIR*

HARTFORD – House Republicans today underscored their support for more flexible work weeks for state employees by promoting their own office plan to allow for telecommuting, a policy aimed at saving taxpayer dollars, making workers more productive and getting commuters off clogged highways.

“We want to make Connecticut and its government *‘Leaner and Greener’* with a test program to allow staff to work from home one day a week,” said **House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr. of Norwalk**. Four-day work weeks should also be considered, he said.

To highlight the telecommuting initiative, Cafero was joined at a Capitol press conference by staff member Lisa Roy and other Brookfield state Rep. David Scribner from their homes via telephone hook up. In order to implement the policy legislative leaders must agree to offer the telecommuting option, and Republicans are awaiting approval from Democrats on the trial program.

“Other states have turned thousands of lost commuting hours into productive work, saved workers millions in gas bills and reduced pollution and congestion,” Cafero said. “Not only will this not cost taxpayers a dime, it will save them in the long run through workplace efficiencies.”

Cafero noted that other states and at least seven towns and cities in Connecticut have also gone to four-day work weeks to save money which could be another option for the state. He said the flexible schedules will not work for all state agencies, but Connecticut needs to be creative. He outlined the pilot telecommuting program he hopes to test out over the next few months and evaluated:

- House Republican staff members could telecommute one day per week, ensuring that all their legislative responsibilities are covered;
- Staff would use laptop computers that are already available to communicate easily with the Legislative Office Building;

- Because the telecommuting would be staggered throughout the office, no disruption of service for constituents or anyone else who contacts the offices would take place;
- Similar programs have been tried in other states such as Arizona where state workers have **converted 181,000 hours of commuting time into productive working hours and reduced air pollution by 175,000 pounds;**
- A 2007 national study by the Consumer Electronics Association estimated that telecommuting saves enough energy in the traditional workplace to power one million households for a year. The same study determined that **3.9 million telecommuters saved 840 million gallons of gas.**
- *Telecommute Connecticut* estimates that employees who telecommute **save an estimated \$1,200 annually on gasoline.**

Cafero noted that Connecticut is one of 13 states that already allows for telecommuting for state workers when it is proved to be “cost effective.” Only 140 state workers participated last year.

“The state of Connecticut encourages private sector companies to allow their employees to telecommute. We need to take this initiative ourselves and make government more efficient and in the process, cut down on air pollution,” Cafero said. “We have the technology and the ability to make this a seamless transition that works for the state and the taxpayer. We hope this House Republican initiative will become the first step toward can become the model for state government,” Cafero said.