

House Republican Press Release

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House and Senate Republicans Call for Across-the-Board Spending Cuts to Fix \$300 Million Deficit



*New Capitol Signs, Reams of Paper Waste,
Pointless Legislative Sessions, Local Projects
All Add Up*

HARTFORD – Promising to lead by example in the face of worsening economics for Connecticut families and workers, House and Senate Republicans today proposed across-the-board spending cuts to eliminate the projected \$300 million budget deficit and highlighted government spending and Capitol projects the state cannot afford.

Republican House Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., of Norwalk and Senate Republican Leader John McKinney of Fairfield cited numerous examples of Capitol projects and budget items - from \$1.7 million for printing, to \$255,000 in new signage and wasteful special legislative sessions. They said Connecticut cannot afford these types of expenditures.

They called for immediate work on the budget with Democrats to come up with slightly less than 2 percent in cuts to the state's \$18 billion budget and not wait for more hearings or studies. They said many other states are cutting spending and Connecticut must do likewise.

Moreover, the Office of Legislative Management has requested a 7.9 percent increase for its operating budget. McKinney and Cafero today wrote to Senate President Donald Williams and house Speaker James Amann asking them to rescind their request and flat-fund the budget for 2009-11.

“Everywhere else in Connecticut people are tightening their belts because of today’s economic realities. Let’s lead by example and clean up ‘our house’ here at the Capitol and take steps to cut the programs and spending that we as lawmakers have direct control over,” Cafero said. He also cited the millions being spent on discretionary local projects for towns and cities that Democrats have asked for.

He added, “Taxpayers and voters have a right to know exactly how their elected officials will deal with this fiscal crisis. We should not be raising any taxes or raiding the state’s piggy bank.”

McKinney said, "Unlike Connecticut other states have called themselves into special session to deal with their budget problems. Governor Rell has made more than \$200 million in recessions. Mayors and first selectmen are cutting spending across Connecticut. Where are the legislative Democrats?"

He added, "Fundamentally, there are two ways to fix a deficit of this magnitude, either raise taxes or cut spending. Republicans are committed to balancing this budget without raising taxes."

Every state budget office and fiscal entity - Republican, Democrat or non-partisan - agrees that Connecticut faces mounting deficits. Whether the examples cited by Republicans are symbolic or significant they said their message is clear: spending must be cut.

Some examples offered:

- The special legislative session last Dec. 5 that cost taxpayers \$1,000 per minute and could have been replaced with a technical session at virtually no cost;
- 100 yards of European black marble is being replaced in the Legislative Office Building for \$200,000 even though there is no safety issue;
- \$255,000 worth of new signs are hanging throughout the building;
- Brand new Liquid Crystal Display screens have just been installed in hearing rooms replacing old televisions that Republicans said they never used in the first place;
- The state of Connecticut spends nearly \$300,000 on pagers despite technology that has rendered them obsolete;
- 65 separate local projects for House and Senate Democrats have been doled out by the Senate President and House Speaker for members totaling more than \$2.3 million compared to **zero** Republican projects.

Cafero did not criticize any of the local projects but merely said because of the falling revenue the legislature should put off these initiatives just as dozens of towns and cities have. "Towns and cities are having trouble issuing bonds because of the credit squeeze and every day we read of municipal projects that have been put on hold. We have to do the same," Cafero said.