

## House Republican Press Release

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### Candelora Supports Initiatives for Senior Security



- End Tax on Pensions, Social Security
- Expand Tax Freeze for Seniors
- Expand “Money Follows the Person” Home Care Plan

HARTFORD- State Representative Vincent Candelora (R-North Branford) has co-sponsored a number of measures this year that are aimed at helping seniors remain in Connecticut near their families in their later years. The proposals were unveiled by the House Republicans earlier this session, and are intended to give seniors more economic breathing room and help with the increasing cost of living in the state.

One bill would exempt certain filers from the personal income tax on pensions and Social Security. The measure, HB 5541, *An Act Concerning a Phase Out of the Personal Income Tax on Pensions and Social Security* would exempt pensions and Social Security after a three year phase out period.

“This state has a poor distinction as one of only four states in the U.S. that doesn’t provide at least some kind of tax break on pensions,” said Candelora. “I think we fail to serve our seniors properly when we ask them to pay taxes once again on money they have earned over the course of a lifetime of work and contributing to our communities.”

Candelora is also signed on to legislation before the Aging Committee which would expand last year’s elderly property tax freeze to include more eligible seniors. The bill, HB 5542, *An Act Concerning Eligibility for Elderly Property Tax Relief*, would reduce the current age of eligibility from seventy years of age to sixty-five years of age, and increase the income eligibility limits for individuals by \$10,000 and married couples by \$10,000. Current levels are \$27,700 for individuals and \$33,900 for married couple adjusted annually for inflation.

“In our state, healthcare costs are on the rise, energy prices are skyrocketing, and tax increases have become far too frequent,” said Candelora. “Seniors shouldn’t have to face the possibility of selling their home because they can no longer afford all of these things, especially when most seniors long ago paid for their home.”

Another bill, HB 5638, *An Act Concerning Expansion of the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Program* is designed to provide funds for seniors to move from nursing homes to home care or community care arrangements. The bill would expand the current number of participants from 100 to 225 by July of 2009, and 400 by July of 2010.

“I think that most seniors who are in need of some level of care would prefer to remain in their own home, or the home of a family member over entering a nursing home facility,” said Candelora. “This measure has been successful in its initial trial, and will enable more seniors to do so. It also saves taxpayers money that would otherwise be spent on costly nursing homes.”

Other provisions in the package of bills would create a program to allow senior citizens to earn a property tax abatement by volunteering in their municipality, and increase the eligibility limits for the ConnPACE program from \$23,100 to \$28,200 for unmarried seniors and from \$31,100 to \$38,100 for married seniors.

“Connecticut’s seniors have worked a lifetime and have contributed enormously to our society,” said Candelora. “We need to make sure Connecticut takes every step possible to make sure our seniors maintain a quality and dignity of life following retirement with their families by their side.”