

## House Republican Press Release

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### Michael Caron Pushes Reform of Pequot/Mohegan Fund



Increasing the grants from casino revenues that are distributed to eastern Connecticut towns is a top priority for State Rep. Michael Caron (R-44<sup>th</sup> District, Killingly, Plainfield, Sterling) for the 2007 legislative session.

“Right now, the major share of the state’s casino revenue goes to the big cities and to the state government itself,” said Rep. Caron. “It seems that the small towns receive only the leftovers after everyone else has had their fill.”

Rep. Caron is proposing two major reforms on how Connecticut uses the more than \$430 million that it receives annually from Indian casino gaming:

- Increase the amount granted to municipalities from the current \$85 million to at least \$100 million, and
- Boost the relatively small grants that are made to towns in eastern Connecticut.

“I will be working with the bipartisan delegation from our area to make sure all towns receive a fair and equitable share of the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Fund,” said Rep. Caron. “It is crucial that the veto-proof Democrat majority join in reforming this inequitable situation once and for all.”

Rep. Caron said the eastern Connecticut delegation has proposed changes in the distribution of casino gaming revenue in the past but has been rebuffed by the Democratic legislative leadership.

### Additional 2007 Priorities

Rep. Caron, a Republican of Danielson also outlined several priorities for rational, affordable public policy that places families over politics.

His initiatives focus on **quality of life issues, the economy, the environment and health care**. More details will be presented as the legislative session progresses, Caron said.

“Our approach is producing positive changes for the people of eastern Connecticut and the entire state. We believe government must play a role in our lives but not at the

expense of personal freedom and responsibility. It is through common sense and rational thought that we will work to establish public policy and set the tone for debate,” Caron said.

Some of the initiatives that Caron and colleagues will be debate this session include:

- **Creating Incentives for First Time Home Buyers.** The state income tax payments made by recent college graduates who remain in Connecticut would be placed in an investment account and participants would have 10 years to use it for a new home purchase.
- **Exempting Seniors’ Pensions from the State Income tax.** Pension benefits would be money for a first-time home purchase. “This proposal addresses issues of creating affordable housing, stemming the ‘brain drain,’ spurring economic development, and enhancing home ownership, ” Caron said. “Our seniors need to feel more secure in their retirement years.”
- **Eliminating the Minimum \$250 Business Tax.** To encourage business startups and new job creation, this tax would be eliminated. “Mom and Pop stores pay the same penalty tax just for opening their doors as huge corporations. It’s not fair,” Caron said.
- **Improving Access to Health Care.** More health plans should be portable as people change jobs, particularly individuals who don’t purchase plans through an employer. There should be flexible health plans for businesses and insurance companies that are free of mandates for younger adults aged 19 to 26. The legislature must provide additional funding for long-term care facilities and expand health care access by committing more money to community health centers.

Rep. Caron said the agenda is affordable if the legislature manages state finances properly recognizing the volatility of the state’s revenue streams. He added that the entire list need not be enacted overnight.

“We look forward to working with Gov. Rell and the majority party Democrats who hold a veto-proof majority,” Caron said.

## **Guiding Principles**

Rep. Caron also listed a series of guiding principles that will underlie his legislative activity for the coming year. They include:

- We support free enterprise because it creates more opportunities for a better quality of life.
- We believe the role of government is to help individuals who are unable to help themselves and to provide services for the common good.
- We encourage smaller, less intrusive government as a means of protecting free enterprise, individualism, and personal freedom.
- We support individual freedom and personal responsibility.

- We are for less taxes and regulation because they take away our freedom to choose and discourage individual responsibility.
- We are fiscally conservative because it's your money, and socially moderate because it's your life.
- We support the freedom to associate and organize as long as it does not deprive others of their individual rights.
- We value different points of view on important personal issues, and we value diversity as a product of freedom.
- We believe in protecting the natural resources of our environment that are such an integral part of our quality of life.
- We believe that government has a duty to protect its citizenry, keeping them safe in their homes and neighborhoods.
- We believe government must be accountable to all citizens, and we honor public service as a means of helping others and not helping ourselves.
- We believe providing a quality education is a vital function of government because learning is the key to human development and success.

*Michael Caron serves the 44<sup>th</sup> Assembly District of Killingly, Plainfield and Sterling in the state House of Representatives.*