

House Republican Press Release

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House and Senate Republicans Push for Ethics Reform in Wake of Melt Down



HARTFORD - Corrupt state officials and workers could lose their pensions under Republican-backed ethics reforms that also crack down on campaign fundraising and require public servants to report witnessing a bribe.

In the wake of last week's legislative melt down on proposed new ethics laws, House and Senate Republicans today proposed sweeping new rules to govern conduct of elected leaders and thousands of union and non-union state employees. Republicans said all those imbued with the public trust must abide by the stricter ethics laws.

"These tighter restrictions will give the public greater confidence that the elected officials they send to Hartford and those on public payrolls are adhering to stronger ethics codes than ever before," House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., of Norwalk said. "The public demands it and the taxpayers deserve it."

Senate Minority Leader John McKinney of Fairfield said: "We are ready to vote on this legislation immediately. Connecticut's citizens want, and deserve, to have faith in their state government and their elected officials. What we are proposing is the true ethics reform that we believe Connecticut residents want us to pass."

The nine-point proposal mirrors the one crafted by a Republican-Democratic working group this spring and embraced by Gov. M. Jodi Rell. The proposals include:

- Pension revocation for elected officials, state and municipal employees upon conviction of a crime related to their employment. Republicans would call upon the attorney general to petition the court for the legal action;
- Failure to report a bribe would become a Class A Misdemeanor if the public servant witnesses the offer;
- Chiefs of staff in the Capitol would be barred from soliciting campaign contributions from staff members for state or municipal elections;
- Mandatory ethics training for newly elected officials and refresher courses for incumbents every four years;
- Restricts future employment with state contractors for one year for a state employee or officials who played a significant role in awarding a state contract.

Representative Cafero and Senator McKinney said the ethical and criminal violations that have plagued Hartford in recent years has led to a crisis of confidence in elected leaders and state employees.

“It is time to show the people of Connecticut that we can be held to a higher ethical standard. We need to better police ourselves and restore the public’s faith in us,” Representative Cafero said.

“We have the opportunity to do the right thing for the people of Connecticut, to pass legislation that will give them reason to believe that we are serious about regaining their trust. The sooner we pass strong, workable, responsible ethics legislation, the better,” said Senator McKinney.