

House Republican Press Release

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HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER CAFERO CALLS ON GOVERNOR TO TAKE UP STATE EMPLOYEE EARLY RETIREMENT PLAN TO CUT GAS TAXES



*Says Republican Plan the Way out of Pending Fiscal
Mess, Gas Woes*

HARTFORD – House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., today said the alternative Republican budget first proposed in April would roll back another scheduled gas hike set for July 1 and provide relief from the state’s pending fiscal woes.

In response to Gov. M. Jodi Rell’s challenge to legislative leaders yesterday to find \$25 million to forestall the increase in the gross receipts tax Cafero said simply, “Republicans already found the money.”

Cafero wrote, “As you know, on April 28th the House and Senate Republicans offered a budget proposal for your consideration and that of legislative Democrats. Our proposal, which was vetted and analyzed by the non-partisan Office of Fiscal Analysis, included the repeal of the gross receipts tax increase.”

The budget also knocked 10 cents off each gallon immediately, restored education program cuts and included more money for towns and cities and nursing homes.

Cafero asked Gov. Rell to reconsider the central feature of the alternative budget: the Early Retirement Incentive Program, ERIP, that saves the state more than \$155 million in payroll to pay for the gas tax cuts and other items in the Republican alternative budget.

“In light of our current fiscal circumstance and most urgently, the hardships for Connecticut families in facing this energy crisis, I would respectfully ask that you consider implementing an ERIP for the fiscal ’09 budget” Cafero wrote.

The Democrats who control the legislature flatly rejected any action on the budget this spring despite rising fuel costs, cuts to education programs and grants to towns and cities that will produce municipal layoffs. Republicans warned that Connecticut residents would not stand for a Do Nothing approach to budget because they needed relief at the gas pump and elsewhere.

“It took some time but the Democrats who insisted on doing nothing are hearing it every day from the people we all represent. We said from the beginning that *Doing Nothing* in the face of a mounting fiscal crisis and disgust at the gas pump was unacceptable. People just don’t understand why the Democratic leaders chose to stand pat,” Cafero said.

A special legislative session is scheduled for June 11 when Democrats have said they want to increase real estate taxes by \$35 million. "Calling a special session to raise real estate taxes when people are losing their homes, and then allowing the gas tax to go up again July 1 is the clearest example of being out of touch with what Connecticut needs right now," Cafero said. He added that the alternative budget is fully written and ready go for the special session.