

House Republican Press Release

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**Rep. D'Amelio: Legislature Should Lead by Example in Effort to eliminate \$300 million State Deficit**



***Wasteful Spending at Capitol, Earmarks for Local Projects, could be cut to save Tax Dollars***

As Middlebury and Waterbury residents tighten their belts to cope with worsening economic conditions, the state legislature should lead by example by eliminating wasteful and unnecessary spending at the State Capitol, state Representative Anthony J. D'Amelio said today.

“We shouldn't be asking state departments and agencies to absorb significant cuts in their budgets if we aren't willing to do the same thing ourselves. We should set the example for the rest of the state by eliminating wasteful and unnecessary spending at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) and the State Capitol. We could, for example, postpone projects designed to enhance the appearance of the LOB rather than improve safety, and cut spending on reference material that is readily available via the internet,” said Representative D'Amelio, R-71<sup>st</sup> District, who serves on the state legislature's Appropriations Committee.

“At a time when the state is faced with a \$300 million deficit and going through extraordinary fiscal turmoil, we do not have the luxury of delaying action on eliminating the deficit until after the November elections – as the Democratic leaders in the state House and Senate are insisting. The people of Connecticut need to know what the legislature will do to resolve our state's fiscal crisis before the elections – not two months afterwards when the deficit will have gotten even worse,” Representative D'Amelio said.

House and Senate Republicans Wednesday unveiled several proposed spending cuts to help reduce the budget deficit and highlighted state spending on discretionary local projects the state cannot afford.

House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr. of Norwalk, and Senate Republican Leader John McKinney of Fairfield cited numerous examples of projects at the LOB and the State Capitol building as well as legislative budget items - from \$1.7 million for printing, to \$255,000 for new signs and an unnecessary special legislative session – that the state cannot afford at a time when it is facing serious fiscal problems.

They called for bipartisan action to come up with slightly less than 2 percent in cuts to the state's \$18 billion budget rather than waiting until after the November elections to

hold more hearings and conduct more studies. New York and many other states already are cutting spending and Connecticut should do likewise, they said.

In addition, Senator McKinney and Representative Cafero Wednesday wrote to Senate President Donald Williams, D-29<sup>th</sup> District, and House Speaker James Amann, D-Milford, asking them to rescind a request from the General Assembly's Office of Legislative Management for a 7.9 percent increase in the state legislature's operating budget for 2009-2011.

Other examples of wasteful spending cited by House and Senate Republicans include:

- A special legislative session last December 5<sup>th</sup> 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 currently being replaced in the Legislative Office Building for \$200,000 - for esthetic rather than safety reasons.
- \$255,000 worth of new signs erected throughout the LOB and the legislative parking garage.
- Brand new Liquid Crystal Display screens recently installed in hearing rooms replacing old televisions that Republicans said they never used in the first place.
- State spending amounting to almost \$300,000 for pagers - even though new technology has rendered them obsolete.
- Funding totaling more than \$2.3 million doled out by Senate President Williams and House Speaker Amann to House and Senate Democratic legislators for 65 separate local projects - compared to zero for projects in Republican districts - because GOP legislators declined funding for such projects because of the state's fiscal crisis.