

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. DelGobbo: 2008 Budget a Victory for Connecticut Taxpayers



House GOP 'No Tax Increase' Alternative Budget Won Tax Debate in 2007 Legislative Session

The 2008-09 budget adopted by the state House of Representatives that avoids major tax increases is a victory for the people of Connecticut which was made possible by the 'No Tax Increase' budget proposal drafted by House Republicans in April, state Representative Kevin M. DelGobbo, R-Naugatuck, said today.

"We fought successfully to prevent increases in both the personal income tax and taxes on employers, both of which would have been a drag on the state's economy and meant fewer jobs for the people of Connecticut," said Representative DelGobbo, the House Ranking Member on the budget-writing Appropriations Committee. "Our proposal, which garnered more popular support than either the Democrats' or the governor's original budget proposals, helped shape the final approved budget. It's a victory for the people of Connecticut, who won't have to worry about the state sticking its hands in our pockets and taking more of our hard-earned dollars."

"We showed that it was possible to provide more education funding to Connecticut municipalities without having to raise taxes. The 2008-09 budget provides \$181 million for Education Cost Sharing (E. C. S.) grants to towns in 2008 and \$260 million in E. C. S. grants for 2009," Representative DelGobbo said.

"We also put in place accountability measures for low achieving schools that are subject to intensified supervision and direction from the state Board of Education and receive additional funding to help them comply with the board's directives and improve students' academic performance," Representative DelGobbo said. "The state board will be monitoring low-achieving schools. If a school fails to make progress for two consecutive years, the state board, in consultation with the governor and the chief elected officials in the school district, may request that the General Assembly enact legislation to have control of the school district transferred to the state Board of Education."

The 2008-09 budget includes sales tax exemptions for energy-efficient vehicles, weatherization products, alternative heating / cooling systems, and energy star appliances, Representative DelGobbo said.

The budget also provides:

- A 16 percent increase in special education excess cost funding for towns.
- A \$7 million increase in aid to communities that comes from the state's share of slot machine revenues from casinos owned by the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan tribes.
- A 10 percent increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospitals.

- A 50 percent increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates for physicians.
- A 40 percent increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates for clinics.
- A 40 percent increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates for dental and eye care.
- A 20 percent increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates for personal care assistants.
- A 3.5 percent increase in funding for Managed Care Organizations that provide medical coverage for children from needy families under the state's HUSKY Plan.
- A 3 percent increase in funding for nursing homes and nonprofit group home providers in the first year of the two-year budget only.
- A 3 percent increase in funding for home care for elderly persons who continue to live at home rather than being hospitalized in nursing homes.
- A \$20 million increase in funding for dentists who provide dental care to children from low-income families under the HUSKY dental plan.
- A \$4.5 million increase in funding for federally qualified health clinics.
- A \$30 million increases in funding for the distressed hospitals pool.

“Although we fought as hard as we could to hold down expenditures, I still believe this budget spends too much,” Representative DelGobbo said. “The challenge for the state legislature will be to ensure we have sustainable budgets over time and to provide more accountability for how the state spends our tax dollars.”