

House Republican Press Release

February 4, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Reps DelGobbo, Labriola: House GOP Health Care, Home Heating Tax Credits to Help Middle Class Taxpayers



Proposals Include Support for Fuel Cell Industry to Create New Jobs, Bolster CT Economy

Connecticut's overburdened middle class taxpayers would see bigger state income tax refund checks and the state's growing fuel cell industry would get a boost if several measures proposed by House Republicans become law, state representatives Kevin M. DelGobbo and David K. Labriola said today.

The proposals include state income tax credits to help offset rising healthcare and home heating costs and a long-term plan to bolster the fuel cell energy market, strengthen the state's economy, create jobs and provide environmentally-friendly power for Bradley International Airport and mass transit buses, said Representative DelGobbo, R-Naugatuck, and Representative Labriola, R-131st District.

The proposals will provide badly-needed relief to middle class taxpayers and help keep the state's economy on track at a time when many believe a recession may be on the way, the legislators said.

"The initiatives we are proposing will help middle class taxpayers offset two major expenses that have been forcing them to stretch their paychecks to provide for their families – the increasingly high costs of heating their homes and maintaining their health care coverage. As a member of the state legislature's Energy and Technology Committee, I believe our fuel cell initiatives could lead to a significant expansion of our state's burgeoning fuel cell industry and ultimately create thousands of new jobs. It will be good for the economy and for the environment," Representative DelGobbo said.

"Our proposals were offered as part of what we hope will become a bipartisan effort at the General Assembly to get more money into the hands of middle class taxpayers and help them weather a possible economic downturn - if one takes hold over the next few months," said Representative Labriola. "The additional dollars will mean consumers can start spending money again, which will help energize the economy and preserve jobs."

House Republicans also outlined a specific timetable of public hearings and various committee reviews that could produce a bipartisan, comprehensive relief package by March 19th. Republicans proposed using roughly \$200 million of the state's \$263 million surplus to:

- Provide maximum income tax credits of up to \$500 per household for joint filers earning up to \$150,000 for home heating assistance and for individuals earning up to \$75,000;
- Provide similar maximum \$500 income tax credits to offset out-of-pocket medical costs.

Long Term Investment in Jobs, Economy, and the Environment

Under the House Republican fuel cell initiative, the state would dedicate \$50 million in bonding each year over the next four years to create a Fuel Cell program that would include:

- Contracting with a Connecticut business to mass produce transit buses powered by fuel cells.
- Using fuel cells at Bradley International Airport to make Bradley the first Hydrogen-powered 'Green' International Airport in the world.
- Establishing two or three hydrogen refueling hubs in the state.