

## House Republican Press Release

March 3, 2008  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE** **State Representative Ruth Fahrbach**



### **Proposals would strengthen ethics,** **campaign finance laws**

The House Republicans recently unveiled reforms designed to prevent publicly financed campaign abuse, ensure impartial ethics safeguards and allow for easier access to voting booths.

The proposals highlight the need for stronger governmental reform: true transparency in publicly funded elections, real independence for watchdog agencies, particularly the overhauled state Ethics Commission and unfettered access to the ballot box.

For the record, I voted against the bill allowing the use of taxpayer money to finance political campaigns. In an effort to clean up publicly financed campaigns, the House Republican proposal would scale back the amount of money available to candidates based on when they qualify to access the Citizens Election Fund that taxpayers support, starting 45 days before the election. In the special election for the 32<sup>nd</sup> District Senate seat, for example, the late-qualifying Democratic candidate received \$63,750 to spend on his campaign just eight days before the special election Jan. 15. The candidate's disclosure form indicated he paid \$50,500 of taxpayers' money to a consultant for two mailings, but provides no additional details. This is clearly a potential loophole in the law that needs to be addressed.

Some lawmakers have proposed establishing a legislative ethics committee. That would be like putting the fox in charge of the hen house. The Republicans also proposed strengthening Ethics Commission oversight by requiring all lawmakers to disclose any potential personal conflicts they might have with any individual that might have a bearing on pending legislation. Instead of stripping the existing independent commission of its authority as other lawmakers have proposed, it makes more sense to give the agency greater independent oversight.

Republicans also proposed amending the state Constitution to allow any registered voter to use an absentee ballot to provide greater access to the ballot box. Currently the state imposes restrictions on absentee balloting and in some cases can require voters to prove that they cannot cast a ballot in person election day. Allowing greater access to absentee

ballots makes much more sense than allowing people to register on Election Day, as some have suggested. Rather than pushing to have people register to vote on one day (Election Day), we should open the process up and make voting more convenient for everyone. Election Day registration only increases the potential for voter fraud.

If you have any questions regarding these proposals, or would like information visit our House Republicans blog at [www.cthouserules.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cthouserules.cga.ct.gov), or call my office at 240-8700.

*State Rep. Ruth Fahrbach represents the 61<sup>st</sup> District, including Suffield, and parts of Windsor and East Granby, in the General Assembly.*