

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE - State Representative Ruth Fahrbach



Substantial deficit relief package needed now

During a special legislative session on November 24, I joined my House Republican colleagues on voting to ease the state's current projected \$300 million budget deficit. However, the reality is that far greater spending cuts are still needed to stop the fiscal bleeding that threatens to undermine Connecticut's fiscal health.

Judging by the forecast of a \$6 billion budget shortfall in the coming years, it is clear that the legislature must start working immediately on re-structuring the way the state of Connecticut delivers services and do it more efficiently.

The deficit reduction plan offered by Gov. M. Jodi Rell was used as the starting point but dealt with only \$300 million of the deficit. Since her plan was developed, the deficit has grown by an estimated \$250 million. The plan offered by Democrats that eventually passed the House and Senate reduced spending by a mere \$71 million.

During the one-day special session the legislature adopted a series of deficit reduction items that amounted to a "band aid" on the hemorrhaging budget and Republicans tried to push through additional cuts of nearly \$80 million.

We find ourselves in this mess because of falling revenues and the refusal by the Democrats to act on the budget last spring, as well as a voracious appetite for spending on sometimes frivolous state programs. We must be responsible and make necessary cuts now, rather than resorting to raising taxes later. In some respects, this budget crisis really is that simple.

House Republicans supported a series of additional cost-saving measures that were rejected, including:

- Combining six commissions within the Capitol into one to save an estimated \$4 million;
- Reducing by half the taxpayer-financed political campaigns to save \$8 million;
- Offering state workers early retirement to save \$130 million in the next fiscal year.

Doubling the amount of spending cuts the governor can make without legislative approval

Connecticut residents should not be expected to pay higher taxes to resolve the \$6 billion deficit problem that the Legislature refuses to face. Everyone's cost of living has increased due to the current economic situation. Taxpayers simply cannot afford even higher taxes to pay for the Legislature's irresponsibility in refusing to address the deficit immediately. .

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