

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

State budget invests in education, increases healthcare reimbursement rates



The battle in the Legislature over the 2007-08, 2008-09 state budget has come to an end, mostly with a positive result, with one caveat. While increases in education funding and healthcare are laudable goals which I support, I have some doubts about an 8.8 percent increase in spending and its potential future impact.

Because of the hard work done by the House Republicans, we are able to fund these historic investments in our future without raising income or sales taxes. I am extremely gratified that we were able to stop most of the tax increases that were being pushed by the Democrats' super majority. We parlayed our 44 House members into a strong position with our no-tax-increase budget proposal, which we unveiled in late April. While there is clearly too much of a spending increase in this budget, it does represent a powerful statement from the citizens of our state to the General Assembly. It is was the citizens' outcry against increases in taxes that helped House and Senate Republicans blunt the Democrats' push for increased taxes on practically everything.

The towns of the 62nd District will all see increased funding from the state for education. The increases will be as follows (over 2 years): Barkhamsted – \$380,463; East Granby - \$519,614; Granby - \$1,131,954; New Hartford - \$441,274. Overall, funding for education will be increased by \$441 million statewide over the next two years.

To help assure healthcare coverage and access for Connecticut residents, there will be an increase of \$224 million in reimbursement rates for doctors, hospitals and dentists to help assure patients on Medicaid will receive the best care available. It will be the first increase in

Medicaid reimbursement rates for physicians in the last 18 years, and should only boost our healthcare system, which is among the finest in the world. Nursing homes and other pertinent state agencies will also be granted a 3 percent increase in funding with this budget.

Increases in funding for state parks, and programs for the elderly are also included in the spending plan, which was approved by a wide margin in the House last week.

It is critical that state government seeks ways to hold down costs and avoid duplication in services as much as possible moving forward to ensure we can maintain this level of spending. Turning to increased taxes as a source of additional revenue is not an acceptable alternative, and the House Republicans will continue to let that fact be known in Hartford.

Rep. Richard Ferrari (R-62) represents Barkhamsted, East Granby, Granby and New Hartford in the General Assembly.