

House Republican Press Release

January 29, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

“Learn Here, Live Here”



This past week, the House Republicans unveiled their new “Learn Here, Live Here” program to encourage Connecticut college graduates who are Connecticut residents to remain in the state after graduation. The goal of the program is to make it easier for these graduates to acquire the funds for a down payment on their first home.

Connecticut has long had a problem of “brain drain” with its college graduates. In 2005, between 5,000 and 6,000 Connecticut residents attending Connecticut State Universities (figures are currently available only from the State University system but if we added in University of Connecticut graduates as well as those from private colleges and universities, the numbers would be even greater) left the state after graduation to work elsewhere. Part of the departure rationale is a job that took them out-of-state. But another is the lack of affordable housing. When these graduates look down the road, they say, “My job is fine, but I could never afford to live where I was raised. I’m going to start my career and my life elsewhere.”

Housing costs have consistently been cited by residents as a major barrier to their children’s ability to stay in our area. Unaffordable housing costs are a key deterrent for the many young professionals that must commute from our neighboring states to good jobs in Fairfield County.

This “Learn Here, Live Here” program will help address the housing issue. At no cost to the graduate, for the 10 years following graduation, the state will deposit up to \$3,000 of their Connecticut state income tax into a “First Time Home Buyer Trust Fund” in an account to purchase a first home under the graduate’s name. At any time during the 10-year period, the individual can withdraw the balance of the account to purchase a home.

The key components of the plan are as follows:

- Income tax receipts from recent college graduates would be deposited into an interest bearing account managed by the state Treasurer;
- Those with at least an associate college degree are eligible for the program;
- Savings would grow over time and must be used within 10 years;
- Participants who move out of state and then return could still access whatever portion of collected income tax receipts are placed in the account.;
- The state Treasurer will manage the accounts and provide statements annually to participants;
- The interest and investment income would be deposited into the state general fund.

This proposal is a unique and creative method to address the problem of “brain drain”. It is our hope “Learn Here, Live Here” will succeed with bi-partisan support in the legislature.

Livvy R. Floren, State Representative, 149th District
Lile R. Gibbons, State Representative, 150th District
Claudia “Dolly” Powers, State Representative, 151st District