

## House Republican Press Release

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### Doing Nothing For State Deficit Unacceptable



*An Op-Ed by State Rep. Janice Giegler*

At the stroke of midnight on May 7, the 2008 Legislative Session came to an uneventful close. It definitely was not to be the fast paced night of getting bills off the House calendar. The General Assembly saw many hours of Committee work die on the calendar with no action taken.

Rather than accomplish the primary purpose of the short session, which is to adopt adjustments to the current budget, we instead saw obstructionist tactics which allowed an outdated budget to remain. This irresponsible move will only worsen the states finances, as a projected surplus of more than \$200 million in February has not only evaporated, but we now face a budget deficit of more than \$60 million for the current fiscal year.

Unfortunately, majority party leaders refused to even allow a debate on this issue. The House Republican Caucus tried several times to present a balanced budget plan that would have funded critical programs, reduced spending with no tax increases but each time, a parliamentary procedure was used to shelf the legislation.

Doing nothing is not an option; it's a guarantee of future tax increases and more pain for hardworking families. It's no longer things like computers, TVs, cars, and vacations that are straining budgets of Connecticut families. It's the cost of bare essentials like groceries, gasoline, and electricity and being able to keep the American Dream - your home.

Given the current economic and fiscal situation, it's ironic that this is the first year since the inception of the biennial budget, that the majority party refused to adjust the second year of the budget. To respond to these difficult times, we need a roadmap that acknowledges these fiscal realities, maintains critical services, gives relief to citizens, and lays a solid foundation for the future.

The Alternative Budget I supported would streamline and shrink government through an early retirement program for longstanding state employees. Measures included in this proposal would also:

- Invest in a 1% COLA for nursing homes and private providers

- Send more dollars back to our cities and towns for infrastructure improvements.
- Fully fund the new criminal justice reforms that were passed with bipartisan support.
- Address the current crisis in gasoline prices by repealing the July 1<sup>st</sup> increase in the gross receipts tax and gives citizens a two-month holiday from the state gas tax.

As there is also a significant projected deficit for the budget that takes effect July 1, it is time that the legislature "Do Something" as the end result of this inaction puts the state on course for state employee layoffs and tax hikes come early 2009.