

House Republican Press Release

April 16, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Make Connecticut More Affordable



By State Representative Marilyn Giuliano

Many Connecticut families are struggling to stretch domestic budgets. Judging by responses to my 2008 legislative survey and comments from people in the towns I represent, it is clear that the cost of living in Connecticut is the number one priority for our state's citizens. Nearly 1,000 people responded to a legislative questionnaire that I sent to households in the shoreline area. The results are in and they are decisive. People are concerned about taxes, energy costs and public safety.

These opinions are very helpful in driving legislation to set the future direction of the state. People are looking for solutions to help make Connecticut more affordable.

Here are some examples. Though these results are not scientific, they offer a reliable sense of public opinion.

Question: Would you support raising the state income tax in the event of a budget deficit?

Answer: A resounding 79 percent said no. The public believes that this is no time to raise taxes and I firmly agree.

Question: Do you support reducing or eliminating the state income tax on retirees' pension income?

Answer: An even stronger 83 percent said yes. I will continue to advocate for income tax relief for senior citizens whose retirement benefits are fully taxed in Connecticut, unlike nearly all other states.

Question: Do you support requiring the state legislature to hold public hearings before tax increases take effect?

Answer: A near unanimous 91 percent said yes.

In developing Connecticut's long-term energy policy, 92% of respondents believe that Connecticut's energy costs are too high and must be reduced.

In bipartisan collaboration with my legislative colleagues, we are working to develop a streamlined and consumer friendly approach to procuring comprehensive energy audits

for homes and businesses. Comprehensive energy audits can significantly drive down energy costs for individual homeowners and businesses, sometimes by as much as 30%. This approach to managing energy costs has worked effectively in other states. Connecticut should make this available to consumers to drive down our energy costs, too.

To offer relief to help with high energy bills, my colleagues and I have proposed immediate state income tax credits of up to \$500 for energy assistance. This tax credit would be in addition to the federal tax rebates that are scheduled to be mailed next month to taxpayers nationwide.

We have listened to concerns about the “brain drain” of young adults leaving the state unable to afford to buy housing in the towns where they grew up. We are pushing for an incentive plan to help first-time homebuyers make a down payment to buy a home and start a family in Connecticut. We need to give our young, educated workforce a reason to remain in Connecticut.

With the recent home invasions in Cheshire and New Britain, public safety has become an issue of heightened concern to many Connecticut residents. When asked if repeat violent offenders should be subject to mandatory life sentences, fully 85 percent of the respondents said yes.

These legislative survey results reflect that economic security and public safety are critically important issues on people’s minds. Now it is government’s turn to respond quickly and creatively to make Connecticut safe, secure and more affordable for all of its citizens.

Marilyn Giuliano is state representative for the 23rd Assembly District of Old Lyme, Lyme, Old Saybrook and Westbrook in the state House of Representatives. She is the ranking member on the legislature’s Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.