

House Republican Press Release

January 15, 2009
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Rep. Hamzy to Take Voluntary 5 % Cut in Legislative Salary to Show Support for State Spending Restraint



Republicans Proposed Legislative Salary Cuts in Debate on Deficit Mitigation Package

State Representative William A. Hamzy will take a voluntary five percent cut in his legislative salary to demonstrate his support for reducing state spending to mitigate the state's rapidly growing budget deficit, which

is currently estimated at \$343 million.

Representative Hamzy pledged to take the voluntary salary reduction after majority Democrats in the state House of Representatives rejected a Republican proposal that would have reduced all legislators' salaries by five percent during debate on measures to reduce the state budget deficit Wednesday. Representative Hamzy today sent a letter to State Comptroller Nancy Wyman asking that his legislative salary be reduced by five percent.

"As a state legislator who believes we should reduce state spending before we even consider tax increases, I wanted to underscore my support for eliminating the deficit through spending cuts by voluntarily reducing my salary by the same amount we had proposed in our amendment," said Representative Hamzy, R-78th District, a Deputy House Republican Leader. "We should not expect state departments, agencies, and programs to absorb cuts in their budgets if we are not willing to share the pain. Although cutting state spending will cause some short-term discomfort, it will be insignificant compared to the long-term damage to our state's economy and the hardship to families that would result if the state legislature significantly increases the burden on taxpayers and employers."

"The majority Democrats' cavalier attitude toward Connecticut's budget crisis was clearly on display Wednesday when they failed to take decisive action to significantly reduce the state's mounting deficit and adopted their plan, which would reduce the deficit by only \$120 million," said Representative Hamzy, R-78th District, a Deputy House Republican Leader. "With the budget shortfall threatening to grow by as much as \$800 million to \$1 billion by the end of the current fiscal year which ends June 30th, the Democrats chose to make only token cuts in state spending while rejecting proposals we made in good faith to balance the budget and avoid tax increases."

House Republicans offered proposals that would have reduced the state's budget shortfall by \$185 million. The Democrat package also included \$250,000 in hidden spending that could further aggravate the state's fiscal crisis, House Republican leaders said.

“When Democrat legislators rejected the proposals we offered to lower state spending and avoid major tax increases, they showed just how out of touch they are with the vast majority of Connecticut residents,” Representative Hamzy said. “Middle class families and individuals throughout our state are struggling to stay afloat in an economic crisis that is worsening every day. When Democrat legislators refused to vote for the prudent and responsible spending reductions we offered, they set the stage for another round of tax increases that will aggravate and prolong the recession in our state.”

In addition to the proposed cut in legislators’ salaries, the House Republican proposals would have:

- Delayed an \$87 million salary increase package for corrections officers until a budget is in place this spring, otherwise the contract goes into effect within 30 days;
- Restored \$54 million in cuts Democrats eliminated from Gov. Rell’s budget
- Eliminated \$274,000 in additional spending;
- Delayed or eliminated expensive state mandates on towns such as costly in-school suspensions, and treated some serious juvenile offenders as adults to save at least \$95 million.

House Republican legislators voted against the Democrats’ proposal because it failed to adequately address the excessive state spending that is driving the deficit higher almost every day, Representative Hamzy said.