

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Rep. Harkins Votes for Gasoline Tax Relief



*Opposes \$35 million tax on home sales that was extended for two years*

HARTFORD- State Representative John Harkins (R-Stratford) has strongly supported and voted for legislation to give motorists some relief at the gas pumps. However, he said, the legislature should have done more and should have considered an alternative budget proposal.

Harkins voted for legislation that was adopted with bipartisan support to:

- block a scheduled July 1 increase in gasoline and diesel taxes,
- allow a cash discount by all gasoline retailers and
- make low-income people eligible for free, fuel-efficient heating systems.

Stopping the gas tax increase was first proposed on April 28 in an alternative budget supported by Rep. Harkins and again May 20 in a separate budget proposal. The legislative majority, while agreeing to halt a gas tax increase, failed to adopt other elements in the alternative budget, or even to allow it come up for debate.

“It’s notable that Democrats finally came around and decided that they needed to do something about the scheduled increase in the gas tax,” said Harkins. “I’m pleased that we staved off a tax increase, but I remain alarmed at the high taxes on gas in this state which are causing such damage to our economy and job growth. There was an opportunity to do something more and the majority passed on it.”

#### **Conveyance Tax Opposed**

Harkins also opposed legislation that was adopted to extend for two years a \$35 million tax on home sales that was scheduled to expire on July 1. Harkins had supported a plan that would have saved home sellers the \$35 million, but also protected municipalities that have come to depend on the tax.

Harkins proposed and supported amendments that would have exempted from the extended home sales tax:

- People who are selling their homes at a loss
- Senior citizens who are selling their homes
- Veterans who are selling their homes

#### **Budget Alternative Proposed**

Harkins said the legislative majority failed to act on a significant and growing deficit facing the state. Republicans again were blocked in attempting to bring up a budget alternative.

The Democrats again voted to not even consider the Republican alternative budget that would have saved \$155 million in payroll through an Early Retirement Incentive Program that restored critical spending cuts:

- \$20 million for the Early Reading Success program for 15 towns and cities;
- \$2 million for added security at battered women shelters;
- \$27 million more struggling nursing homes and other service providers.
- Elimination of the state's take from the real estate tax without costing towns and cities any loss in revenue.