

## House Republican Press Release

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### Rep. Harkins Attends Capitol Budget Roundtable Discussion with Local Elected Officials



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#### ***Says House Republican Initiatives Could Provide Needed Relief to Towns and Cities***

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Cash-strapped municipalities like Stratford need relief from the state as they prepare municipal budgets at a time when revenues are declining and more people are seeking critical services towns provide, chief elected officials from around the state said at a budget roundtable at the State Capitol Tuesday.

After the forum, state Representative John A. Harkins, R-Stratford, cited several Republican proposals that could provide the kind of relief the officials are seeking. The forum attracted almost 30 chief elected officials from small-to-medium sized cities and towns. The meeting was held to solicit information and suggestions from the local officials on how the state legislature can assist communities struggling to provide critical services during the current recession.

“These are critical times for our state and our towns,” Representative Harkins said. “For that reason, it’s important that we all work together to address the current economic crisis and the deficits that are making it difficult to provide important services to our citizens, not just on the state level, but on the local level as well. Stratford and other Connecticut communities are facing major challenges as they try to develop their budgets at a time when people are out of work, businesses are failing and revenues are drying up.”

“As state legislators, we should be doing whatever we can to provide our local elected officials with the tools they need to get through the budget problems all of us are experiencing,” Representative Harkins said. “It’s important that we hear from chief elected officials throughout the state so they can give us their ideas on how we can help them during these difficult economic times. Our roundtable meeting today gave many of them that opportunity. We came away from the meeting with valuable information we will use to develop legislation that helps our towns continue providing critical services to the people we all represent.”

The roundtable discussion, which included a budget briefing and an outline of Connecticut’s fiscal problems and how they could affect towns and cities from the state legislature’s nonpartisan Office of Fiscal Analysis, was hosted by House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., R-Norwalk.

House Republicans are supporting several proposals to provide fiscal relief to towns and cities. Those measures would:

- Require new unfunded mandate proposals to pass by a two-thirds vote of the state House of Representatives and the state Senate before they can become law (House Bill 5285).
- Delay the implementation of a new in-school suspension requirement until July 1, 2012 (H. B. 5705).
- Delay from January 1, 2010, to July 1, 2012, the implementation of a requirement increasing the maximum age for juvenile court jurisdiction for youths charged with certain criminal offenses (H. B. 5237).
- Allow towns and cities to post legal notices on their municipal websites (H. B. 5214). The bill would not preclude municipalities from placing legal notices in local newspapers as well.
- Delay the implementation of a new state mandate that requires towns and cities to post certain information (such as minutes of meetings of local boards and commissions) on municipal web sites until on or after July 1, 2012 (H. B. 5218).