

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Hovey: State Should Explore Telecommuting Measures



Lawmakers Seek To Lead By Example With Pilot Program

On Tuesday, July 15, State Rep. DebraLee Hovey (R-Monroe, Newtown) joined House Republican leaders in backing more flexible work weeks for state employees by promoting their own office plan to allow for telecommuting, a policy aimed at saving taxpayer dollars, making workers more productive and getting commuters off clogged highways.

Republican lawmakers unveiled a test program to allow staff to work from home one day a week. In order to implement the policy, legislative leaders must agree to offer the telecommuting option, and Republicans are awaiting approval from Democrats on the trial program.

In unveiling the proposal, legislators noted that other states have turned thousands of lost commuting hours into productive work, saved workers millions in gas bills and reduced pollution and congestion. It would not cost taxpayers additional funds and save them in the long run through workplace efficiencies.

Other states and at least seven towns and cities in Connecticut have also gone to four-day work weeks to save money which could be another option for the state. The state needs to consider innovative ways that can lead to more effective government, said Rep. Hovey. Details of the pilot telecommuting program that would be established over the next few months and evaluated include:

- House Republican staff members could telecommute one day per week, ensuring that all their legislative responsibilities are covered;
- Staff would use laptop computers that are already available to communicate easily with the Legislative Office Building;
- Because the telecommuting would be staggered throughout the office, no disruption of service for constituents or anyone else who contacts the offices would take place;
- Similar programs have been tried in other states such as Arizona where state workers have converted 181,000 hours of commuting time into productive working hours and reduced air pollution by 175,000 pounds;
- A 2007 national study by the Consumer Electronics Association estimated that telecommuting saves enough energy in the traditional workplace to power one

million households for a year. The same study determined that **3.9 million telecommuters saved 840 million gallons of gas.**

- *Telecommute Connecticut* estimates that employees who telecommute **save an estimated \$1,200 annually on gasoline.**

Connecticut is one of 13 states that already allows for telecommuting for state workers when it is proved to be “cost effective.” Only 140 state workers participated last year.

“The trial program is one way the state can see that telecommuting options for state government have real benefits,” said Rep. Hovey. “The concept certainly has proven to increase efficiency in both our own private sector and other state governments. Anyone who has traveled Connecticut’s interstates in recent years knows that taking cars off the road would be a positive step that can also reduce pollution. It is something the state really needs to consider.”