

House Republican Press Release

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Klarides: Governor's Budget Important Starting Point



HARTFORD- Governor M. Jodi Rell delivered her proposed biennial budget to a joint session of the Connecticut General Assembly, recommending bold and significant commitments to reforming education funding, improving healthcare access, addressing Connecticut's rising energy costs. It phases out the inheritance tax and property tax on automobiles. The \$36 billion two-year

budget also breaks the Constitutional spending cap, increases the state personal income tax.

State Representative Themis Klarides (R-Derby), Deputy Republican Leader in the House of Representatives, said the proposed budget aims at important and laudable goals, and is a good framework from which to craft a final budget before the legislature adjourns June 6th.

“The Governor has laid out critical priorities in this budget, including a number of initiatives to encourage energy conservation and reduction of energy-related taxes,” said Klarides. “She is also making a tremendous commitment to education by increasing the level of state contributions by \$1.1 billion. There are great similarities between these aspects of her budget and bills that House Republicans have introduced during this session.”

Klarides did note that she had grave concerns about the tax increases that were part of the proposed budget. “I understand that to achieve the goals Governor Rell has set for the state, there needs to be a financial commitment,” she said. “However, I am not at a point where I believe raising the state income tax is a solution. Right now Connecticut residents are facing increased energy and healthcare costs, and with over \$500 million in anticipated budget surplus funds this year, I would find it all the more difficult to tell the people of Connecticut that I think they ought to have their taxes increased.”

Breaking the Constitutional spending cap also caused Klarides some concern. “The spending cap was supported by 81% of voters to protect against government excess,” she said. “I do not like the idea of breaking the cap, and it suggests this budget spends beyond its means.”

Ultimately, Klarides observed that the next four months of the legislative session will include healthy debate on the merits of all aspects of the Governor's proposals. “The

Governor has the right central priorities in her budget,” she said. “We will have to work on the areas where we have fundamental differences to craft a budget we all believe will serve the residents of Connecticut well. Our work is just beginning.”