

House Republican Press Release

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Klarides: Democrats Deny Gas Price Relief



Legislative Majority Blocks Efforts to Suspend State Gas Tax

HARTFORD- Preferring to delay a bill that supports law enforcement officials in the discharge of their duties, majority Democrats engaged in procedural cowardice to escape a vote on an amendment by House Republicans to suspend the state's 25 cent gas tax from Memorial Day, May 28th, until Labor Day, September 3rd, 2007, creating a one-time gas tax holiday according to Deputy House Republican Leader Themis Klarides (R-Derby). The measure would have saved Connecticut motorists \$120 million.

“There was a real opportunity here to save motorists roughly \$5 per fill-up of their gas tank beginning on Memorial Day,” said Klarides. “Here we are days away from the beginning of the busiest driving season, with our state’s gas prices the third highest in the nation and climbing. We may not be able to do a lot on the state level to relieve to high cost of fuel, but this is something substantial that we can do. With a nearly \$900 million budget surplus from overtaxing residents this year, we can afford to give some of this money back.”

When the GOP amendment was brought out, Democratic Majority Leader Chris Donovan immediately moved to pass the bill temporarily or “PT” it. This procedure temporarily skips an item on the agenda, and it can be brought up again at a later time.

“Unfortunately the Democrats refused to even debate the bill, let alone go on the record in opposition of the measure,” said Klarides. “Democrats owe state consumers an explanation as to why they don’t believe gas prices should go down.”

No transportation programs would be affected under the proposal and the lost revenue that is used to back highway construction bonds would simply be replaced by the surplus money. Governor M. Jodi Rell has gone on the record in support of the idea. She has repeatedly said that if the legislature does not go along, she and her fellow Republicans will attempt to make the gas tax proposal a part of the budget negotiations that have just begun.

This session of the Connecticut General Assembly adjourns at midnight June 6th, 2007.