

House Republican Press Release

February 4, 2009
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Klarides Applauds Governor's Biennial Budget Message



No Tax increases, No Cuts to Cities and Towns

HARTFORD- Deputy House Republican Leader Themis Klarides (R-Derby) noted that Governor M. Jodi Rell's proposed Biennial Budget, delivered today to a joint session of the State Senate and House of Representatives, set a positive tone for the overall difficult challenges that lie ahead.

"We are facing an unprecedented fiscal crisis," said Representative Klarides. "Governor Rell has presented an excellent framework from which to build, focusing on trimming down government without raising taxes on Connecticut families who are already struggling."

The legislature's non-partisan Office of Fiscal Analysis estimates that the budget deficit for the current fiscal year is \$1.3 billion, and in FY '10 it jumps to nearly \$4 billion.

Klarides noted the proposed budget makes no cuts to cities and towns while relieving them of a number of unfunded mandates which can balloon local budgets. There are also no major increases in borrowing, and she consolidates numerous state agencies, reducing the state workforce by eliminating 448 unfilled positions, and 400 positions that are currently filled.

"This is certainly no time to raise taxes, and I applaud the governor for sticking to her pledge to not propose any increases," said Klarides. "The families of Connecticut are already struggling, and a tax increase is the worst thing the legislature should additionally burden them with."

Some mandate relief, such as delaying costly in-school suspension rules and treating young offenders separately as juveniles, have been proposed by House Republicans.

The governor's budget also made a number significant reorganization of government by:

- Combining certain functions of higher education and the state education department;
- Re-ordering the functions of numerous departments within Legislative Management that is responsible for running the state Capitol;
- Anticipating \$550 million in cost-saving measures from public sector employee unions. Klarides noted that could mean possibly offering early retirement to those who qualify to reduce state payroll

"These are very tough times, and making these kinds of choices is not easy," said Klarides. "Yet, when the people of this state and the businesses that employ them have already been making these kinds of hard decisions, it's time for their state government to do the same and set proper priorities."