

House Republican Press Release

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Larry Miller Introduces “Affordable Housing” Reforms



Says Existing Law Resulted in Few Truly Affordable
Units in 16 Years

*Priority for 2007 Session is Incentive to
Help Young Adults Buy Their First Homes
and Stay in Connecticut*

State Rep. Lawrence G. Miller, R-122, Stratford, Shelton, today called for new thinking to encourage young adults to buy starter homes and build families in Connecticut rather than moving to other lower-cost states.

Miller proposed legislation to reform failed affordable housing laws adopted in 1990. He noted that current laws have produced an abysmally small number of truly affordable homes. Instead, he said the law has fostered the development of more densely constructed expensive homes.

For a new direction in housing policy, Miller joined with other Connecticut House Republican legislators in promoting incentives for first-time home buyers.

“It is absolutely crucial that Connecticut stop the brain drain of young people leaving the state for more affordable areas and better jobs,” said Miller. “We want to see our children and grandchildren remain in Connecticut. The future of our state depends on it. This must be a major focus of the 2007 legislative session.”

Miller noted that the legislature’s liberal majority party clings to the failed policy of state affordable housing statutes (CGS 8-30g) adopted in 1990 to address the growing housing problem.

He said, “After 16 years, anchored by five state agencies, one quasi-public agency, some 65 affordable housing developers, and a cost approaching \$10 million to already strained municipal budgets, the result is about just 3,000 affordable units built under this law.”

In contrast, Miller pointed out that Bridgeport will have some 2,000 new market priced housing units by the end of 2006, without state prodding. In the Naugatuck Valley, 5,000 units of housing are anticipated over the next five years. “Contrast that with

approximately 3,000 units (a two percent increase) of affordable housing under the state legislative mandate (the section 8-30g law)," Miller said.

Miller noted that existing laws have generated numerous lawsuits between developers and towns that have required an 10 percent of Superior Court judges and consumed additional tens of millions of dollars in court time while hearing affordable housing cases.

Miller said, "The legislature must address a housing solution for lower- and middle-income working families, which include municipal employees, teachers, firemen and police officers. We must be creative in finding answers and rescind the failed legislation that has burdened our state and our people."

"I have submitted bills to repeal or modify this failed policy," added Miller. "Our state is under extreme pressure to find answers to this housing situation. We must work with officials in the real estate industry and in state and local government to address this issue. The current large inventory is a buyer's delight as the median price has dropped to \$221,000 in October and more homes are on the market."

Ideas for the Future

Miller and the Connecticut House Republicans have proposed a legislative agenda for 2007 that includes new financial incentives for first-time home buyers. The House Republican agenda also entails improving education and job skills, increased access to healthcare, enhanced air and water quality and holding down energy costs.

Miller said the House Republicans have proposed a plan to allow people to tap into a Housing Trust Fund to assist with a down payment for a first home.

"Telling towns they must accept denser housing development does not solve the problem," said Miller. "Coming up with the down payment is often a greater problem. Helping young adults overcome the initial costs of buying a home goes a long way toward keeping them in Connecticut."

Miller said he hopes the legislature works in a bipartisan manner to make it easier for people to buy starter homes throughout the state.

Larry Miller serves the 122nd Assembly District of Stratford and Shelton in the state House of Representatives.