

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Miller, House Republicans Test Telecommuting, Push Flexible Workforce Hours



Initiative Could Lead to Greener, Leaner Government; Cleaner Air; Gasoline Savings

House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., state Representative Lawrence G. Miller and other House Republican legislators today underscored their support for 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.

“We want to make Connecticut and its government ‘Leaner and Greener’ with a test program to allow staff to work from home one day a week,” Representative Cafero, R-Norwalk, said at a Capitol news conference today. Four-day work weeks also should be considered, he added.

“State departments and agencies, the House and Senate Republican and Democratic caucuses at the State Capitol and the Governor’s Office also should consider implementing closed-circuit television teleconferencing as an alternative to forcing people whose offices are located at some distance from the capitol to drive to Hartford for meetings and conferences with legislators and other state officials,” said Representative Miller, R-122nd District, who took part in today’s news conference.

“Closed-circuit teleconferencing is an efficient, cost-effective and proven technology that the private sector has utilized for many years,” Representative Miller said. “In Shelton, one of the most business-friendly, fastest-growing communities in Connecticut, several local companies have been using teleconferencing for many years. There is no reason the State of Connecticut cannot do so as well. It would save time, lower gasoline costs, and reduce air pollution. We should follow the example set by the private sector to make state operations more efficient and cost-effective.”

In order to implement the telecommuting policy, legislative leaders must agree to offer the telecommuting option. Legislative Republicans are awaiting approval from their Democrat counterparts on the trial program., Representative Cafero said.

“Other states have turned thousands of lost commuting hours into productive work, saved workers millions in gas bills and reduced pollution and congestion,” Representative Cafero said. “Not only will this not cost taxpayers a dime, it also will save tax dollars in the long run through workplace efficiencies.”

Representative Cafero noted that 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. He said the flexible schedules will not work for all state agencies, but Connecticut needs to be creative. He outlined the pilot telecommuting program he hopes to test and evaluate over the next few months. Under the pilot program:

- House Republican staff members would 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 telecommuting would be staggered throughout the office, no disruption of service for constituents or anyone else who contacts the offices would take place.

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, Representative Miller said.