

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Miller Attends Budget Crisis Roundtable Discussion with Local Elected Officials at State Capitol



Shelton Mayor Mark A. Lauretti, 40 Other Chief Elected Officials from Around State Participate in Forum

Cash-strapped municipalities such as Shelton and Stratford need relief from unfunded state mandates as they prepare municipal budgets during the current economic downturn when revenues are declining and more people are seeking the critical services towns provide, about 40 chief elected officials from around the state said at a budget roundtable at the State Capitol Tuesday.

After the forum, state Representative Lawrence G. Miller, R-122nd District, discussed several Republican proposals that could provide the kind of relief the officials were seeking. The forum attracted almost 40 chief elected officials from small-to-medium sized cities and towns, including Shelton Mayor Mark A. Lauretti. The meeting was held to solicit information and suggestions from the local officials on how the state legislature can assist communities struggling to provide critical services during the current recession.

“Mayors and first selectman from throughout Connecticut sent us a message about unfunded state mandates that was loud and clear. They also asked for our help in changing the inequitable formulas the state uses to distribute education aid and special education funding to suburban and rural towns,” said Representative Miller, who also attended the forum. “They asked for our help in gaining relief from several unfunded state mandates, including the prevailing wage and binding arbitration laws, which force towns to increase local spending and can lead to property tax increases. The chief elected officials also expressed their frustration about their lack of control over excessive Board of Education spending, which also can lead to increases in property tax rates.”

The roundtable discussion, which included a budget briefing and an outline of Connecticut’s fiscal problems and how they could affect towns and cities from the state legislature’s nonpartisan Office of Fiscal Analysis, was hosted by House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., R-Norwalk.

House Republicans are supporting several proposals to provide fiscal relief to towns and cities. Those measures would:

Require new unfunded mandate proposals to pass by a two-thirds vote of the state House of Representatives and the state Senate before they can become law (House Bill 5285).

Delay the implementation of a new in-school suspension requirement until July 1, 2012 (**H. B. 5705**).

Delay from January 1, 2010, to July 1, 2012, the implementation of a requirement increasing the maximum age for juvenile court jurisdiction for youths charged with certain criminal offenses (**H. B. 5237**).

Allow towns and cities to post legal notices on their municipal websites (**H. B. 5214**). The bill would not preclude municipalities from placing legal notices in local newspapers as well.

Delay the implementation of a new state mandate that requires towns and cities to post certain information (such as minutes of meetings of local boards and commissions) on municipal web sites until on or after July 1, 2012 (**H. B. 5218**).