

House Republican Press Release

July 15, 2008

Press Office: 860-240-8700

House Republicans first to test drive telecommuting; to save millions in gas costs, make air cleaner



HARTFORD – State Rep. Craig Miner (R-Litchfield) joined his House Republican colleagues today in announcing that their offices will allow employees to work remotely from home on a staggered basis to create more efficiencies in state government, get commuters off clogged highways and combat soaring gas prices.

“This pilot program is a logical thing to do. We need to think of every conceivable option and try every reasonable approach to cut back on commuting, save the state money and burn less fuel,” said Rep. Miner. “This program should in no way reduce services to constituents after its implementation. If we can meet all of these goals with the pilot program, this kind of program may be useful for all state agencies down the road.”

Highlights of the pilot program that will be tested over the next few months and evaluated:

- Staff members will be allowed to telecommute one day per week based on a lottery system, ensuring that all Legislative Office Building responsibilities will be covered;
- Staff will use laptop computers that are already available to allow them to perform all their usual office functions;
- The voluntary program has been tried in other states such as Georgia where state workers have converted 181,000 hours of commuting time into productive working hours and 175,000 fewer pounds of air pollution;
- Because the telecommuting will be staggered throughout the offices, there will be no disruption of service for constituents.

Connecticut is one of 13 states that already allows for telecommuting for state workers when it is proved to be “cost effective.” But last year only 140 state employees actually took advantage of the telecommuting option.

A 2007 national study by the Consumer Electronics Association estimated that telecommuting saves enough energy in the traditional workplace to power one million households for a year. The same study determined that 3.9 million telecommuters saved 840 million gallons of gas.

The pilot program can only be implemented with the approval of Democratic legislative leaders.