

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. O'Neill: New Budget To Benefit Area Towns



Southbury To Receive \$1 Million Increase

HARTFORD – The State Senate today approved a budget package that will benefit area towns, while keeping tax increases to a minimum said State Rep. Arthur J. O'Neill, R-Southbury. The House of Representatives approved the \$36 billion biennial budget package early Saturday morning and Governor M. Jodi Rell has indicated she will sign it into law shortly.

Under the budget, in Fiscal Year 2008: Southbury will receive an additional \$1 million in state funding for a total of \$3.1 million; Bridgewater will receive an additional \$15,332, for a total of \$258,621; Roxbury will receive an additional \$23,615, for a total of \$336,713; Washington will receive an additional \$40,029 for a total of \$472,601. The increased state funding contains substantial increases in local education funding for each town, noted Rep. O'Neill.

During the 2007 Legislative session, both Governor Rell and the majority party Democrats proposed tax increases of \$1.4 billion and \$1.7 billion, respectively. In the first year of the budget, the only tax increase is a \$86 million tax, which consists of an increase in the cigarette tax, from \$1.51 per pack to \$2 per pack. This tax increase is partially offset by targeted tax cuts largely aimed at helping consumers and businesses reduce energy consumption.

“This budget represents a victory for Connecticut taxpayers in that House Republicans prevented the enactment of a \$1 billion plus tax increase,” said Rep. O'Neill. “We did this by proposing our ‘No Tax Increase Budget’ on April 24. Voters across the state rallied to our proposal. Working together, we changed the discussion from the size and shape of a major tax increase to whether or not there needed to be any tax hike at all. This itself was a significant accomplishment.”

Additional components of the budget include:

- Depositing \$100 in the state Rainy Day Fund;
- \$181 million for local education funding in Fiscal Year 08, including increases in funding for Head Start and special education;
- Increased health care funding, including expansion of the HUSKY insurance program and increased Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospitals, doctors, dentists and clinics;

- Increases in funding for state parks, including \$1.7 million to hire additional park personnel.
Additional funds for programs that benefit the elderly, such as personal care assistants and Dial-a-Ride;
- Full funding for day programs provided to young adults with developmental disabilities who recently graduated from high school.