

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Reps O'Neill, Williams: Dem 'Deficit Mitigation Plan' Barely Dents Shortfall; Sets Stage for Major Tax Hikes** *House Republicans Propose Deeper Spending Cuts; Would Reduce Legislators' Salaries by Five Percent*



The refusal by the majority Democrats who control the state legislature to consider more than token cuts in state spending in the face of a mounting budget deficit is setting the stage for major tax increases that could devastate middle class families in the 69<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> districts and throughout Connecticut, state Representatives Arthur J. O'Neill and Sean Williams said Wednesday.

“Although the Democratic proposal is a step in the right direction, it does not go far enough to eliminate the deficit. It also contains spending increases, which in the face of the state’s fiscal crisis are simply irresponsible,” said Representative O’Neill, R-69<sup>th</sup> District. “Too many members of the House Democratic caucus are counting on President-elect Obama to wave a magic wand and make our deficit disappear. Given the large number of states that are facing deficits that are far higher than Connecticut’s, we should not count on the federal government to bail us out. Instead, we need to join hands and work together in a bipartisan spirit to eliminate the deficit without increasing taxes, adding to the burden on families in Southbury, Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington and aggravating and prolonging the recession in Connecticut.”

The House Republican proposals would have reduced the state’s mounting deficit by \$185 million, \$54 million more than the majority Democrats’ plan. The Democrat package also included \$250,000 in hidden spending that could further aggravate the state’s fiscal crisis, House Republican leaders said.

“When Democrat legislators rejected the proposals we offered to lower state spending and avoid major tax increases, they showed they are completely out of touch with the vast majority of Connecticut families,” said Representative Williams, R-68<sup>th</sup> District. “Oakville, Watertown and Woodbury families and citizens throughout Connecticut are struggling to stay afloat in a recession that is worsening every day. When they rejected the prudent and responsible spending reductions we offered, legislative Democrats set the stage for major tax increases that will aggravate and prolong the recession, force more businesses to close their doors and mean more job losses.”

The House Republican proposals would have:

- Delayed an \$87 million salary increase package for corrections officers until a budget is in place.
- Restored \$54 million in cuts Democrats eliminated from Governor Rell's budget.
- Reduced legislators' salaries by five percent.
- Delayed or eliminated expensive state mandates on towns such as in-school suspensions and treated dangerous juvenile offenders as adults, which police departments support.

House Republican legislators voted against the Democrats' proposal because it failed to adequately address the excessive state spending that is driving the deficit higher almost every day, Representatives O'Neill and Williams said.