

## House Republican Press Release

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



HARTFORD – State Rep. Anne Ruwet (R-Torrington) joined fellow House Republican colleagues today in announcing that her office plans to 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.

“Trying out a telecommuting program on a pilot basis shows creative initiative and leadership by the House Republicans,” said Rep. Ruwet. “When implemented, this plan will take vehicles off the roads, make for cleaner air and most importantly save taxpayers money.”

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.

Republican legislators from around the state joined House Leader Larry Cafero at a Capitol press conference Tuesday from their homes and offices via telephone hook up. The pilot program can only be implemented with the approval of Democratic legislative leaders.