

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### March Legislative Madness?



*By State Representative John J. Ryan*

Spring and March Madness are here, we have hopefully seen our last snow for months, and the General Assembly Session for this year is now well past the halfway point. As always, we have more topics than time, so.....

**-“Short session”- more bills/less time?:** This topic was actually noted by The (Stamford) Advocate in an editorial (‘The Legislature is overburdening itself’) that totally missed the point last Thursday. I don’t think our favorite local editor has fully recovered from our bashing his viewpoint on Gov. Rell’s property tax initiative a few weeks ago, but those daily newspaper folks are supposed to be thick-skinned, so please, take a look at the editorial again (you can hunt it down easily on-line) and tell me why the media is always good at criticizing and complaining (in this instance, quite accurately) without figuring out, and chastising, who has the real responsibility for a problem?

The editorial, and the news story that the piece refers to, points out how “quality control”, namely the General Assembly limiting itself to budget-related matters in a short session, is totally lacking this year, as topics are flying all over the place and too many bills being sloppily drafted and passed out of committee despite the short session limitations.... we pointed out one such example in last week’s column. But don’t the Advocate editors know that someone is supposedly in charge of the Legislature? Did they somehow forget that our General Assembly, like Congress, runs on a partisan majority system? Are they unaware that the majority (quite properly procedurally) controls all of the Committee chairs and the legislative agenda? (They quote the Speaker, so at least they know there is one!) Is there not the slightest recognition that with the power of the legislative majority comes the responsibility of running the place? That pretty basic concept appears nowhere in their editorial!

Note, by the way, that this is not an exercise on my part of knocking Democrats solely – the head of the executive branch is Republican Gov. Rell, and if the executive doesn’t do its job in some instance, the executive branch deserves accountability. So why write a perceptive piece about a serious legislative issue with no awareness of who gets the blame, or the credit?

**- “3 Strikes Bill killed in Committee”:** You will recall when we detailed the doings of the Special Session a number of months back that dealt solely with the issues resulting

from the horrific Cheshire home invasion murders, that Governor Rell was not content with the revamping of the Parole Board and other reforms, and pledged to push for a “3 Strikes Law” for repeat violent felony offenders, a proposal that seems to have considerable public support. Unfortunately, the bill was killed last week in the Judiciary Committee, with every negative vote coming from a member of the Democrat majority. I have to admit that this development puzzled me, since one would think that this option would be a useful tool for prosecutors in the proper circumstances. Given the Governor’s expressed unhappiness with this development, I doubt we have heard the end of this topic and you can expect to see the proposal turn up as an attempted amendment on the floor this session as we take up related legislation.

- **Estate tax reform going nowhere:** We recently mentioned the study indicating the deleterious effects of this tax that unfairly targets our area of the State. Were you aware that none of the many bills proposing to reduce or phase out the tax were even scheduled for a public hearing this year? See the “responsibility” observations made several lines above about how things do or don’t get done in our Legislature.

- **Broadwater LNG Long Island Sound proposal:** This highly controversial plan, opposed by nearly every elected official and group in Connecticut was blithely approved by FERC ( the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) recently, and if you were under the impression that Gov. M. Jodi Rell is this absolutely sweet, nicey-nice lady who would never think a negative thought, then you want to see her statement of March 20 on this topic...see her site at [www.ct.gov/governorrell](http://www.ct.gov/governorrell) that “FERC’s decision is nothing short of a disgrace” ! It will be interesting to see how newly-in-office New York Gov. David Paterson reacts on this topic.

And speaking of said new Governor Paterson, proof that our Governor Rell has a substantial sense of humor (in my view, an important virtue in the oft-nasty world of government) can be noted from the contents of the congratulatory “care package” she sent to Paterson : a magic 8 ball (“to guide your decisions”), an “easy” button from the Staples stores (“nothing is easy”), Pepto-Bismal and Excedrin (“for those tough days and nights - and there will be many”), a Connecticut-made Wiffle ball (“for your staff to let off steam”) and a season pass to Connecticut’s 138 state parks and forests (“ when you need to get away”). If only we had more fun news like this to report!

As always please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, and Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at [John.Ryan@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:John.Ryan@housegop.ct.gov) or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.