

## House Republican Press Release

May 19, 2008  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Remembering: legislative fizzles, and veterans



By State Representative John J. Ryan

Memorial Day should be one of the most important days on our calendar. In a General Assembly Short Session year, it is the ideal point to take stock of what happened, and more importantly what did not happen during the legislative year. But much more significantly, we pause this weekend to take note of those who gave years of their lives (and in some cases, their life itself) to serve all of us and protect the rights that we so carelessly take for granted.

The phrase “Freedom isn’t free” has become a cliché, and thereby easy to ignore. Please take a moment this weekend to reflect that Memorial Day is more than just an occasion to go to the parade or a cookout, or to plant the veggies for the summer. Please remember to thank a Vet.

And also thanks to this publication for making the time-consuming effort to remind us that those who served our country and all of us are not just “troops”, but our neighbors, our family members, our valued friends...and actual faces and not just names on a list, or a stone.

On to legislative memorials, for all of those topics, causes, and bills that generated much newsprint, and ‘air time’ and no results. Here is a brief summary of several:

- open container bill : you might want to look up just how few states allow you to cruise around in a car with passengers who have an open bottle or can of alcohol.

Amazingly, this bill was ‘talked to death’ on the House floor this year.

- Casino smoking ban: do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea that smoking is allowed in Connecticut’s “tribal casinos”? This bill was not even called for a vote in the House.

- ‘bottle bill’: a perennial topic, usually in the form of adding water and juice bottles to the ‘bottle bill’s” list (many think the topic is best addressed in a larger recycling concept) also went in the trash.

- Snow/ice on vehicles: have you narrowly avoided an accident, or a heart attack, when a big chunk of ice hurtled at your windshield from the vehicle ahead of you on the turnpike? Sorry, but this topic melted down in the last week.

- billboards : some did not like Gov. Rell actually taking the initiative to limit unsightly billboards; this bill attempting to stop her efforts ran off the road.

- sick leave : business groups nearly fainted at legislation aimed at mandating sick leave for companies with more than 50 employees, non-profits and municipalities; they recovered when the bill was never reached.

- Sharing sales tax with towns: the much-publicized effort to bring tax money to municipalities did not close the sale.

-State-sponsored 401(k): a “first-in-the-nation” (always a clue as to likely result!) authorizing a State 401(k) plan did not qualify due to not being called in the House.

-Ethics reform/pension revocation: generating much heat and no result, the House and Senate did not pass the same version of a bill! So much for ethics...

And most regrettably, in my humble opinion, meaningful ‘3 strikes’ criminal sentencing legislation, and the ‘do something budget’ that would have addressed real budget problems did not happen, and could and should have, but for politics.

Legislators have been cranking out press releases taking credit/doling out blame for two weeks now, and of course most of our clueless media has no idea what happened or why. Unlike our lazy media, you can easily reach conclusions by knowing the basic rules of a legislative process (i.e. who is in the majority, who isn’t, and what that means) and by looking up the results on [cga.ct.gov](http://cga.ct.gov)!!

Finally, I assume you noted the stories that yours truly has not re-upped for another tour of legislative duty, and maybe at some point we will discuss what has changed over the years, and some projections for the future. But in the meantime, we still have seven more months of columns and lots of legislative topics, and thanks again for the complimentary messages.

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.