

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Williams: Legislature Should Lead by Example in eliminating \$300 million State Deficit



Wasteful Spending at Capitol could be cut to save Taxpayer Dollars

As Oakville, Watertown and Woodbury families tighten their belts to cope with worsening economic conditions in Connecticut; the state legislature should lead by example by eliminating wasteful and unnecessary spending at the

State Capitol, state Representative Sean Williams said today.

“If we are going to be seen as true leaders by the people we represent, we need to lead by example. That means cutting back on esthetic – as opposed to safety improvements – at the state capitol and cutting back on the state legislature’s operating budget,” said Representative Williams, R-68th District.

Representative Williams took part in a news conference held Wednesday by House and Senate Republicans to unveil several proposals to reduce the state budget deficit and highlight spending on local projects the state cannot afford.

“While I still believe the state’s fiscal problems are serious enough to justify a special session before the November elections, it’s unrealistic to expect the Democratic leaders in the state House and Senate will agree to one, given their insistence on delaying action to deal with the deficit until the 2009 legislative session,” Representative Williams said. “However, if the deficit continues to worsen, I wouldn’t rule out the possibility that we could meet sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas.”

House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr. of Norwalk, and Senate Republican Leader John McKinney of Fairfield cited numerous examples of projects at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) and the State Capitol as well as legislative budget items - from \$1.7 million for printing, to \$255,000 for new signs and an unnecessary special legislative session – that the state cannot afford at a time when it is facing serious fiscal problems.

They called for bipartisan action to come up with slightly less than 2 percent in cuts to the state’s \$18 billion budget rather than waiting until after the November elections to hold more hearings and do more studies. New York and many other states already are cutting spending and Connecticut should do likewise, they said.

In addition, Senator McKinney and Representative Cafero Wednesday wrote to Senate President Donald Williams, D-29th District, and House Speaker James Amann, D-

Milford, asking them to rescind a request from the General Assembly's Office of Legislative Management for a 7.9 percent increase in the state legislature's operating budget for 2009-2011.

Other examples of wasteful spending cited by House and Senate Republicans include:

- A special legislative session last December 5th that cost taxpayers \$1,000 per minute and could have been replaced with a technical session at virtually no cost.
- One hundred yards of European black marble currently being replaced in the Legislative Office Building for \$200,000 - for esthetic rather than safety reasons.
- \$255,000 worth of new signs erected throughout the LOB and the legislative parking garage.
- Brand new Liquid Crystal Display screens recently installed in hearing rooms replacing old televisions that Republicans said they never used in the first place.
- State spending amounting to almost \$300,000 for pagers - even though new technology has rendered them obsolete.

Funding totaling more than \$2.3 million doled out by Senate President Williams and House Speaker Amann to House and Senate Democratic legislators for 65 separate local projects - compared to zero for projects in Republican districts - because GOP legislators declined funding for such projects because of the state's fiscal crisis.