

House Republican Press Release

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HOUSE REPUBLICANS PASS DEFICIT RELIEF; MORE CUTS NEEDED



HARTFORD – House Republicans voted today to ease the state’s budget deficit by nearly \$300 million but warned that far greater spending cuts are still needed to stanch the fiscal bleeding that threatens to undermine Connecticut’s ability to deliver services.

During the one-day special session the legislature adopted a series of deficit reduction items that amounted to a “band aid” on the hemorrhaging budget and Republicans tried to push through additional cuts of nearly \$80 million.

“Anyone who thinks that this is comprehensive response to our worsening fiscal crisis is misguided. Today, we addressed less than half the problem and we should be honest with ourselves and the public because a lot more work lies ahead,” House Republican Leader state Rep. Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., of Norwalk said. “The legislature must start working immediately on re-structuring the way the state of Connecticut delivers services and do it more efficiently.”

The deficit reduction plan offered by Gov. M. Jodi Rell was used as the starting point but dealt with only \$300 million of the deficit. Since her plan was developed, the deficit has grown by an estimated \$250 million. Cafero said the deficit estimated climb to about \$6 billion over the next two-year budget cycle that begins July 1, 2009.

“We find ourselves in this mess because of falling revenues and the refusal by the Democrats to act on the budget last spring. It is too late to do anything about either of those issues, but we now have to come together and agree to take steps because no one entity can solve these problems alone,” Cafero said. “If we don’t cut now, we may have to tax later.”

House Republicans supported a series of additional cost-saving measures that were rejected, including:

- Combining six commissions within the Capitol into one to save an estimated \$4 million;
- Reducing by half the taxpayer-financed political campaigns to save \$8 million;
- Offering state workers early retirement to save \$130 million in the next fiscal year.
- Doubling the amount of spending cuts the governor can make without legislative approval