

House Republican Press Release

December 27, 2006
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Thank You For Your Continued Confidence And Opportunity To Serve Our Community Again



An Op-Ed By State Rep. John H. Frey

On November 7, voters gave me the opportunity to again serve as our community's voice in the State House of Representatives. It was an honor and privilege to have spoken with so many Ridgefielders during the campaign season and hear their thoughts and suggestions on issues

before our state government.

I am deeply appreciative for the trust and confidence voters have placed in me these past eight years and the chance to continue bringing your concerns and issues to Hartford. Serving in the Legislature and helping citizens navigate the bureaucracy of state government has been the most rewarding experience I have ever known.

I very much look forward to working on the challenges facing the Legislature during the next two years. A number of serious issues await us. These include the skyrocketing cost of energy. Governor Rell has introduced an energy plan that would establish several long term energy goals for the state and several proposals to reduce energy-related taxes. I am hopeful elements of her plan, in conjunction with additional proposals put before the General Assembly, will be among the first bills passed into law next year. We, as a Legislature, must and should bring about relief for ratepayers as quickly as possible, without delay.

Budgetary issues will also be prominent during the 2007 Legislative Session. While the current fiscal year looks bright with a surplus of nearly a half billion dollars, the Legislature must craft a budget for the following two years. Deficits of almost \$800 million are projected between those two years. We are projected to exceed the spending cap by over a half billion dollars each of those two years. Therefore, there will likely be a battle over how much of the surplus to spend on new programs and how much to use for budget shortfalls. Legislators simply have to hold the line on spending.

The Speaker of the House has also suggested there may be proposals for certain tax breaks put forward. In addition, Governor Rell has pledged to reintroduce her plan to abolish the local tax on motor vehicles. Regarding potential tax breaks, I strongly support eliminating the estate tax, which has hurt many Ridgefielders through the years.

Education topics will be on the Legislature's agenda as well. The Governor's Commission on Education Funding will put forth recommendations regarding distribution of local school funds. Aid to towns under the current Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula ranges from

over \$7,000 per student to about \$250 per student and actually punishes the Town of Ridgefield. We must create a more equitable formula.

Healthcare- affordability, adequacy and access- will also be a major legislative priority when the General Assembly convenes on January 3rd. I believe the role of government is to help individuals who are unable to help themselves. I believe any plan must include portable and flexible insurance plans which are consumer-friendly. We are committed to increasing access to quality healthcare for all Connecticut citizens.

A First-Time Homebuyer Trust Fund is a proposal we in the House Republicans are putting forth this session. The plan is to deposit taxes from earned income of new college graduates into a trust fund and allow graduates up to ten years to withdraw their accumulated taxes for the purpose of buying a home. We need a program like the First-Time Homebuyer Trust Fund to stop the “brain drain” and keep talented, young adults in the state and make homeownership more affordable.

Finally, as we start the New Year let us remember that the government you have graciously re-elected me to, is the peoples’ government and I always enjoy hearing from you – if you have thoughts on issues before the legislature, have a local issue of concern or just don’t know where to turn, please call me (toll free Hartford number is 800 – 842-1423 or at my home 431-6799).