

House Republican Press Release

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REP. FREY DECRIES DEMOCRATS FOR EXCESSIVE BORROWING PLAN AND REJECTION OF TOUGHER REPEAT FELON LAWS



“Refuse Republicans Efforts to Tighten ‘Three Strikes’ Proposal”

HARTFORD – Despite a Connecticut Supreme Court ruling striking down portions of the state’s persistent felon laws, and growing public outrage over the brutal, tragic murders of a Cheshire family by two paroled felons in July, Democrats rejected State Representative John Frey (111-Ridgefield) and fellow House Republican members in their attempt to toughen the laws and correct unconstitutional flaws as well as passing a compromise bonding package during last week’s special session.

Instead, the Democrats called two special legislative sessions to pass a state contracting bill and borrow \$3.1 billion more for major capital projects and so-called earmarked items for individual districts.

“It is regrettable that despite the public outrage over the tragedy in Cheshire, and the Supreme Court ruling just weeks ago, the Democratic majority instead chose to debate a state bond package that the Governor had said was unaffordable,” House Republican Whip John Frey said.

The murders of three members of the Petit family on July 23 have focused attention on the holes in the criminal justice system that allowed repeat criminals to be eligible for parole. Republicans want to classify burglary as a violent offense and fall under the Three Strikes statutes that could send future felons to life in prison.

Frey said that at the very least, the technical flaws in the current laws outline by the Supreme Court should be addressed immediately and fixed as the high court suggested.

“We continue to hear that the Democrats are in agreement with us in many areas of the persistent felon statutes. The public is demanding action and we have a road map from the court to make the changes. We should act now,” Frey said.

“Bond Package Passed by Democrats Even after Governor Rell’s Veto Threat”

“Gov. M. Jodi Rell was absolutely right to reject the Democrats’ \$3.1 billion bond package last week because it contained at least \$600 million more in borrowing than the plan she proposed earlier this year. The governor then quickly called the legislature back into session this week and the Democrats have balked; they are holding dozens of local school construction projects captive in exchange for their own additional costly bond items for their voting districts,” said Rep. Frey.

“We should go forward with the original agreed upon bond package. Unless this impasse is resolved quickly local school construction projects will be delayed and contractors who have already performed work for municipalities will not be paid, thereby exposing towns and cities to legal jeopardy,” added Frey who is a member of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee.

Connecticut ranks right near the top when it comes to accumulated debt as we currently spend one out of every nine dollars of the state budget just on the interest payments for our \$13.9 billion worth of debt. 10 years ago the state allocated \$660 million in general obligation bonds; last year allocations totaled \$1.4 billion. Under the bill, allocations in Fiscal Year 2008 would be \$1.77 billion.

Rep. Frey concluded, “Accumulating such high debt in relation to our overall tax and spending plan makes the rating agencies that measure our fiscal health and ability to meet the state’s bottom line. We are on the wrong end of this money train, and we have to get off.”