

House Republican Press Release

October 14, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

REP. FREY APPLAUDS NEW LAW STRIPPING CORRUPT OFFICIALS OF THEIR PENSIONS



RIDGEFIELD- State Rep. John Frey announced that state or municipal officials convicted of corruption would lose their pensions under a strict state ethics law that took effect October 1st.

Rep. John Frey has supported and worked to pass a pension revocation bill for several years and with the help of Governor M. Jodi Rell a compromise law was passed to withstand a possible constitutional challenge. A bill first requiring pension revocation was introduced by Rep. Frey in 2006.

“Taxpayers ultimately foot the bill for pensions and health benefits of state employees, including elected officials,” said Rep. Frey, who serves as a Republican Whip in the House of Representatives. “Clearly, the taxpayers should not have to cover those for people -- Republicans or Democrats, elected officials or employees -- who engaged in corruption. Connecticut has seen a rash of corruption-related crimes in recent years on both the state and local level.”

Among the violations that could lead to revocation or reduction of pensions include bribery, theft or embezzlement of public funds or using public office to gain profit or advantage.

The new law:

- Permits state courts to revoke or reduce any retirement or other benefit due to state or municipal officials or employees who commit certain crimes related to their employment;
- Makes it a class A misdemeanor for public servants to fail to report a bribe;
- Expands illegal campaign finance practices to cover certain solicitations by chiefs of staff;
- Makes several changes to state codes of ethics such as limiting gift exceptions, prohibiting state contractors from hiring certain former public officials and state employees, restricting the Office of State Ethics' (OSE) authority to issue

subpoenas, prohibiting ex parte communications during OSE hearings on ethics complaints, limiting Citizens' Advisory Board members who can act on ethics complaints, and subjecting the governor's spouse to the code;

- Requires OSE to provide mandatory training to legislators on the Code of Ethics for Public Officials, and;

- Requires public agencies to post, on available web sites, meeting dates, times and minutes required by law to be publicly disclosed.

“By passing this tough law, we send a clear message to anyone tempted to engage in corruption that not only do you face losing your job and incarceration, but you can also lose the benefits you count on in years to come,” added Frey.