

House Republican Press Release

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'No Tax Increase' Budget Takes the Lead



Opinion by Representative Themis Klarides Deputy Republican Leader

This past week has been a critical one for the debate on the state budget. A new Quinnipiac Poll this week demonstrated that more Connecticut voters favored the House Republican "No Tax Increase" budget by 40%, beating out the Governor's proposed budget, or the Democrats' budget. The Democrats' budget received 33%, while the Governor's only received 16%.

This data finally demonstrated what House Republicans have been saying all along; Connecticut residents are tired of high taxes, and they aren't buying the Democrats' tax increase shell game.

Also this week, it was announced that the state's projected surplus is over \$200 million higher than originally anticipated, getting the surplus up to nearly \$900 million.

High budget surpluses mean only one thing: we are being taxed to highly. And there really can be little doubt of that. Connecticut remains the highest taxed state per capita in the US of all states. Connecticut residents work an average of 140 days out of the year just to pay their federal, state and local tax bills. The Tax Foundation released a report in March on the tax burden in all states. According to their report, Tax Freedom Day, the day of the year residents finish paying taxes for the year, and begin to keep what they earn is the latest in Connecticut at May 20th.

Legislative Democrats would have you believe that their budget cuts taxes for 90% of state residents. It is true, that their plan would cut the income tax for a number of taxpayers. However, they are increasing sales and service taxes in a number of areas, forcing you to pay back in other taxes what they give you from your income tax.

The Democrats' budget increases spending over \$2 billion, and claims it shifts the burden more toward the state's wealthiest residents. Of course, the Democrats want to eliminate the exemption from the sales tax on clothing items under \$50, which hardly targets wealthy people.

As usual, the Democratic proposal underestimates revenues. Over the past fifteen years, we have had budget surplus after budget surplus because of this, and they have

consistently raised taxes. House Republicans estimate revenues more realistically, and have proposed a budget that makes no cuts to any state service or program, would increase education spending by \$358 million, and does it without any tax increase. It's irresponsible to raise taxes any further.

Governor M. Jodi Rell this week announced that she may now believe we can accomplish the goals we need to without a tax increase. This is naturally a positive step in the debate on the budget, and a victory in the effort to fight off tax increases.

The session ends June 6th, and much can and will happen between now and then.