

House Republican Press Release

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Answers Starting to Emerge?



By State Representative John J. Ryan

Hopefully you might remember our post-election column from November 30th of last fall ("Questions, questions, questions") where we speculated on what might happen in this year's Session. So [unlike those editorial writers in the big dailies who seem to never look back on their prior expoundings], let's revisit some of the possibilities we suggested last November:

- It is certainly clear now that Governor Rell is not disposed to "sit back" and await initiatives from the large Democrat legislative majority; she has opted for the "take charge" approach. Whether you love or hate the substance of her initiatives, Rell has put forward not only her February budget proposals, but her new educational cost-sharing plan, and most recently, a property tax increase cap plan. As with last year's car tax abolition plan, the Democrats are not likely to let any of these proposals become reality, but Rell seems undeterred, and clearly will not be a passive head of state!

- It is also readily apparent that Governor Rell continues to be popular with the electorate, and seems likely to remain so. For nearly any other elected official, proposing a tax increase is always politically fatal, but Rell's popularity only moved downward a minor blip!

- We asked in November "what approach do the Democrats use with Rell", and it is now obvious that they do not have the slightest clue! By ignoring negative comments (such as those of House Speaker Amann) that her property tax cap proposal was "harebrained", she refuses to react to opponents' political rhetoric, does not dignify their remarks, and the headline churning political wrangles fizzle out in one day. Certainly an unusual approach, but with less than two months to go in this year's Session, the Democrat supermajority has (thus far!) not attempted to flex its' political muscle.

- We also mentioned a number of election promises from last fall, and naturally there seems to be no Democrat effort in sight to fix the horrible affordable housing law (8-30g). And those pledges that "we will bring more \$ back from Hartford" to lower Fairfield County are certainly amusing in light of stories such as that in last Thursday's Advocate "Area Democrats balk at education plan"; imagine, a report where "southwest (Democrat) Connecticut legislators caught off guard by a Democrat bill that would strip

away much of the additional school aid the Governor proposed for lower Fairfield County". So what was it that George Santayana said about "the lessons of history"?

So where is all of this headed? The governor's transportation initiatives are actually moving forward, surprisingly, there is still a "live" eminent domain reform bill that is still moving through the process, and there have been a large number of bills reported out of committees on a wide variety of topics, but on the all encompassing "big issue" namely the budget, are we headed for a huge confrontation with a big spending budget that passes on a party-line vote, and Rell vetoes? Are stalemate, special sessions, veto override attempts, and flashbacks to 1991 (the year Weicker got the income tax passed after many months of special sessions)? Or does Governor Rell chose to push the envelope as far as she thinks she can, and then work out a compromise , and if so, when ? In any event, it seems there will be lots to discuss in future columns!

As always please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at John.Ryan@housegop.ct.gov or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.