

House Republican Press Release

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Running out of time.....



By State Representative John J. Ryan

As you are reading this column, there are less than 2 weeks left of this year's General Assembly Session, and as is usually the case, much of the business of the session happens in the final weeks (or does not happen at all!). By way of a quick recap, remember that this is a "long session year" commencing early in January and concluding on June 6, the major business of a "long session" being to approve the State biennial budget; the political mix of your State Legislature is 107 Democrats (and only 44 Republicans) in the House, and 24 Democrats (and only 12 Republicans) in the Senate, which means not only that the legislative majority controls the agenda and what bills we take up, but that there is also a Democrat "supermajority" that has enough votes to override a gubernatorial veto.

And with the clock ticking down, amazingly the list of items not addressed (as of early this week as we are writing) is both substantial and lengthy:

- Gas and utility price relief: if you thought this would be a priority you will not be happy to know that we have not even had a bill come up for a vote yet! Maybe you saw last week's news coverage on the House Republican proposals we outlined; if a relevant bill is brought to the floor, we will try to amend it with our proposal of a summer suspension of the gas tax!
- Conveyance tax: the odds of this supposedly temporary tax increase being "sunsetting" are about the same odds as my winning the next NBA slam-dunk competition, and you can also expect that the legislative majority will never bring up Gov. Rell's plan to eliminate the car tax either.
- Eminent domain reform: Connecticut attracted national attention a while back when the *Kelo* case from New London went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court; many states have already acted, and a bill from the Planning & Development Committee on which I serve, that would have gone a long way towards addressing the problem has not yet been called for a vote.

And.

- The budget! : And of course, the most important topic which encompasses just how much total spending the State does, and the tax package that creates the revenue stream for the spending on all of these programs, is nowhere close to a resolution yet. I hope that you are paying attention to who is proposing a "no tax increase budget" and who is proposing to increase income and estate taxes. I suspect that there will be the usual frantic flurry of activity in the closing days, but I am not at all optimistic that there will be an acceptable budget in place before we adjourn the regular session!

Of course, there is a wide variety of legislation that has been taken up and passed already, and we can report on some of these items during the (hopefully) quiet summer. But on the major issues that continue to dominate the news coverage at the Capitol, right now, nothing doing.

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.