

House Republican Press Release

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Fiscal year ticking away....



By State Representative John J. Ryan

....and with less than 10 days to go in this fiscal year, the good news is that our budget surplus is charging towards the \$1 Billion (yes, that is "billion" with a "B"!) and the bad news is that, at least as of early this week as we are going to press, there is no final budget deal! (We have a tentative agreement", but let's see what happens.)

Since our recent closing-hours-of-the-regular-session column was all too prophetic on all of the major items that did not get addressed, or got less attention than they deserved, and since there is no new budget package (yet) to talk about, let's spend a little time on some things that we have not been able to devote as much attention to lately:

-speaking of the huge and growing surplus in the current fiscal year, I continue to be astounded that none of the editorial experts in our daily media have figured out that possibly, maybe, our residents are being over-taxed to the tune of a billion dollars per year ! Of course, in kvetching about the topics that did not get results this year, they also seem to be blissfully unaware (or uninterested?) in how government works, or who is in the majority and "in charge", etc.

- amazingly, despite the magnitude of the growing surplus, the Democrat "supermajority" in budget negotiations has been insisting not only on increasing the income and estate and other taxes, but on modifying our tax code to provide for increasing the tax rates as income levels increase (guess which towns this will effect the most ?) e.g. a "more progressive tax" . Of course under the system now in place the top 25 percent of taxpayers (those earning \$75,000 and more) generate 80 percent of the revenue! Doesn't that sound like it already is "progressive"?

- remember all of the noise about "affordable housing issues" and how candidates promised at election time to "fix" that bad zoning override 8-30g law ? Will you be absolutely astounded to learn what did not happen on this topic in the State Capitol this year? We will devote a column to this worthy issue in the near future.....

-all was not total futility in Hartford this year; one item that has long concerned myself and other Republicans is the large unfunded liability in the State Teachers' Retirement System (currently nearing \$7 billion !) The last budget funded the payment then due to

the system, and this year we passed HB-6141, requiring the State to borrow (by issuing Pension Obligation Bonds) \$2 billion to close the gap, and to then fully fund the State Teachers' Retirement System. Of course, this does not immediately solve the problem, but it's a start.

- and in future columns, assuming that we will have a new budget soon to discuss, we will discuss topics of local interest, matters that I specifically worked on in this session, what did and did not happen in the particular committees on which I serve, and of course, what all of this might mean for next year's session.

In the meantime, a sure sign that summer is here is that the John Cutrone & Friends Sunday jazz sessions have started in nearby SoNo, and I have already scheduled one weekend at Tanglewood, and I have to take a look at the Caramoor schedule. Hope to see you somewhere!

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.