

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

Nothing Happened, and....



By State Representative John J. Ryan

Somehow it is almost the end of July, but the good news for Connecticut taxpayers is that the State Legislature has drifted off to its drowsy, dormant stage, hopefully until next year, and will not be able to do more damage to you this year! So in wrapping up a Session where fortunately batches of tax increases did not happen, the Veto Session held this Monday was also happily a non-event.

But first, a news update! You may remember that a successful argument by legislative Republicans against proposed Democrat "supermajority" tax increases was the rapidly climbing surplus, last pegged in the \$900 million+ range. Well, guess what? See the news at the Governor's website www.ct.gov/governorrell "Final Monthly Estimate of Fiscal 2007 Budget Surplus Tops \$ 1 Billion" [yes, a billion \$ with a "B"] for the details! And do you think that there is any chance that our local daily media might discern that a billion dollar surplus on a budget of close to \$17 billion is a bit of over-taxation, or maybe that the State has no revenue problems, just a spending problem, or more insightful yet, just what sources are generating these tax windfalls ? At least the good news is that this year's deposit to the State's Rainy Day fund is about \$250 million.

Now back to nothing else happening. If you are a regular column reader, you are aware that the so-called "Veto Session" is a regularly scheduled event on the legislative calendar; this year there was more attention on this topic because the Governor did veto the tax-increase budget plan [that every legislative Republican voted against] during the regular session, and there was the concern that we explained in columns early in the year that given the large Democrat 'supermajority' - veto overrides might become routine! Well, it didn't happen with the budget, and as we have explained at length, the resulting budget compromise was a more acceptable result.

One gubernatorial veto was actually overridden during the session [P.A. 07-83 regarding the Social Services waiver process], but the Governor went on to veto four further bills that had passed during the session. Given the potential muscle of the "supermajority" what might happen? At Monday's Veto session, the answer was a resounding NOTHING and a re-affirmation of Rell's clout, and the "supermajority's" non-oomph. Two of the bills that passed during the session and were the object of Rell vetoes had gained media notice and some notoriety. One, P.A. 07-137 was popularly labeled "the medical

marijuana bill" [it passed the House 89-58, for instance], the other P.A. 07-135 would have extended " in-state tuition status (to UCONN, for example) to children of undocumented immigrants residing in Connecticut who meet certain criteria" [it passed the House 76-67]; I did not vote in favor of either bill, so I should be saying that I suppose that the Governor validated my vote?

As with all of these topics, there are more details than we can summarize here, so why don't you take a look at the "2007 Veto Package Report" by our non-partisan Office of Legislative research on their site at www.ct.gov/olr and get a lengthier explanation, the Governor's explanation of her veto, and more! Look it up!

But that's not all that isn't happening, We never voted during the regular Session on one of the "implementer bills" on bonding [think of the budget package as a revenue raiser that the various implementer bills then spend], so someday that has to get done? Yet another non-event was the latest settlement agreement in the old-but-ongoing *Sheff vs. O'Neill* Hartford school desegregation case, which would have called for spending yet another \$112 million over the next five years. (Now here is a topic that several columns could be devoted to!!) If with all of this *nothing* going on, the refrains of that particularly nihilistic Fugs song from decades ago comes to your mind, well, I don't want to guess what you were doing back then in college !

Finally, on a truly local note, I wanted to let you know that I recently learned that our former First Selectman Hank Sanders, who still diligently follows Darien doings from out-of-state, is recuperating well from a recent medical setback, and expecting a complete recovery. He (and Shirley) appreciates everyone's good wishes and I assume that we will be hearing more from him soon!

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, and 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.