

House Republican Press Release

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So Many Issues, So Little Time.....



By State Representative John J. Ryan

Maybe you are weary of the non-stop Presidential campaigning (did you see the recent poll claiming that 98% of the public believes that the Presidential election process is much too long?) or you can't wait for pitchers and catchers to report, so I hope that you paid attention to

the news coverage of last Wednesday's commencement of this year's General Assembly Session!

Since this is (allegedly) a "short session" year, the highlight of "Opening Day" is the Governor's Budget Address. (You can listen to it, or review a summary at www.ct.gov/governorrell) As usual, the Governor took on more topics than we have room to summarize, but here is my view of the highlights of the leading Hartford issues for this year:

- **DOT** : the issue of the State's DOT as a cumbersome, non-responsive, intransigent bureaucracy has been around as long as I can remember, and Guess Who has decided to take a shot at it (doesn't that Rell lady ever learn ? You are supposed to smile sweetly, blame other people for problems, and make excuses if government actually doesn't work!) by proposing to implement many of the findings/recommendations made by a DOT study task force headed by (Darienite) Michael Critelli, the big recommendation being to split DOT into 2 new agencies! Even our local dailies have already editorialized that it merits serious consideration. I and many Republicans think that almost ANY change to the disaster that is DOT is worth considering, but **Prediction?** Since the legislative supermajority Democrats are beholden to the State employee unions who will be loathe to even tinker slightly with the State's employee army, expect much wringing of hands that 'this needs more study' and 'this should wait for a long session year'.

- **Taxes/property tax cap**: Gov. Rell proposed fiscal prudence with no new taxes or tax increases given the uncertain nature of the national economy (and the stability of this year's projected surplus), but **Prediction?** Those Supermajority folks are already talking about spending the surplus on give-away plans, and only the impending Fall elections might restrain their intentions (of course, the Supermajority always views tax increases on "the rich", i.e. most of the residents of Fairfield County, as always a good idea). She is also taking another shot at last year's property tax cap proposal, but **Prediction?** Given

that nearly all the big cities (that get large amounts of State funding) are controlled by the same political party as the legislative Supermajority, take a guess!

- **3 strikes** : As mentioned in a recent column, the '3 strikes' sentencing provision in violent felony cases was not part of the package passed in the January Special Session; to her credit, Rell has no intention to 'quit while ahead' on this topic, an issue that polls seem to indicate the public favors. So Gov. Rell proposed addressing this topic with new legislation in this regular Session, but **Prediction?** Those Supermajority folks sat in stony silence as the rest of the hall vigorously applauded this part of the Governor's address.

-**Highway safety/weigh station:** More State troopers (and dedicated to traffic enforcement), increasing DMV's truck inspection program, more anti-speeding enforcement, longer weigh station hours, etc., and **Prediction?** Some of this may actually happen, especially when some legislators will claim that it was all their idea in the first place!

-**Cut \$250 fee:** We legislative Republicans have been condemning the \$250 'Business Entity Tax' for years as being anti-small business, and for **Prediction?** See "highway..." right above!

-**And billboards...?! OK,** proof that I am not "Carnac the Magnificent" is that I never saw this one coming! So take a look at the Feb. 9 entry on the Governor's website, and **Prediction?** Sorry, but I could not find my 'Magically-predicts-the-future-8-Ball' in time!

Stay tuned...it is your tax dollars we are talking about.

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.