

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

SPECIAL SESSION SPENDING



By State Representative John J. Ryan

I trust that you noticed that last week's column "Primaries and Prognostications" appeared on the website of this distinguished publication (you do check your favorite media websites frequently, we assume !); after all, do we have to keep killing trees to generate (and recycle) newsprint ? So if you did not see it, there is plenty of time to go back to the website and review our thoughts and what did/didn't happen in the recent primaries earlier this month.

On to the latest from your State Capitol, I know that you noticed that we had (yet another!) Special Session last Friday, this time on what to do with the funds that would comprise the relatively small surplus from the fiscal year that just ended on June 30. And did we start work as scheduled for this Special Session (Chorus: Of course not!) Did we finish babbling at a reasonable hour? (Chorus: Of course not! - - and do you really think that I am going to miss driving back on the Merritt at 2:30 a.m.?) Did we sock this 'found money' in the Rainy Day Fund, or use it to buy down some of our [whopping] debt? (Chorus: Of course not!!) Were those considerations important when one keeps in mind the large and looming deficits universally predicted for the current fiscal year? (Chorus: Of course not!!)

I hope that you at least saw some of the news coverage on what happened. Gov. Rell, clearly being cognizant of the proclivities of the large (Democrat) majority that controls both chambers of the General Assembly, obviously made a policy decision that if these surplus \$\$ were going to be spent, she would at least like to have them go to a worthy issue, namely "energy legislation" to help with this winter's upcoming high heating bills. So at the least, we did some good on an important issue, the result being that nearly \$75 million will go to help consumers, schools and non-profit agencies help pay their energy bills.

But as usual, could we have done a better job? (Chorus: Of course we could!) Once again, we Republicans could have made the proposal better. (Again, as we have said frequently in this space, don't take my word – or anybody's – for it, go look it up. Remember that **everything** voted on in your State government is recorded, and can be looked up 'online') I joined fellow House Republicans in voting for an amendment (the Bill was SB-1101, the amendment is LCO 6945) that would have increased the funding to "Operation Fuel" – in effect extending relief to working and middle-class families;

providing funds to the “Clean Slate program” – those who are late on electric bills; providing funding for the Energy Conservation and Load Management Fund; and also appropriating \$3.5 million to our Office of Policy and Management for a “Victims of Home Heating Oil Company Closure” fund – can’t we do anything to help folks who prepaid for next year’s oil and watched helplessly as their company went under?

So did any of these perfectly reasonable proposals pass? (**Chorus:** Of course not!) If you have paid any attention to what has happened in this year’s Special Sessions, you have the idea on what happens to most Republican legislative amendments. But more importantly, I hope that you noted (over 14 years now of these columns) that the message always is: It is your government. It is your money. It is not difficult to pay attention. And if you don’t pay attention

And speaking of not paying attention, there was an editorial in another publication that will merit one of my very rare “letters to the editor”. Like we say, you can’t make this stuff up!

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.