

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **A No Tax Increase Plan is a Better Way**



*By Rep. John Stripp*

House Republicans in the state legislature have put forward an alternative “No Tax” budget proposal. Since the start of the legislative session and the unveiling of both the Governor’s and Majority Democratic budgets, residents in Easton, Redding and Weston have voiced loud and clear their frustration with any notion of taxing an already too-taxed citizenry.

The “No Tax” budget balances and does not cut a single line item – in fact increases many – but is not balanced on the backs of working people. There is no tax hike for anyone of any income level in the state. With a \$1 billion budget surplus this year, how can we ask any wage earner– forget for a moment how much you make – to pay more. We don’t believe the legislature should begin any budget discussions with talk of raising people’s taxes in order to maintain a high standard of living.

In addition, the “No Tax” budget includes priorities of the majority of Connecticut residents and House Republicans: lower energy costs, access to better health care, education, a clean environment.

House Republicans want the best education for our children and we have a new and different approach to state education funding. The current formula is rife with inadequacies and inequalities that forces small suburban towns such as Easton, Redding and Weston to shoulder the burden. We want to finally fix and reconfigure the mangled school funding formula to address these concerns and to encourage greater educational accountability.

The big cities and their lobbyists continue to declare additional money is the solution to their education woes yet the miserable educational track record continues in cities like Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford, year after year. Residents of our communities are struggling in paying their local property taxes and our existing Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding forces towns to make difficult decisions each year. The best method is a level playing field and the rewarding of well-performing schools which permits towns to receive their fair distribution in state education dollars.

To address energy concerns our budget provides \$26 million for the Energy Conservation and Load Management Fund which is setup to assist in development and implementation in cost-effective energy conservation programs and market transformation initiatives, \$31

million – Eliminating sales on electricity for businesses which will help mitigate energy costs of businesses, and \$9 million to exempt energy-related products from the sales tax to create an incentive for residents to purchase energy saving goods.

In an effort to deal with and focus on health care we provide \$87 million for increased Medicaid rates for hospitals and \$50 million to increase Medicaid rates for other medical providers which will help ease the financial burden on hospital and other providers. We also supply \$14 million for increased enrollment in the state's Healthcare for Uninsured Kids and Youth (HUSKY) program.

The No Tax plan also offers \$30 million in tax credits for individuals and small businesses for having or providing health insurance coverage.

If we move toward our state's most pressing issues in a reasonable approach, we can address them effectively without raising taxes. If people are working and the economy is expanding, it will generate all the revenues we need to tackle our most urgent problems over the next few years – and without threatening our state's economic future.

The choice is clear with the three proposals that have been presented thus far – a state budget that doesn't call for an increase in taxes is the most responsible alternative.

I am interested in your opinions on the budget proposals before the State Legislature. Your comments should be sent to me at the Legislative Office Building, Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106 or email [John.Stripp@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:John.Stripp@housegop.ct.gov).