

House Republican Press Release

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REP. STRIPP: APPLAUDS PUSH FOR FLEXIBLE STATE WORKFORCE HOURS; TEST TELECOMMUTING



HARTFORD – State Representative John E. Stripp expressed support for more flexible work weeks for state employees by promoting their own office plan to allow for telecommuting, a policy that to save taxpayer dollars, make workers more productive and get commuters off clogged highways.

“We want to do our part to make Connecticut and its government ‘*Leaner and Greener*’ with a test program to permit staff to work one day a week from home,” said Rep. Stripp. Four day work weeks and “flex time,” must also be considered, he said.

In order to implement the policy legislative leaders must agree to offer the telecommuting option, and Republicans are awaiting approval from Democrats on the trial program.

“The state of Connecticut encourages private sector companies to allow their employees to telecommute. We need to take this initiative ourselves and make government more efficient and in the process, cut down on air pollution,” Stripp said. “We have the technology and the ability to make this a seamless transition that works for the state and the taxpayer. We hope this House Republican initiative will become the first step toward can become the model for state government,” Stripp said.

“Other states have turned thousands of lost commuting hours into productive work, saved workers millions in gas bills and reduced pollution and congestion,” Stripp said.

Redding has implemented a four-day workweek for non-emergency employees in a trial period that began June 30 and will end Aug. 31 to save money which could be another option for the state. The flexible schedules will not work for all state agencies, but Connecticut needs to be creative. The pilot telecommuting program we hope to test out over the next few months and evaluated:

- Republican House staff members could telecommute one day per week on a department basis, ensuring that all their legislative responsibilities are covered;
- Staff would use laptop computers that are already available to communicate easily with the Legislative Office Building;

- Because the telecommuting would be staggered throughout the office, no disruption of service for constituents or anyone else who contacts the offices would take place;
- Similar programs have been tried in other states such as Arizona where state workers have **converted 181,000 hours of commuting time into productive working hours and reduced air pollution by 175,000 pounds;**
- A 2007 national study by the Consumer Electronics Association estimated that telecommuting saves enough energy in the traditional workplace to power one million households for a year. The same study determined that **3.9 million telecommuters saved 840 million gallons of gas.**
- *Telecommute Connecticut* estimates that employees who telecommute **save an estimated \$1,200 annually on gasoline.**

Connecticut is one of 13 states that already allows for telecommuting for state workers when it is proved to be “cost effective.” Only 140 state workers participated last year.