

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

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Bill Number: 1500

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House Pages: 9105-9139

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Committee: No Hearings

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SENATE

PROCEEDINGS
2007

JUNE
SPECIAL SESSION
VETO SESSION

VOL. 50
PART 19
6039-6384

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Senate

June 25, 2007

THE CHAIR: .

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Calling from Senate Agenda No. 2, Emergency
Certified Senate Bill 1500, An Act Implementing the
Provisions of the Budget Concerning General
Government.

The bill is accompanied by Emergency
Certification, signed, Donald E. Williams, Jr.,
President Pro Tempore of the Senate, James A. Amann,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SEN. HARP:

Thank you, Mr. President. I move acceptance and
passage of the Emergency Certified bill.

THE CHAIR:

Acting on approval of the bill, Ma'am, will you
remark further?

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SEN. HARP:

Thank you very much. This is our general government implementer, and it implements many sections of the overall budget.

And unlike the Human Services and Public Health implementer, and the Education implementer, which were focused in certain departments, this particular implementer goes across almost every department in government.

And I've got to say that it was not an easy implementer to negotiate. So before I detail what is in the bill, I want to thank my Co-Chair, Representative Merrill.

I want to also thank Senator McDonald, who came in especially to look at some of the judicial issues in this bill. I want to thank Senator Fasano, who was there late, late one night and then early the next morning, working on this.

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Representative DelGobbo, who helped us with a lot of the energy issues in this bill. Senator McKinney also helped with this bill, as did, and, of course, as the center of all of the negotiations was Secretary Genuario and Under Secretary Cicchetti.

I want to thank them especially for their patience. I want to thank Senator Roraback. Somehow, he even managed to be a part of one of the many meetings on this particular implementer.

But the person who probably did the [inaudible] person's work is our Attorney, Jo Roberts, who must have, on some of these sections, she must have changed things at least 15 times, back and forth.

She was here many, many nights until 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning, talking to us. And then she had to prepare items as well.

Our staff were there as well, Kevin Graff from our side, and Ellen Scalettar, and Susan Keane, and

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Susan Shimelman, as well as the staff from the Office of Policy and Management.

Thank you to everyone because we certainly couldn't have gotten it done without all of your help. So I'm going to take you through this bill as quickly as possible.

As I said before, it goes across government. Section 1 basically implements the budget through allowing the City of Hartford to lease the old state house to the General Assembly through the Joint Committee on Management.

It provides for a 99-year lease. The bill also authorizes the Water Planning Council to establish an advisory group and to do various studies that need to be done on water issues throughout our state.

The bill, as well, implements the budget by establishing guidelines for the distribution of youth employment and training funds to the Regional Workforce Development Boards.

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As well, it sets up a pilot program in the New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court to reduce the number of children who are placed out of their communities in foster care and creates a guardianship program for caring for children.

The bill also establishes some support for municipalities in making the municipalities eligible up to one-half of the cost for training Firefighter 1's and also recruit training.

The bill also funds, within the Department of Environmental Protection, a very important initiative to help to reduce invasive plants in our state and fund the recommendations of the Invasive Plants Council.

The bill also establishes a competitive grant program to eliminate or reduce in areas urban youth violence in our state.

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The bill, as well, provides funds in Fiscal Year '09 for the Connecticut manufacturing supply chain and expands the purview of that program in our state.

It also implements the budget and indicates how we will expand and fund the Small Business Incubator Advisory Board and make changes to that program and allocate those dollars.

The bill also establishes a grant program within the State Department of Environmental Protection for the reduction of school bus emissions and funds over two years, provides for \$10 million of funds over two years.

The bill also raises the fee from \$25 to \$75 required of anyone, of any person the court orders to participate in a victim impact panel, as the condition of the person's enrollment in the alcohol intervention program, and provides adequate funding, I believe, for that program.

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The bill, as well, alters the qualifications for the executive director position in the Office of Military Affairs. It specifies that the state cannot recover from James Tillman any of the \$5 million settlement for his costs of incarceration.

The bill reduces the annual number of meetings required for the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund from six to two. And it expands the purview of the governing board of the Criminal Justice Information System.

It, as well, implements the budget by requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a study on the Connecticut Valley Hospital water supply.

And it increases the fees charged by court reporters and monitors when preparing transcripts for certain governmental officials and governmental work.

The bill, as well, implements the budget by defining a program in the Office of Victim Services

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that allows for contracts to assist victims who are victims of the crime of trafficking.

The bill, as well, implements the budget by expanding diversion services and court options for families with service needs.

The bill basically changes the types of cars and light-duty trucks that the state can purchase. And after January 1, 2008, at least 50% of those cars and light-duty trucks have to have an efficiency rating in the top third of their class.

As well, 50% have to, must be alternatively fueled or a hybrid electric or a plug-in electric vehicles.

The bill also implements the budget by transferring funds, approximately \$5 million annually, that are generated from the commission on prisoners' phone calls to the Judicial Department to expand the Probation Transition Program and the technical violations unit in the Court [inaudible] Services

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Division, in order to reduce recidivism and decrease, ultimately, the prison population.

As well, the bill basically describes how we're going to implement our overall bio-diesel program. It establishes a tax exemption against the petroleum gross earnings tax to encourage the production and use of bio-diesel fuel for transportation and heating.

It creates the Connecticut-qualified biodiesel producer incentive account, and it, as well, expands the Department of Agriculture's farm link program to include biodiesel.

As well, in biodiesel, it sets up additional tasks for the Institute of Sustainable Energy, located at Eastern Connecticut State University, to support biodiesel, and it provides funding for a staff person, within the Connecticut agricultural experiment station, to conduct research into the best crop cultivator for success as biodiesel fuel.

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It also defines a new and updated minority set-aside program. It implements the Raise the Age of Juvenile Jurisdiction. It indicates that the effective date for that policy will be January 1, 2010.

And I guess I want to stop here for a minute and thank Judge Lavery and members of Judicial Department for coming over to clarify how that department, which actually handles most of the individuals in this age group, will implement this program in our state.

The bill, as well, eliminates the Statute of Limitations for certain offenses that, provided that the perpetrator is identified by DNA and that the victim notified the police or prosecutor of the offense within five years of its commission

It also requires registered sex offenders to notify the Department of Safety whenever the sex offender establishes or changes an electronic mail

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address, instant message address, or other similar Internet communication identifier.

The bill makes it a felony to misrepresent one's age over the Internet to entice a minor. The bill establishes a new Division of Autism Spectrum Services within the Department of Mental Retardation.

It requires the Department of Mental Retardation to adopt regulations to establish eligibility standards and allows the new division, within available appropriations, to research, design, and implement delivery of services for individuals with autism spectrum disease.

It allows the Department of Mental Retardation to carry forward up to \$200,000 in its pilot program for autism services to be used for a feasibility study regarding whether or not the state should enter into a Medicaid waiver on behalf of this population.

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The bill, as well, sets up a number of studies. One is a study on Internet sales tax credit. The other is a study on the property tax cap.

And the other thing that this bill does is validate the confirmation of the Department of Children and Families Commissioner. That is the bill in a nutshell, and I urge your support.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Harp. Will you remark?
Senator Herlihy.

SEN. HERLIHY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I have a question relating to legislative intent. It relates to the Connecticut Energy Assistance Plan, and I would like to ask it through the proponent of the bill, Senator Harp, but I'm going to ask that she yield to the Chairman of the Energy Committee, Senator Fonfara, if I may.

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Senator Harp.

SEN. HARP:

Thank you, Mr. President. Certainly, I will yield to Senator Fonfara.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara, do you accept the yield?

SEN. FONFARA:

I do, Mr. President, thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Herlihy.

SEN. HERLIHY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Fonfara and Senator Harp. Is it correct, Senator Fonfara, that the Department of Social Services can continue to run the Fixed Margin Pricing program under this new language?

SEN. FONFARA:

Through you, Mr. President, yes.

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Senator Herlihy.

SEN. HERLIHY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Fonfara. Thank you, Senator Harp.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark? Senator Fasano.

SEN. FASANO:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I just want to take this moment, Senator Cappiello is not here today, and just very briefly say that this is the first time I was exposed to the process, and, Senator Harp, I only had to spend one night into the wee hours of the morning, and, Senator Harp, you did a great job with the Committee and putting the implementer together.

And a lot of people don't know how long it takes to put these things together. But also what was very important is the ability of that Committee that worked

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on this implementer to make sure that it stayed as clean as possible and stick to the budgetary issues.

Senator Harp did a great job of doing that and also sticking to her guns on an item that all of a sudden was yanked from the implementer and then, to her credit, put back in.

And she did a great job at bringing us along, and I want to thank her for her hard work. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano. Will you remark? Will you remark further on Senate Bill 1500? Will you remark? If not, Mr. Clerk, please call the roll. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in
the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

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An immediate roll call vote has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the Chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on passage of Emergency Certified Senate Bill 1500.

Total number voting, 31; necessary for passage, 16. Those voting "yea", 30; those voting "nay", 1. Absent or not voting, 5.

THE CHAIR:

Emergency Certified Senate Bill 1500 passes.

Senator Looney.

SEN. LOONEY:

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Yes, thank you, Mr. President. Would move for immediate transmittal to the House of Representatives of Senate Bill 1500.

THE CHAIR:

Hearing and seeing no objection, so ordered, Sir.

At this time, the Chair will entertain points of personal privileges or announcements. Senator Roraback.

SEN. RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. For purposes of a Journal notation?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, Sir.

SEN. RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. Three Members of our caucus have missed some or all of the votes today. Senator Nickerson was out of state on family business.

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I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Is there any business on the Clerk's desk?

CLERK:

No. Can we go now? No, Sir, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Thank you, Sir. Are there any announcements or introductions? Any announcements or introductions? Will the Clerk please call Emergency Certified Senate Bill Number 1500.

CLERK:

Emergency Certified Senate Bill Number 1500, AN
ACT IMPLEMENTING THE PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET
CONCERNING GENERAL GOVERNMENT, LCO Number 9757,
introduced by Senator Williams and Representative
Amann.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Representative Merrill.

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REP. MERRILL: (54th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. And I move acceptance and passage of the Emergency Certified Bill.

SPEAKER AMANN:

The question is on passage. Will you remark?

REP. MERRILL: (54th)

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are back today to complete our budget business with the implementing language that is in this measure. There are 123 sections to this bill, most of which are items that implement the budget.

There are some other items that are not directly related. However, all of them are at least indirectly related to the bill, and many of them are here because we needed to pass the language that completes the budget and tells us exactly how those items should be spent.

There is a fiscal note that I think outlines fairly completely most of the language in this bill. And rather than go through it section by section, many

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of us have had ample opportunity to read this bill. This is the language that was passed in the Senate last week.

So I would move its passage and simply say that, for those that have questions, I have people that can answer questions on most of the topics, and I would defer to those people who have an interest in some of the sections and leave it at that.

So without further question, thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions anyone might have on any of these provisions.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Will you remark further? Representative
DelGobbo.

REP. DELGOBBO: (70th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of the bill before us. And as has been properly stated, this is the annual type of bill that has innumerable provisions that implement in detail the budget document that we adopted last week.

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Mr. Speaker, there is, it is not often that I can say that I can, there are moments when you can appreciate being in the minority rather than the majority.

This might be one of those, whereas the Chair of Appropriations has the very daunting task should Members have specific questions on a document that has the range that is contained within this bill, so I appreciate that.

I would say to the Members of the Chamber, to characterize this is that I do know that leadership on both sides of the aisle were extraordinarily sensitive to issues of concern of all the Members of this Body as they were put forward and are contained within this document.

And I know that the Chair of the Appropriations Committee was very strident and active in obviously not just negotiating this document, but making sure that it reflected the underlying budget agreement and the issues that many Members of this Chamber have on a variety of things.

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It's my understanding that there may or may not be some other loose ends or strings that might need to be taken care of in the future and would accept that understanding that in fact we may be revisiting a few items.

But broadly speaking, Mr. Speaker, I think this document is worthy of support in that it implements the budget details as has been accepted by this Chamber, and does so, I think, in an appropriate manner and would urge adoption. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Thank you, Sir. Care to remark further? Care to remark further on the bill before us? Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON: (51st)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to comment upon the bill that's before us and how it relates to our budget, I was one of those on the very small minority that voted against our budget this year, Mr. Speaker.

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And I did so because I think, although it does a lot of tremendous things for our towns, great strides in healthcare and some very important issues, Mr. Speaker.

I felt that the end product would put us in a position in future years where the growth that we built into that base of that budget this year would be unsustainable in future years.

And I think that as we see a correction in the stock market, and I hope we certainly don't see that, and if we do, I hope we don't see it soon, but I'm afraid that if that market does not perform as it has been that much of our income tax revenue that's being driven by capital gains in that market will disappear and we will be in a budget shortfall.

And for those of you who were here during the years when we had budget shortfalls, there were some very tough decisions that had to be made at that time. And therefore, I wish that our budget that we had adopted had made some much more structural change to put us in better shape for our future years.

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Mr. Speaker, as I listen to this bill bring brought out in the Senate the other night, in a fashion similar to how we brought out the other budget implementer bills, where the General Assembly received them finally minutes before they were brought out.

Often Members of this Body actually were finding lobbyists to try to get a copy of the language so they could actually read it before the debate began, a budget that was brought out with no copies of the Governor's declaration of a fiscal emergency.

It just got me thinking about how the process works in our towns when they vote on their budgets. And in our towns, that budget's available to the public, and they have a public hearing on that budget, and often it lasts hours and very detailed questions are asked, down to single line items for \$1,000.

It's gone over in scrutiny, and then that budget sits there for a two- or three-week period before the public votes on it. We passed a budget, \$16 billion, and quite frankly, we had not seen the language of

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that budget until literally minutes before we voted on that budget.

Mr. Speaker, as I listen to the discussion in the Senate and the gratitude and thanks to all of those who wrote and rewrote version after version of that budget, night after night into the wee hours, and it just kind of struck me that that budget was crafted by a handful of people, night after night a new version, a new rewrite, a new section added, a section deleted, a section amended.

And yet we had 151 people, and I would daresay that probably 130 of those people probably never got to see one of those rewrites. They got to see that document less than probably one hour before we voted on it, almost impossible to decipher.

And to illustrate that point, we read an article in the paper where somehow a \$50 million line item was removed from that budget and no one was really sure that it was there.

So if you think about that and think about how it works on the town level, they're arguing about \$1,000

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in a budget. It sits out there for weeks. Everyone knows exactly what it is before they vote on it.

Here we're voting on a package where we can lose \$50 million and no one's really sure how it happened. Maybe three people, maybe five people knew how it happened.

Mr. Speaker, I did not support the budget. I will not support this bill today because I think it continues a process of crafting a budget and crafting a final document that doesn't serve us well.

And if it doesn't serve us well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it serves our constituents well. This is my 13th year in this building, Mr. Speaker, and this process has eroded away, and I think over the last three or four years dramatically.

It almost seems as if committee process doesn't work anymore. I know when our fourth-graders come up here, we give them a pamphlet, says how a bill becomes a law, and it describes the whole process.

You know, if there was truth in advertising, we'd change that pamphlet because almost, it's very rare

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that a bill starts in the committee process, gets passed through that committee to the next committee, gets changed, and eventually that final product comes up on its own for a full debate on the floor of the House and voted.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, most of those bills end up right here in these budget implementing bills. As I look at this 144-page document, which is one of the four bills that implements the budget, which we assume just kind of puts the painting and the finishing touches on a product and describes how that money is spent.

On my quick count earlier today, I identified at least 20 sections of the budget that have absolutely no budgetary impact, and between 8 and 12 others that I think I can make a pretty strong argument actually have very little if no impact on the budget.

So what we have here is a document that pretty much brings together maybe 50 or 60 or 70 individual bills, and it rolls it all into a bill and we call it

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a budget implementing bill, because we know we're not going to debate any of those issues.

We're going to have one vote. We had that one vote last week. If you vote for the budget, you vote for the implementer bills. The deal is you're not going to amend this.

Mr. Speaker, this may not be a bad product, but Mr. Speaker, this is a bad process that created this product.

And I think it's incumbent upon us, and I would ask especially those Legislators that are up here for the first year to think long and hard about this and to think what in the future, is this the budget process that they want, is this the process that we want as a Legislative Session, because I could offer to you that, for the most part, probably 90% to 95% of what we do this Session boils down to these individual implementer bills.

And I begin to wonder if not we ought to have four days of Session, the opening day, the day the Governor releases her budget, the day that Finance and

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Appropriations Committees come out and announce what their package is, and the day we adopt the budget and the implementers, because it seems other than that, there does not seem to be a lot of detailed debate on this.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the time to talk about my views on this, and I my vote will be in the negative today in the hope that maybe more people think about the process that we've created, because this process probably works when you've got a lot of surplus in good budget times.

But this process is going to wreak some havoc in bad budget times, and it's going to make it incredibly difficult to govern the way I think that we all think that we ought to govern and with some of the ideals that we initially walked into this building for.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Representative Miller.

REP. MILLER: (122nd)

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to comment on a couple areas of this bill. First of all, I'd like to talk about the area of bio-diesel in Sections 51 through 61. The last four weeks, Mr. Speaker--

SPEAKER AMANN:

Representative Miller, are you going to be asking questions, Sir, or just--

REP. MILLER: (122nd)

No. At this point I'll be just making comments.

SPEAKER AMANN:

You may proceed, Sir.

REP. MILLER: (122nd)

On the next section I'll ask some questions. Thank you. The last four weeks there have been two AP stories in the *Connecticut Post* regarding the air pollution in the State of Connecticut, one of which identified the greater Bridgeport region as part of New York and Newark as the 17th most polluted air in the country.

Shortly after that, another AP story came out in the *Connecticut Post* regarding carbon dioxide. In the

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State of Connecticut, we use 670 million gallons of heating oil, and obviously this is creating some kind of a problem with our environment.

And both of these stories couldn't come at a better time as we start to begin the process of establishing a bio-diesel industry in the State of Connecticut.

One thing we have in the State of Connecticut when it comes to air quality is some of the poorest air in the country.

First of all, we have the high, one of the highest percentages of asthma in the entire United States, partly because of the fact that we have, we're a small state and we have some major highways.

We're actually the gateway to New England, so anybody that wants to ship up to the New England region uses our highways and everybody comes through the State of Connecticut spewing diesel emissions, as well as automobile emissions.

You add to that the utilities, and we have a recipe for disaster. As I said, we have one of the

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worst incidences of asthma in the nation. COPD is another big factor in the State of Connecticut, people with respiratory ailments.

We have a high rating with regard to cancer. We're one of the top ten states in the nation in the area of cancer, heart disease, all these things that air pollution does not help.

So while this is a start of an industry, I'm only sorry that we hadn't started to initiate bio-diesel and bio-heat in our state five years ago.

Again, the heating oil, the amount of heating oil we use in this state and the carbon dioxide we get from that heating oil, we could do away with that particular pollutant by going to a 5% bio-heat blend.

And it's really not an imposition on anybody. There are four companies in the State of Connecticut utilizing today, one in Norwalk, one in Bridgeport, one Hartford, and I think the other one is in Wallingford.

It's a small percentage of bio into heating oil. It will increase the efficiency of that oil burner, as

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well as reduce the pollution. Again, it's a factor in our state, and we should have been doing this five years ago.

I'm happy to see the bill today, but again, we should be utilizing this material as quickly as possible. With regard to bio-diesel for diesel trucks, again, we should have been implementing this five years ago.

We continue to hear about the problems with asthma and the solutions. Well, the solutions are to put a filter on the truck, and these filters go anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000, and they do require service.

As one educator from Glastonbury had indicated during a public hearing of the Energy Committee, if we put a 10% to 20% bio into the petroleum diesel for all our school buses, we could drastically reduce the incidence of asthma attacks in the State of Connecticut.

And if you utilize the same product, a 20% blend in our transit authorities, we would help the people

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who ride our transit buses and improve the air quality for the State of Connecticut.

So I'm delighted to see this come forward in a bill form. It's been almost a dozen years for me hoping that this would happen, and it actually is. I hope we don't take another dozen years to implement utilizing this friendly environmental fuel.

And Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'd like to discuss Section 44, incentive housing grants. Over the last five or six weeks, there's been at least four or five bills regarding the Home Connecticut, each one changing in what it, what was required.

So now we have a bill that provides incentive to municipalities who adopt overlay incentive housing zones in their community.

And what they will receive if they do this is a grant from the State of Connecticut. They will see \$5,000 per home for single residences and \$2,000 for multifamily residences.

And the one thing I can tell you, the housing policies in the State of Connecticut, I can't

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overstate it, but they stink, literally stink. To look at our public housing, we have more failures in our public housing.

Housing authorities are in trouble because we're not funding them properly. They're old buildings. They need updates. They've needed updates for the last 25 to 50 years.

We have some buildings in the housing authority area where they don't have access for handicapped. And this is 2007.

We have more laws, ADA and things that address those areas, and yet we have some housing authorities in our state who have not put in proper handicapped access, besides the fact that a lot of these buildings are ill kept.

We have mold growing in some of these apartments, as well as mushrooms on the walls, forcing people to become ill and are sent to the hospital. Often they don't return. These are some of the elderly people who are frail.

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And this type of incident in a home that they're supposed to be living in, that's supposed to be clean and safe and affordable, is not what it's meant to be.

With regard to this new housing incentive plan, under 8-30g, we have to have a 30% of the units being built must be affordable. In this particular area, we've changed that percentage to 20%.

Again, paying these communities money to adopt this zoning, and yet we're reducing the amount of affordable housing that's required back down to 20%. 8-30g is a failure. We built 3,000 units in 16 years. I'm not so sure that this particular bill is going to improve our affordable housing.

It may give our municipalities an incentive to adopt it, because God knows they can't get enough money from us or from the taxpayers. And giving them \$5,000 for a single-family home and \$2,000 for a multifamily home will certainly get them to look around and find out where they can adopt this type of zoning.

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And I'm just wondering how far we're going to go with this particular bill. You've got \$4 million as a starting point, and it's, our neighboring State of Massachusetts, there's been a big, a lot of interest for this type of zoning.

And \$4 million, I don't think, is going to be a big start, and I'm not sure that could cover if in fact many of our municipalities decide they want to take advantage of the incentive zoning.

Again, I hope that this thing will be a successful program. 8-30 is a failure. Here we are, attempting another way to promote housing because we do need workforce housing in the State of Connecticut.

When people come in from other states to work and reside in Connecticut, they get sticker shock because they may be living in an area, for instance, in the South, where you might be selling a colonial, eight-room colonial with two and a half baths, maybe a swimming pool and a brick home, it might be selling for about \$300,000.

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And lo and behold, they come to Connecticut, and they get sticker shock because they're going to find out that in certain areas of the state for \$500,000 they're not going to get much more than a Cape Cod, without the swimming pool, without the two and a half baths, maybe one bath, but that's about it.

So I'm hoping that this thing will be successful. It's something obviously that we definitely need. We need workforce housing for people that come into our state. Our affordable housing is, we just don't have enough of that, and we all know that.

So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I just would make sure I got those comments on the record. Hopefully this thing will be successful. Again, there will be other, another time in the future, we'll be able to deal with it.

While I'm somewhat satisfied with it, I do have a lot of questions, and I don't think the Assembly would appreciate me asking 30 or 40 questions. I know they're thrilled to death with some of the other

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things I've done, so I don't want to give another opportunity to complain about me talking too long.

But I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the time. I thank the Assembly for the time. It's a lovely hot day. Hopefully we'll be out of here pretty soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Mikutel.

REP. MIKUTEL: (45th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a question for the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Please frame your question, Sir. Representative Merrill, please prepare yourself for a question. You may proceed, Representative Mikutel.

REP. MIKUTEL: (45th)

Yes, Representative Merrill, this Senate Bill Number 1500 makes changes to the previous bill, Senate Bill Number 1032, dealing with the proposed diesel emission reduction equipment retrofitting bill.

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And under the original bill, Senate Bill Number 1032, this was a voluntary program. My understanding is now, under Senate Bill Number 1500, this becomes a mandatory program. It's a mandate.

I want to know if we have the sufficient monies to cover this mandate, because I know there's a lot of towns that are going to have to comply with retrofitting their school buses, and I want to make sure that we do not saddle them with a mandate unfunded.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL: (54th)

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the amount that was placed in surplus for retrofitting buses so that they were, we would have clean buses should be sufficient to retrofit all the buses that need to be retrofitted in the state.

That is my understanding of the \$10 million that we placed in the bus, in the budget, and it is to retrofit the older buses.

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And primarily that's because the newer buses are already running clean diesel retrofitting, so we don't need to retrofit the new ones. My understanding is that it should be sufficient to retrofit all the buses. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Representative Mikutel.

REP. MIKUTEK: (45th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Representative Merrill. I hope that we are correct.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Representative Ritter. Representative Nicastro.

REP. NICASTRO: (79th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill. Mr. Speaker, I haven't had a chance to read through entirely. It is humanly impossible to read through this bill entirely in a short period of time.

And I'm sure there are many areas in here where I could have questions, but there's one thing I'd like to point out that I feel is so vitally important to

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every Member of this Chamber and to every household in this state.

You can't put a price tag on a child's life. You can't put a price tag on a child's education. And for too many years, Connecticut has been behind as far as treating juveniles at a proper age.

I see that starting in January of 2010, the juvenile courts will handle ages 16 and 17. Mr. Speaker, through the 17 years that I served as a youth officer, all too many times I saw 16- and 17-year-old children, boys and girls, run away from home, get into trouble, and their lives ruined at an early age because we had no control over them, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, they were considered youthful offenders, and the parents, the parents of those children, they had bigger problems, because when the child ran away, the parents could take no action on them. The police could take no action on them.

The police could not return them home because they weren't considered a runaway. And because of that, they would get involved in all sorts of

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problems, from drugs to anything that you can think of, Mr. Speaker.

Now the way this bill has been written, that 16- and 17-year-olds will fall under the Family With Service Needs Act and provide them the services they need.

The ironic part about it was, and I mentioned this before, Mr. Speaker, if a 16- or a 17-year-old ran away from home, the parents had no control over them. Yet if that child got into problems with the law, the parents were still legally responsible.

It's time that we step forward and took those children and put them under control of the juvenile court. We've heard arguments out there that that's going to put a large amount of responsibility on the juvenile court.

Maybe this is so, Mr. Speaker, but also, Mr. Speaker, it's going to remove a lot of them from the adult court system and put them where they belong.

No one understands what it's like unless you're personally involved and have seen the opportunity to

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see these young children involved and get out of the system, drop out of high school, hang around with the wrong crowd.

For once we've got a chance to put a handle on this, Mr. Speaker. There's no way in God's name that we can place a price tag on a young child's future, and that's what they are at 16 years old and 17 years old.

We need to be able to control them and their actions. This is a step forward. People may argue that point, but Mr. Speaker, I saw it for 17 years. And until you see a young child take their life or get involved in drugs so badly that they'll never be the same again, you don't quite comprehend what it's about.

If anything, Senate Bill Number 1500 puts control on those young men and women. We owe them that, Mr. Speaker. We owe them the opportunity to get their lives together. This bill does it, Mr. Speaker. I realize we're giving our state a couple of years to

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get the system in, you know, in process, and that should do it.

And I think by working together, we'll be able to resolve it. No child deserves to be left alone, and that's what we've done for the last countless decades, is 16- and 17-year-olds have gone by the wayside.

They should deserve better and they do deserve better, Mr. Speaker, and by doing this, we will have control on them. Why should we have a child drop out of high school in their sophomore year?

We owe them that opportunity to see to it that we leave no stone unturned, that we see to it that they get the proper education.

If we're going to sink so much money into ECS, then we have a responsibility to see to it that every child up to the age of 18 years old is getting the education that they rightfully deserve by law.

I stand in support of this bill, just on that alone, Mr. Speaker, because you can't place a price tag on a child's life, and right now we're behind the ball by not having it at this age.

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And I think this is a giant step forward, and I want to thank the Committee that brought this forward because it's a step in the right direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER AMANN:

Thank you, Sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The gentleman from the 88th, Representative Sharkey.

REP. SHARKEY: (88th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise in support of this bill. And in particular, I want to draw to the Chamber's attention to the fact that this implementer is also implementing the Home Connecticut program, as Representative Miller alluded to before.

There's no question, I think, in the State of Connecticut that the biggest economic development issue that we face in the State of Connecticut today is housing.

The Home Connecticut program is an inventive, expansive program that we have worked on throughout

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this year that, frankly, I think many of us felt we couldn't actually get through because it was such a comprehensive approach to affordable housing and creating the housing that we need in the State of Connecticut in a way that towns can accept and be part of.

We have an example recently of Pfizer in Groton who wanted to bring 1,000 new jobs to the State of Connecticut to their headquarters in Groton. And when they found, when they were bringing folks from other parts of the country to Connecticut, they couldn't find the housing that they needed in the Groton area.

And as a result, all these jobs were put at risk. This is the kind of future that we're facing in the State of Connecticut if we don't seriously address our housing shortage.

And furthermore, the Home Connecticut program is really, in the larger sense, an affordable housing and a property tax reform program, because if we can actually create the kind of housing that makes sense in our communities around transportation hubs, around

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employment centers, around places where it makes sense to provide higher density housing for people that is affordable and that allows our communities to grow in a way that's cooperative with these communities and is not forcing it down their throats, I think we in the State of Connecticut will all benefit in the long run.

I'm glad, this is a compromised proposal that has been developed with the cooperation of the Governor's Office, the Republicans and Democrats here in both Houses, and I'm happy that we're able to do this in this implementer, and I urge my colleagues' support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

I thank the gentleman from Hamden. The gentlewoman from Quaker Hill, Representative Ritter.

REP. RITTER: (38th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly rise to discuss just one portion of this implementing bill. That would be Section 4.

It's my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that the language in Section 4 that affects the New

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London/Groton sub base in no way intends to reflect the ultimate goal of the Legislature in this Session, which is to remove that funding from the sub base.

And it is with that understanding that I would support this bill. It is my understanding that we will be proceeding to take care of that oversight with future legislation later this month, or rather in July, and I will also be supporting that. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Thank you, Madam. The gentlewoman from Bolton, Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER: (55th)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Section 1 of this particular amendment refers specifically to one of our oldest historic and very special places in the State of Connecticut.

And I would like to say a very special thank you to Representative Merrill, to Senator Harp, to Representative Godfrey for their efforts in trying to preserve the old State House.

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We knew that there was a need. The Legislature stepped up to the plate, and in consultation with the Governor's Office, looked to move forward on a way to be able to have this preservation happen.

The money that was put into the budget is perhaps the tip of the iceberg, but will make sure that the programs continue. And it also in Section 1 looks, has a forward-looking piece to being able to find a solution.

So I'd like to again thank those that made, worked on this, and for those of us that have a long love of history, we have a safe future because of this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill? If not, staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be open.

CLERK:

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The House of Representatives is voting by Roll
Call. Members to the Chamber. The House is voting by
Roll Call. Members to the Chamber, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members
voted? If so, the machine will be locked. The Clerk
will take a tally. The Clerk will, hold on, hold on,
hold on, please. The Clerk will announce the tally.

CLERK:

Emergency Certified Senate Bill Number 1500, in
concurrence with the Senate.

Total Number Voting	126
Necessary for Passage	64
<u>Those voting Yea</u>	<u>124</u>
Those voting Nay	2
Those absent and not voting	25

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Representative Zalaski, for what purpose do you
rise? Representative Zalaski.

REP. ZALASKI: (81st)

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I tried to push my button. It didn't seem to work at the time. I must not have hit it hard enough. I wanted to be in the affirmative. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The transcript will so note. The bill is passed in concurrence. The distinguished Deputy Majority Leader, Representative Christ.

REP. CHRIST: (11th)

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

Good afternoon, Sir.

REP. CHRIST: (11th)

Mr. Speaker, I move for the immediate transmittal of Senate Bill Number 1500 to the Governor.

DEPUTY SPEAKER GODFREY:

The question is on immediate transmittal. Is there any objection? Hearing none, the bill is immediately transmitted. Are there any introductions?
Representative Roy.

REP. ROY: (119th)