

PA10-003

HB5545

House	762-796	35
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H – 1075

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2010**

**VOL.53
PART 3
595 – 894**

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voted? Please check the roll call board to make sure your vote has been properly cast. If all members voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will please take a tally.

The Clerk, please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5249 as amended by House "A."

Total Number voting 148

Necessary for adoption 75

Those voting Yea 148

Those voting Nay 0

Those absent and not voting 3

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The bill as amended passes.

Will the Clerk please call Emergency Certified Bill Number 5545.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5545, AN ACT CONCERNING DEFICIT

MITIGATION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2010, LCO Number 3314, introduced by Representative Donovan and Senator Williams.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Distinguished Chair of the Appropriations Committee, Representative Geragosian, you have the

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floor, sir.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker. I was hoping for a good morning or good afternoon. But good evening, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good evening, sir.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

I move passage of the emergency certified bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on passage of the bill. Will you
remark?

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Clerk has an amendment, LCO 3392. I'd ask that he call and I be given leave to summarize.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 3392, which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "A."

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 3392, House "A," offered by Representative Donovan and Senator Williams.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to

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summarize the amendment. Is there any objection to summarization? Hearing none, Representative Geragosian, you may proceed.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This amendment becomes the bill and becomes our deficit mitigation plan. And I'd first like to thank the many folks that made this possible. This is definitely a work of -- a work that we had in conjunction with the Governor's office and OPM and the secretary, Bob Genuario, many of our Republican colleagues. And we hope that it's a bill that will get broad support today.

Essentially it takes care of the deficit for the 2010 fiscal year. That's Sections 1 to 33. Sections 34 on deal with something that my ranking member, Representative Miner, has been working on very hard. It's reducing hunting, fishing and other fees, camping, beach fees for many of our residents as we move towards the summer and making up with that by increasing certain fines.

So I'd ask for the members of the Chamber to give this proposal broad-based support. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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Oh, sorry, Mr. Speaker. I move adoption of the amendment.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question before the Chamber is adoption of House Amendment Schedule "A." Will you remark? Will you remark?

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just for procedural clarification, the amendment will be the bill. There's no subsequent amendments.

Is that correct?]

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Geragosian.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Not to my knowledge. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

You're welcome, Representative. Thanks for clarification.

Representative Miner of the 66th District.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good evening.

Mr. Speaker, if I might, a few questions through you to the proponent of the amendment?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. MINER (66th):

Mr. Speaker, as I have looked through the fiscal note, it leaves me with a couple of questions.

One is -- and I understand the gentleman has laid out that there are a series of reductions, fees, fines and so on in the bill. But on the cover page, the front page of the fiscal note, it talks about a \$323.2 million reduction in anticipated costs in an effort to close the deficit.

I think most people throughout the state have heard that the deficit for 2010 is somewhere around 535 million. And if the gentleman could explain the difference between that 535 and where this document leaves us at 323? Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Geragosian.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'll try to do that. And it gets a little complicated because we were

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working of the Governor's deficit mitigation plan number, which is \$504 million.

So off that number, there were various items that we cut as part of this plan. There were items that the Governor has unilateral authority to cut under this plan, the biggest being a hundred million dollars for the state employer retirement contribution, 44.5 million for some federal revenues we received, and an extra 10 or 12 million dollars in additional cuts that were within the Governor's authority.

So I think if you add those numbers to the 323 million number that you talked about, we get a lot closer to the 504. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the gentleman for his answer.

As I look through the bill, and I looked through the fiscal note, I don't see any reference in here to a tax increase. If the gentleman could help me, to his knowledge, is there any kind of a tax increase in this document? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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Representative Geragosian.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So members of the Chamber have asked me over the last couple of days, no hospital tax, no inheritance increase, none of that is in this bill. Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Geragosian.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Through you, no. It's not.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So for fiscal year 2010, theoretically, we balanced the State's deficit without raising taxes.

Is that correct? Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Geragosian.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

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Through you, Mr. Speaker, that's true.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And as I read through the bill also, the gentleman is quite right, there are four or five pages of reductions within individual accounts that I think all of us have at one time or another received communication about.

I don't think this bill affects everyone in the state of Connecticut, but I do think that it does affect a lot of people in the state of Connecticut. To some degree it may affect municipal aid. To some degree it may affect nonprofit agencies. It may affect some of our agencies.

Mr. Speaker, through you, we have had a committee process that began in February, and that committee process dealt with not only the 2011 deficit, but the 2010 deficit. And it's my understanding that when this is passed, while this closes the gap for 2010, it leaves a rather large gap for 2011. And to the extent that 2011 is in the bill, I wonder if the gentleman could help me with what the plan is going forward to

close that 2011 gap. Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Geragosian.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Well, through you, Mr. Speaker, we did pass a budget of the committee that tried to deal with the 2011 situation, and it had some of the things that you discussed earlier that you weren't -- that you didn't like very much.

This particular plan also has a series of reductions in '11, many of which that were in that budget. And just as the Governor did in her plan, it compensated for the taking of budget reserve funds to help us in '11 -- in year '10, I should say.

So as it relates to the '11 deficit, this particular plan makes it no better or no worse, but it does close '10. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again, I thank the gentleman.

Ladies and gentlemen, the problem, as I see it, is not this piece of legislation. This piece of

legislation is, in my view, similar to the legislation we voted on less than a year ago, which was the SEBAC agreement.

The SEBAC agreement wasn't the problem. This isn't a problem. Mr. Speaker, the problem is the process. At certain junctures throughout the year we have public hearings and those public hearings really don't get to the root of what we need to deal with here.

This deals with some of it. I think if the members of the Chamber look through these lists, I'm sure they can find something here they don't like. I'll bet they find a few things in here they hate, and I'm one of them. But Mr. Speaker, we're going to have to do some very difficult things in this bill. Things we've not yet done.

We've drained our rainy day account. Now we're moving money back and forth from one year to the next. We've swept just about every fund, every fee, every couch cushion known to any member of the Legislature and any member of, probably, state employ, and we're looking at a \$700 million deficit, and I think that probably begins on July 1st, less than two and a half months from now.

I'll go back to the process, if I could for a minute. Every year that I've been on the Appropriations Committee, and that has not been a lot, but I have been a party to public hearings where people come and complain, concerned about what we're doing. We're going to reduce programs. We're going to reduce services. We're going to reduce funding to one place or another. And frankly, Mr. Speaker, that's what we have to do.

We either have to reduce funding for some of the programs that we run in the State of Connecticut or we have to increase taxes. We can't have it both ways. We're not like a municipality; when we run out of money we can't file bankruptcy. People have asked me, it almost seems like the State of Connecticut is bankrupt. Frankly, the State of Connecticut is almost bankrupt. We don't have a savings account to go to.

If it wasn't for our ability to borrow money and pay our bills, we wouldn't have enough money to pay our bills, and I think that's only going to get worse in the next couple of months, Mr. Speaker.

A year ago, as I said, we voted on an agreement, a SEBAC agreement, it might have been less than a year ago. And when we spoke about it in our caucus, we

said this isn't where we would like to be, but it's a starting point. We hoped it would be a starting point, a starting point for an honest, hard-working dialogue to reduce the cost of government in the state of Connecticut.

There isn't a poll in the state of Connecticut that hasn't said the same thing since then. And like I said, I know there are cuts in here that are not easy, and I've said to members of our caucus, if you think this is bad, wait till we deal with 700 million. And if you think that's bad, wait until you get reelected and you have to deal with 3.5 billion.

So I don't have any interest tonight going through this list. I don't have any interest in asking questions about what this 200,000 will do. I know what most of this stuff will do. It's not nice. But it's not going to be any nicer, Mr. Speaker. It's not going to be any nicer going into the future if we do not begin to get our house in order.

A constituent of mine was in the LOB a couple of weeks ago, and he asked a number of us, when will you get your house in order in the State of Connecticut? And that's a legitimate question that deserves an answer.

And while we move money from 2011 to 2010, because I know and you know the cuts that we have to make in the next month and a half would be devastating. There would be no way for people to prepare. I know and you know we have to address those problems in the upcoming months. This cannot be something that festers for the next year. We cannot wait until next January and begin the whole hearing process halfway through the fiscal year. It is not a situation that we can afford to duplicate. We have no rainy day fund.

So Mr. Speaker, I'm sure there will be other people that have comments about what they think this bill does that's good and what they think this bill does that's not so good. And I do respect the hard work that has gone into trying to reach this agreement.

But my support on a bill like this is not a blessing to what it has done or the blessing of the process. My support is a hope that we once again start to get down to work and deal with the bigger problem, which is the underlying costs of state government.

Let's figure out a way to do that. Let's figure

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out a way to make it more affordable, not provide less services in every case, not to have less employees in every case. But I know that's resolvable, but it's only going to be resolvable if each of us take an interest.

It cannot be up to Representative Geragosian and Representative Staples or anybody else on the money committees. It's got to be up to all of us, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise reluctantly in support of this deficit mitigation plan. I think what this plan really is, is a product of delay. It's a product of the delayed decisions that we've seen over the last year. And because we've run out of time for 2010 and we only have about two months left, we're faced with decisions that involve a lot about one shots.

When I look through this document, I see over and over again the word "sweeps." We're sweeping accounts. We're sweeping savings accounts in order to

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fill the budget hole in 2010. And fundamentally, I think what we need to begin doing is we need to begin to look at our ongoing expenses, not the one-time expenses or the one-time funds, but our ongoing expenses in order to adjust for the long-term deficit that we're facing in the next three years.

I feel like the past deficit mitigation plans, we have plucked the low hanging fruit. And I think what this plan today represents is we're pressing all the juice out of that fruit today, and now we're going to be left with the real tough decisions.

Part of the process that does concern me is what we're faced with, what we left up to do in 2010 when we passed that budget back in September. We set out goals of having a securitization plan of a billion dollars, of selling state assets to the tune of about 50 million, and to find consolidations and efficiencies of \$53 million.

And I've served on the Commission for Agency Outcomes, and we have a lot of work to do. The process has been very slow. And I'm concerned that because those decisions have been met with delay, again we're putting ourselves in a box that's going to be very difficult to get out of in 2011.

And so I do support this proposal mainly because I am happy to see that we have not resorted to taxes. We're seeing here today -- we're addressing some fee issues, because as we continue to increase fees or increase taxes as alternatives, we are going to see a reduction in those revenues. Because eventually Connecticut residents are not going to want to purchase the products that we have to offer because they're just too expensive to do business in Connecticut, to create jobs in Connecticut and to partake in the quality of life that we have in Connecticut; to go to our beaches and to enjoy the recreations.

So I would like to see after this vote today that we certainly move forward and begin to, not only to tackle the challenges of the deficit in 2011 to the tune of 700 million, but to also begin fulfilling the promises that we made in September when we say that we would come up with a securitization plan; we would sell assets; we would look at agency efficiencies and consolidations in order to begin to close the deficit.

And if we don't do those things, that \$700 million deficit -- we're looking at '11 -- is only going to grow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative David McCluskey.

REP. McCLUSKEY (20th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, a question to the proponent of the amendment.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Police procedure, sir.

REP. McCLUSKEY (20th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, to Representative Geragosian, starting on lines 301, it appears that a meal allowance is being eliminated for state police personnel. Is my understanding, through you, Mr. Speaker, that the troopers and master sergeants have meal allowance in their collective bargaining agreements?

So through you, Mr. Speaker, for purposes of legislative intent, is it your understanding that this language, by deleting this, will only apply to people not in a certified collective bargaining unit, specifically the colonels and majors in the state police? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

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Representative Geragosian.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

REP. McCLUSKEY (20th):

Thank you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Clark Chapin of the 67th District.

REP. CHAPIN (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of the amendment before us. It's not perfect. It's not pretty, but it's something that's necessary for us to do here today. Prior speakers have focused on the earlier sections in the amendment, and I'd like to confine my remarks to Sections 34 through 74.

The chairman of the Appropriations Committee thanked a number of people for their hard work on this and on these sections. And I think there are a number of times when we pass legislation in this Chamber, and we come back to make corrections in subsequent years. These particular sections, I think, are necessary and appropriate.

Last August we raised hundreds and hundreds of

license fees in the state of Connecticut. And included in those fee increases were sportsmen's fees, fees to get into our state parks and fees to get into our campgrounds. At the time it seemed there wasn't a lot of rhyme or reason as to what those new fees were set at. Many of them were simply doubled if they were at a level that was below a certain threshold.

Those fee increases took effect October 1. And as luck would have it for any Legislator, on October 1, I had a constituent go down to the town clerk's office expecting to buy a \$20 fishing license for himself, a \$20 fishing license for his son. When he found out that that was the very first day that the new fee was \$40, he was livid.

He called me up and explained to me that he could not afford those new fee increases. And eventually as I calmed him down -- and he seemed to want to confess to me that although he didn't purchase his license, he did in fact go fishing that day.

And I think that that is very telling to the chilling effect that we can have in this Chamber when we do things in such a manner without a lot of discussion, a lot of consideration.

These particular sections in the bill were aimed

to increase the fees over last year's level by approximately 35 percent. As I said earlier, we increase them by a hundred percent. This rolls them back to a point that's roughly 35 percent over last year's fees. I hope this has the effect of making all of our constituents compelled to be lawful, to go out and purchase those licenses and to enjoy outdoor recreation, as I think we have all invested a tremendous amount of state resources in recognition that it's an appropriate thing to do, and we certainly want our constituents to do those things.

It is important to acknowledge and to thank both the leadership of the Environment Committee as well as the Transportation Committee in working together to forge this compromise.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier it's not perfect. It's not pretty, but it certainly is deserving of everyone's support in this Chamber. And it's my hope that we transmit it immediately, that the Senate takes it up, and that the Governor signs it as soon as possible, since fishing season does start on Saturday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

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Representative and House Republicans Leader,
Larry Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Chamber, like most of you, I often sit here as we debate these bills as they come before us and say to myself, what are they saying at home? What are they thinking about what we're doing here?

First of all, I'm assuming that more than a handful are watching us on TV or reading with detail about what we do, but whether they are or not, I think we owe them explanations, and we certainly owe them our hard work.

Because those at home, especially in this time, might not get the time to watch us on TV or follow in detail the bills that we vote on, because they're busy raising a family, paying a mortgage, paying their rent, trying to hold down a job.

Maybe mom or dad is sick in the hospital. Maybe they themselves or someone in their family is ill and they're racing back and forth to doctors or hospitals to try to take care of them. Maybe they have a watchful eye on their savings account. Maybe they

cross their fingers and say their prayers to hope that they can pay for their kid's tuition, or daycare or maybe a new transmission on the car, because these are tough times.

So what do they think when they watch us? What do they expect of us? A year ago November we were all elected by our constituents. And when they elected us in our individual districts, they did not know who was going to be the majority party or the minority party. They elected us as individuals to come up here and do our job and represent them to the best of our ability.

And two months after we were elected, we all stood in his room and we took an oath for a two-year term, that we would faithfully execute our duties and defend the Constitution of the State of Connecticut. And one of the provisions in that Constitution is that we produce a balanced budget, that we take the people's money that they have entrusted with us, that we spend it wisely and that we balance our budget, that the amount we expend equals the amount that we ask of them and take in.

As we learned throughout the months we have different opinions, different philosophies on how we might do that. There are many of us who believe, that

especially in this economic time, we must be fiscally responsible. We must be efficient with every dollar. We can ask not -- cannot ask more of our citizenry to give us more of their tax money, being one of the highest taxed states in the United States of America.

We realize, as businesses close and people find themselves out of work, it's not the time to ask for even more of their tax money. There's others who believe that we have an obligation to the neediest among us, and that if we curtail any state services, it might be harmful to them. And that's the philosophy that has raged in this room and in this building for the past several months.

And that's what the people at home have watched on television. And though they understand a difference of opinion, sometimes they don't get the fact that that difference of opinion has resulted in paralysis, in inaction that has exacerbated the situation.

Less than a week ago myself and the Speaker were invited, as well as others, to the Governor's residence, wherein she had assembled several business leaders. And among the many things that they shared with us, one in particular was this: Please get your

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house in order, your fiscal house in order, because people are watching what you do. Businesses are watching what you do.

In some cases they decide whether or not to come to Connecticut and build more jobs or grow more jobs, or whether or not to leave Connecticut based upon what you do. Lead by example and get your fiscal house in order, they said to us.

So we find ourselves here, on April 13th, with a bill before us entitled "A Deficit Mitigation Plan." And for those people at home that might not be able to follow the complexities of what we do up here, I think it's worthy of a review.

When we were elected for that two-year term, our first responsibility and our biggest is to adopt a two-year balanced-budget, one for fiscal year 2010 and for 2011. The public watched the controversy and the debate over philosophies culminate in a budget that was passed on August 31st. And just a few months after the passage of that bill we found ourselves for a whole host of reasons, including the economy, in a deficit.

So the fiscal year that ends, that ends in less than three months on June 30th, we find ourselves as

we sit here today some \$350 million in deficit, and the fiscal year that begins in less than three months on July 1st, the fiscal year that is from July 1st to June 30th, we find ourselves in a deficit in excess of \$700 million.

And as has been alluded to, in the years beyond that, in the years when our successor Legislators will be in office, years 2012 and 2013, budgets that we, as a Legislature, our successors will have to deal with in less than a year's time. We find ourselves facing \$3.8 billion in deficit -- followed by \$3.8 billion in deficit. That's where we are.

There are many in this building that believe we should handle that problem all at once. Because of the differences in philosophy that was not to be. So we find ourselves here today with this bill, this bill that handles a deficit for our fiscal year which ends on June 30th.

It is a bill that I will stand in support today along with a great number of my colleagues on this side of the aisle. It is a bill that one could claim is a compromise. And my hat is off to our Governor who sat both sides down and wanted to reach that compromise.

My hat is off to the majority party, the Speaker of the House, the President Pro Tem in the Senate, who are willing to sit down with all of us and try to reach some common ground. And we did that and it wasn't easy. Look at the document before you. Read the line items. It is not easy to make those cuts. It is no easier for you than it is for us. They are painful cuts because they mean something to somebody, but we felt we had to do that.

Is this the be-all and end-all? When we take the vote on this bill, do we walk home and say, our job is done? No. We cannot do that because we took an oath to come up with a balanced budget. And the budget, we know, as we stand here today, even after we vote this bill in for fiscal year 2011, which starts in less than three months, is \$735 million in deficit.

We have an obligation, as a Legislature, to take care of our business and do our job. We cannot pass the buck to our successor Legislators. We cannot leave here at our adjournment date on May 5th and say, we'll worry about it next year.

We cannot leave here and say, let the next Governor and the next House and the next Senate take care of it. We have to do our job and that's going to

start the moment after we vote on this bill.

We're taking that first step. It is a beginning and not an end. We have a lot of work to do in a very little time to do it. Midnight on May 5th is just around the corner.

But for today, let's take this step together. Let's show the people who elected us that, when it comes to solving the problems of the State of Connecticut, there are times that we can walk hand in hand, we can take that step together, we can compromise when we have different philosophies, but we're not going to stop trying because we owe them nothing less.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a first step of many steps that we must take together in a short period of time. Let's do it for the benefit of the State of Connecticut. Let's turn our attention to our beloved state. Let's air our differences in civil manner with civil discourse, but with a spirit of compromise and reaching solution.

Today let's take that first step only knowing that it is only a first step and there is much work to be done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

The distinguished House Majority Leader,
Representative Denise Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I apologize in advance for my voice. And I have a lot of things I would love to say tonight, but I think it's going to be difficult for me.

This is a very, very important step we're taking tonight. And in deference to the importance of it, I am going to soon yield to my friend, John Geragosian, who did the lion's share of the work on this bill.

But I think it is useful just for openers to say that it is instructive to recognize why we are where we are tonight and the importance of the step we're taking, as Representative Cafero says, together, and how difficult it is to do this.

Our revenues are still plummeting. I think we have to remember that. It happened, really, January of last year. We lost about 35 percent of the revenue in the state budget very suddenly. We've all been dealing with it ever since. And I think it's also instructive to remember there are 48 other states in exactly the same place we are, some of them even

worse. And so I just hope everyone remembers those basic facts while we try to move forward in a very difficult situation.

Yes. You're right. People at home are watching this and wondering, and I think there are very few people in the state at this point that don't know what we're dealing with. They do.

They're worried about it, and they are worried about things like if they get sick, whether their hospitals will still be open. If their children, you know, every town in the state seems to be cutting teachers, cutting local services.

And those are the very things we tried so hard to protect as we moved forward. Because every time the State does anything, whether it's cut things or raise revenues, someone is impacted. And we tried very, very hard as we went forward with this measure to honor the concerns that came before all of us.

Representative Chapin talked about the sportsmen who were upset about the increased costs of the fishing licenses. These are not things anyone in the room wants to do, but that's as we struggle to find revenue that we lost. We tried to recognize the many, many concerns that came to all of us from thousands of

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people across the state, some very vulnerable people.

So before I run out of croaking power, I'm going to yield to Representative Geragosian for some further remarks. But I want to thank everyone who worked on this.

And it is not the end. It's probably the beginning of what we need to do, but I'm glad we were able to work together to come together to a compromise on this measure tonight.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would yield the floor.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative:

Representative Geragosian.

REP. GERAGOSIAN (25th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Madam Majority Leader. And I'll be brief.

The word that comes to mind for me is balance, not only balancing the 2010 budget, but using a balanced approach, and that's how we've addressed this.

We could -- we didn't take a meat cleaver to the services that the people need out there.

Representative Cafero talked about people out there

need health care. Well, we made sure that that health care is there for them if they go to a hospital or a community health center or a school-based health clinic across the state. So that's something that's very important to remember.

It sounds good to cut across the board or -- but the needs are great out there. I've talked about this many times. My own emergency room last year, its utilization had 20 percent more people go to the doors last year than the year before. That's something that you'd like to make cuts to if you could, but the reality situation -- there's more demands on things -- like that.

And quite frankly, Representative Merrill, the Majority Leader touched upon how we got in this situation in terms of the deficit. This deficit was caused for two reasons: about a \$300 million in revenues and about \$200 million in spending that we incurred that we did not budget for that we could not control, most of that in Medicaid.

Much of that, we made cuts across the board to our OE, our other expenses line items. We rolled it back to 2007 levels. Well, lo and behold, as we've gone through the budget year that almost every

transfer, every deficiency has had add-backs to other expenses, that's the administration the agencies with the administration cannot live with some of the cuts that we made.

Specifically I talk about the Department of Transportation that got 58 million in other expenses in 2010 -- 2009. And we gave them 43 million in 2010. And the reality is because of the weather that we've had, the salt and the sand, they couldn't live within that. So we have to deal with the reality of the budget as we move forward.

And I, too, would like to have solved '10 -- 2010 and 2011 as part of this. That wasn't in the cards. This is what we were able to compromise on. And the Speaker talked about this morning, you know you have a good compromise if everybody is not really happy or everybody is not really sad about what the product is in front of you, and that's what I think what we have here.

And I think that Representative Miner's cautionary tale was a true one, because if you think that, you know, we avoided cuts to municipal aid in this particular package, but when -- if we have a \$4 billion budget deficit and we have -- and the

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municipalities have no protection from the federal stimulus dollars and other things, we're talking about hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts in the future if we don't get our revenue and fiscal house in order.

So I want to thank the Minority Leader and the ranking member for their support today and for the work you've done with us. I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the Majority Leader, and all the members that helped make this a reality, especially Representative Walker and Representative Abercrombie, who helped very much with this, and Representatives Nafis and O'Connor.

I thank the members of the Senate and the Governor and her budget team for their hard work on this and urge everybody in the Chamber to support it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor of the amendment, please signify by saying, aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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All those nay?

The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted.

Will staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Members take their seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

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.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Please check the roll call board to make sure your vote has been properly cast. If all members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will please take a tally. The Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5545 as amended by House "A."

Total Number voting	148
Necessary for adoption	75
Those voting Yea	147
Those voting Nay	1
Those absent and not voting	3

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

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Emergency certified bill as amended is passed.

Representative Merrill.

REP. MERRILL (54th):

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I make a motion that we immediately transmit all items today to the Senate.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The motion is to immediately transmit --

REP. MERRILL (54th):

All items of business transacted today.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

-- all items of business transacted today to the Senate. Any objection? Any objection? Hearing none, all items acted on today are immediately transmitted to the Senate.

Any announcements or introductions?

Representative Cook.

REP. COOK (65th):

Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of announcement. Human Services will meet outside the chamber tomorrow at 11 o'clock.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Lawlor.

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Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would move for immediate transmittal of Emergency Certified House Bill 5544 to the Governor.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered, sir.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, if the Clerk would call as the next item from Senate Agenda Number 2, Emergency Certified House Bill 5545.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Calling from Senate Agenda Number 2, Emergency Certified Bill 5545, AN ACT CONCERNING DEFICIT MITIGATION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2010, as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A." The bill is accompanied by emergency certification signed Donald E. Williams, Jr., President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Christopher G. Donovan, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I move the emergency certified bill with in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

Acting on adoption. Ma'am, would you like to remark further?

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you, sir.

This bill makes modifications and revenue adjustments to the fiscal year 2010 and fiscal year 2011 budgets. It will result in a \$323.2 net reduction in the projected fiscal year 2010 General Fund deficit. In the bill, there is a net appropriations reduction of \$77.6 million in fiscal year 2010 and \$120.3 million reduction in fiscal year 2011. And those reductions occur in various agencies and accounts.

The bill transfers funds from various special funds and accounts to the General Fund for fiscal 2010 and fiscal year 2011 and reduces several state medical assistance and other social service programs. The bill increases fines for various motor vehicle

offenses, decreases fees for resident and nonresident hunting, fishing and other sportsmen licenses, and caps camping and state park fees. It establishes a nonlapsing General Fund maintenance repair and improvement account for state parks.

The bill also trans -- adjusts transfers between the budget reserve fund or Rainy Day Fund, as we call it, and the General Fund -- and the General Fund and the special transportation fund. I urge adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further?

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, some questions to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Through you, Mr. President, if the good Senator could just explain what some of the major differences are between the bill before us today and the bill that we were debating in the early hours of the morning on a Saturday about a week and half ago. Through you,

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Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you very much.

Through you, Mr. President, basically the -- the bill that we have before us today makes spending reductions of approximately \$139.3 million, whereas the bill we had before us on March 26th made spending reductions of approximately \$115 million.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And I can't help but notice there is no state tax for health care or hospital tax in this, as well, and how does this make up for those increased taxes in terms of spending cuts or otherwise. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Through you, Mr. President, basically, through you, more spending cuts.

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THE CHAIR:

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I am delighted to hear that answer. Mr. President, one more question, through you, given this bill's impact on FY 11, what is the approximate deficit that we will be facing in FY 11 once this bill is passed. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you very much.

Through you, Mr. President, approximately \$734.2 million give or take a few projections.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I thank Senator Harp for the answers to her -- those questions.

Mr. President, I stand today in support of this bill and stand here very pleased that we have been able to come together and agree on closing this years

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fiscal deficits with spending cuts rather tax increases. I think you see the proposal before us today has a combination of spending ideas from the Democrats, from the Republicans, from the Governor.

Ideas that we all, hopefully today, will come around. They are very moderate ideas. This is not slash and burn cutting but very well thought out spending cuts that we can all get behind. I'm very pleased that the hospital tax and the estate tax are gone. I hope they are gone for good and I believe that, Mr. President, this serves as a launching pad because Senator Harp just said we have a \$734 million deficit for the fiscal year that starts in just three months.

And we have an opportunity right now. We have an opportunity to actually address that problem before it gets to late. The issue that we had this year was we waited until three months before the fiscal year ends to actually close this deficit, which greatly limited our options on what could do. If this General Assembly takes action before our May deadline for adjournment on the 2011 budget in a manner similar to this, we will actually, again, have massive bipartisan support for a bill.

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A bill that reduces spending to cut -- to eliminate our deficit. Now, Mr. President, in any bill that's a compromise, there are some things you don't like. And in this bill, this still has SAGA moving into Medicaid, which creates a new entitlement, which personally I do not like but, Mr. President, I'm going to be voting for this bill today because any bill that we, as Democrats and Republicans, can agree upon that cuts spending is a good bill for Connecticut.

So, Mr. President, today I urge adoption of this bill but equally importantly, I urge us to get to work on 2011 before the end of this fiscal session to solve the \$734 billion deficit with spending cuts for next year just like we have for the \$323 million this year.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark?

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to take my hat off the architects of this bill because what they've done is they preserved the

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all important safety net of Connecticut. They have not taken an ax to spending. They've taken a surgical knife. And what they've done, and I'm pleased to have been an advocate for this, is they preserved early childhood learning that the Governor proposed to cut dramatically. They've preserved school transportation for children after a proposed cut of \$5 million, which would have gone back to our towns and caused an increase in the property tax.

They preserved the school-based health centers, which have been such a tremendous benefit to kids in this -- in this state, who have been able to go to school and get health care at school. The bill, also, avoided the proposed increase in Medicare copays and that -- that would have cut the safety for our older people. The bill preserves so much of the Biomedical Research Fund, which had been attacked. And finally, it maintains Connecticut's successful mortgage foreclosure program, which seeks to mediate problems that homeowners are having when they're facing foreclosure and want to avoid foreclosure.

This -- this bill, as tough as it is with respect to spending cuts, does preserve the safety net, is done in a surgical way and it is something that I

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think, as a -- as a bipartisan manner, we can all support with enthusiasm. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Meyer.

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President.

It's very nice to have you back in the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

It's good to be back, Senator.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

I rise to support this bill. It certainly is a new day from when we last met at 5:30 in the morning when we were so divided and could not agree on the direction we should take the state in solving its deficit problem. I am pleased to see that many of the alternative budget proposals that the minority Republicans brought forward that evening that were defeated that night that there's been a change of heart and coming together of those areas that we could agree on.

Particularly, I was happy to see, and I hope that it's not something we're going to have to revisit in just a few short weeks when we have to deal with the

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2011 budget deficit of nearly \$750 million but we did not see the hospital tax, which was going to be placed at 5.5 percent and then redistributed to winners and losers throughout the state. We did not see the change in the estate tax that was going to take us to a percentage that would be one of the highest in the country making us further unfriendly to our residents, luckily.

And we did not see the reductions to our local communities that are already suffering under a number of serious burdens themselves on solving their own budget problems, which many, luckily, are and I just received word, just today, from my own first selectman so that they had reached a wonderful agreement with their labor unions in our town for a freeze on salaries for a year to help solve the budget problems. And they were hoping that this wonderful gesture, this voluntary gesture, would permeate the community and our teachers unions would do the same and maybe if we're really lucky, the state employee unions will do likewise to help us.

Because if that were to happen, we probably wouldn't have to cut any programs at all and many of the nonprofits that are seeing less in support. So

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for those reasons, I am so pleased to see that we've come together not as the majority party's budget or the minority party's budget or the Governor's budget but as our budget here in the state of Connecticut. And for that reason, Mr. President, I'll be supporting this particular budget tonight. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, ma'am.

Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise in support of this measure before us today associating my comments with some of my colleagues. It was early in the morning awhile back where we were objecting -- we, as minority Republicans of this circle, myself included, objecting to a couple of measures that were very uncomfortable. Namely, I would say the hospital tax and the estate tax but shifting back to my focus that early morning hours of the hospital tax that would have had very dramatic negative impact on Danbury Hospital and its future strategic partner, New Milford Hospital.

So I'm glad to see that we were able to find appropriate spending cuts. I agree with Senator Meyer

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that this has been strategic and precision in the cuts. I think that this is a move in the right direction but I am hopeful, as my colleague, the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee stated, I'm very hopeful that we will proceed quickly to deal with the fiscal year '11 budget so that the \$740 million projected deficit does not balloon us and make it more difficult to make these tough decisions in the very near future.

So I enjoin my colleagues to approve this and I encourage all of us to work together quickly on the -- on the next year's budget so that we don't wait to the last minute and make the decisions that much more difficult. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise in support of the bill before us and I'd, first, just like to thank the leadership for the great job in pulling this together and making this happen, as well as the leadership of the Appropriations Committee for Senator Harp and all of the hard work

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and incredible details that takes to go into a plan like this. You know, there's been some discussion of, there's no taxes in this, this is spending reductions, and it's all, you know, cuts going forward but there is something else in this bill and that is some smart government going forward.

And I thank, again, the leadership and the chair of appropriations for putting one piece of the work of the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes in this bill and that's Section 14. In Section 14, what this does is it authorizes the Department of Administrative Services commissioner, on the state's behalf, to join an existing purchasing contract, a cooperative contracts, if it's in the best interest of the state of Connecticut. And by doing so, it allows us actually to save money going forward.

So for example, on some of the contracts that we have right now with perhaps Vendor A, we are paying -- I'll give you an example -- we are paying \$6.95 for an air handler whereas we can get that \$3.52 and save half the amount on that particular item from the same vendor. So there's no change in service. There's no change in vendor. There's no change in who's -- who's getting the contract. It's just a better price all

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around. Of course some of these are big ticket items but some of them are smaller.

But ultimately, at the end of the day, it adds up to actually millions of dollars over the years and millions of dollars each year that we will be saving by having this ability to join this cooperative purchasing network. So I'm delighted to stand up today and thank all of the members of the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcome for their hard work and will be continuing to look for ways to find -- streamline our state government and to just make smarter decisions all around so we're not always looking for cuts and not always looking for taxes.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, ma'am.

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Good afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, sir.

SENATOR KANE:

I, too, rise in favor of this bill along with my

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colleagues who have already spoken on both sides of the aisle, of course. I think it's very important that we finally get this done and move forward. I think the taxpayers have been asking us for this for quite awhile. I also want to thank Governor Rell for her work because quite honestly without her veto or potential veto of the last package that we debated until 5:30 in the morning, we would have seen the hospital tax gone through. We have seen the estate tax gone through.

So before we pat ourselves on the back too much, I want thank Governor Rell especially for using that veto power, as she did, because that was very important. We don't want that hospital tax to go through. We don't want the estate tax to go through and some of the other programs that were implemented on the package.

Through you, Mr. President, I do have a couple of questions for the proponent of the bill, if I might.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

When we debated this bill a couple weeks ago, if

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you remember until 5:30 in the morning and I had some questions about the social service aspect of it and -- can you just speak to that maybe with a broad brush and may be different, what may be the same. I know we -- a number of us had a number of concerns in regards to some of the social service aspect, if you would. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me see. I will try, if I can, and maybe I will focus my attention to the Department of Social Services. In the Department of Social Services, basically, what is different, I believe, is that in the Governor's latest proposal she proposes that we align Husky B copayments requirements with copayments charged for state employee health plans.

That is new to this plan. It was proposal that the Governor most recently made in here April 1st plan and it is something that we have now agreed to.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

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That's very good. Can you -- can you give me maybe a couple of specifics or an example of some of those copays. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Through you, Mr. President, I believe that the copays for Husky were anywhere from \$1 to \$3 and I believe that the state employee copays are 5 and 10 and 15 depending upon the service. Through you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

That's Husky B as opposed to Husky A. Correct? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you very much.

Through you, it is Husky B as opposed to Husky A. Husky B, as you will recall and probably know, is a higher income is a higher income than Husky A.

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Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

One of the big questions I think we debated that evening was -- and morning -- was about the SAGA program and how we are able to cap the SAGA program. We -- have we made that change that was proposed in the last deficit mitigation to move those individuals off that program on to the Medicaid entitlement. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Through you, Mr. President, the short answer is yes. I believe that one of the things that we discussed that late or early morning is that the new federal health care law allows states to move programs into Medicaid with a Medicaid plan amendment as opposed to a waiver. And, Mr. President, as you will probably recall, for at -- in at least three different sessions, the General Assembly has indicated to the Executive Branch that there was a desire to move SAGA into Medicaid through waiver.

So since federal health care bill no longer

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requires a waiver to move populations into Medicaid but a plan amendment, what this bill does is instructs the commissioner of the Department of Social Services to -- to apply for a Medicaid plan amendment to move the SAGA population into Medicaid through a plan amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And I do believe that part of this process will allow us to take advantage of higher or at this point higher rates through the federal stimulus dollars. Is that true? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Through you, Mr. President, yes. Normally, we receive a match of -- we are matched evenly, 50 percent -- we pay 50 percent and the federal government pays 50 percent but because of the financial stress that this recession has caused states, all states have been given an increased federal match. And now our federal match now instead

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of being 50 percent is 61.5 percent or nearly 62 percent.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And that -- but that 61 percent will end after this fiscal year or 2011. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you very much.

I believe that it will end fiscal year 2011.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And I thank Senator Harp for her answers. Obviously, she is knowledgable, as always, and I appreciate you taking the time. That was one of my big questions being the ranking member on the Human Services Subcommittee. It was one my big concerns throughout this time. So I wanted to make sure that

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we were able to clarify that going forward. It's been a couple weeks since we had the discussion.

But, as I said earlier, Mr. President, I am voting in favor of today's package and look forward to its passage. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator Guglielmo.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm also in favor of the proposed legislation. It certainly was important in my area, something that probably a smart part of the overall package but reduction of the hunting, fishing and camping fees is very important area. That's what people. They hunt, fish, camp and we doubled the fees, which in dollar amount might not have seemed too much but if you're family person and you want to take a son or daughter fishing, introduce them to the sport and you're only going to go once or twice a year, it's a big price to pay and not much of a value. So it was a good thing that we did among others lowering those fees was very important.

I also think actually that it will increase

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revenue because there are folks are who weren't going to buy these hunting and fishing licenses or they were going to go to other states. And it was actually cheaper in some of our neighboring states, as a nonresident, to get these licenses than it was in Connecticut. So I think that you'll find that the revenues will spike once this deficit mitigation package goes into place.

I did have a question though and I don't know if the proponent will be able to answer but on line 65 of the package there is a portion from the Department of Special Revenue and it says reduce oversight of nonprofits. And it's my understanding that in the Department of Revenue Services there are two -- there's a unit -- I'm going to try to get the correct name here and I don't know. I'm looking at my notes -- charitable gaming, perhaps, and there's two -- yeah, that's what it is -- it's Charitable Games Unit and there's two divisions -- two sections of that, one is registrations and permits and one is field operations.

And it was my understanding that if we take that -- that reduction, that this would completely eliminate any field operations of DRS, Department of

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Revenue -- Special Revenue. What that would mean is that there would be no one to go out to supervise the bingos, the other nonprofits and I think that would -- that would be a problem if that's -- if that's what this tries to accomplish.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. President, I do believe that that's what this accomplishes.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Guglielmo.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

So the answer is yes that would completely eliminate that unit. Okay. Well, that -- that would then be a problem, I think. I just wanted to bring it to the attention of the circle. That would mean we'd have no field supervision over any of the nonprofit gaming activities in the state of Connecticut. Okay. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

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Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you very much, Mr. President. Great to see you.

THE CHAIR:

Good to see you, too, sir.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Well, I wanted to associate myself with the remarks of Senator Guglielmo and point out something that I think is highly unusual in this particular proposal and why I think it's a great moment for our Senate in working together in bipartisan fashion. And, again, that is the issue of the hunting and fishing licenses.

That has been an issue very near and dear to my heart. I felt that what took place last fall with the huge jump, 100 percent, in these fees was completely inappropriate and certainly my constituents in North Central Connecticut made that very clear to me in the last several months.

What's really noteworthy in this particular proposal that we have before us this afternoon is that in the process of whittling away and getting rid of our budget deficit right we have actually also cut

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down on the inappropriate fee hikes for these particular areas. And let me just point out before I thank some folks what some of these substantial fee changes are. For example, a resident firearm hunting, goes from 28 down to 19, much more appropriate; resident fishing goes from 40 down to 28. This is one is even impressive.

I'm not even sure how we did this but the one-day resident marine fishing will be going from \$15 down to 5 and I wonder even if we doubled in the fall, it must have been about 7.50 and now it's going to end up 5. So we're actually moving in a very positive direction for those one-day resident marine fishing licenses and I'm sure all those folks -- and that's part of our tourism and that's part of the beauty of our shoreline state that will be a benefits, perhaps, to those folks down there. Resident all waters fishing goes from 50 to 32 and I can go on and on and on.

The other thing that is important to note in this particular piece of legislation is that we've adjusted our camping and state park fees. And to give you an idea of how they have been adjusted as we've gone back and benchmarked them to April 1st of 2009 before the last budget changes took place, essentially doubling

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those fees, and we've stated that the commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection would have to go down to no more than 135 percent of what that number was. In other words, essentially stating that the increase could not be more than 35 percent from a year ago and for nonresident 150 percent. Essentially saying it could not go up more than 50 percent.

In a perfect world, I would have liked to see us go back to where are these things were before. But in light of the fact that we have hundreds of millions of dollars of deficit that we're looking, I think it really is good that we worked very well in bipartisan fashion to reduce fees that will allow people to access our great outdoors. Be they hunters, fisherman, campers. Just folks that want to use the great environment in the state of Connecticut.

And so for that, I also want to specifically commend Senator Daily, who, to my knowledge, as the head of the sportsperson caucus, here in our Legislature. I want to commend Senator Ed Meyer. I remember testifying on behalf of my own bill to reduce these hunting and fishing fees before the Environment Committee and he was very open to all of that testimony and there was a good bill that got out of

the Environment Committee and Senator DeFronzo who has been a champion of this measure as well here in the Senate.

And one of things that was recognized was to bridge this gap other fees would have to be concomitantly increased on the transportation side such as fees for driving without a seatbelt, maybe a specialized permitting fee for individuals who aren't allowed to drive but maybe have granted by the court's special permission to go to and from work and things like that. So there was a special attention made to make sure that this particular area was a wash but I know that the hunters and sportsmen and campers and all those folks in my neck of the woods are going to be very happy when they read about what we did in here in our Legislature this afternoon.

And down in the House, one individual also must be mentioned and given high praise that's Representative Craig Miner. He worked tirelessly on this particular issue. He was at the forefront of these changes and hammered out a compromise.

And this is the great stuff that can happen when we all sit around and we work together as a team. And I mean Democrats. I mean Republicans. I mean

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Executive Branch. I mean Legislative Branch. And I mean Judicial Branch.

In going out to town hall meetings, recently, and talking to my constituents whether it's in Somers or Suffield or Enfield or Windsor Locks or Windsor or East Granby or Granby, they have told me very clearly, they want optimistic and positive solutions. They recognize the situation that we're in but they feel very good about the state of Connecticut going forward if we can all work together here in Hartford. To the extent, they're still wrangling and disharmony and other kind of problems where we can't seem to take one step forward without taking two steps back, they really have no patience for that.

And so today is a great afternoon for the people of the state of Connecticut. I, for one, would have loved to see this happened months and month and months ago but guess what, I'm reasonable enough to know that half a loaf is better than none and if I can't get half a loaf, I'll take a couple slices of bread.

But going forward my constituents understand, we have tremendous budget problems going forward and they are hopeful and they are counting on us to address the fiscal problems that we have for the next fiscal year

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and the ones after that in a similar way as to we have finally gotten our arms around this one right now. And with that, I'm very supportive of this bill going forward as amended. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR: .

Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Mr. President.

This is a wonderful step in the right direction and I'm very encouraged by the bipartisan coming together and working together on this bill. What is not so great about it in my judgment is that it has taken so long. Mick Jagger had it all wrong, Mr. President, time is not on our side when we are facing large deficits like we've been facing here for the last year and we've known for a fact that we would be facing large deficits.

How much and how much would we be able to cover from federal assistance from other creative to -- to plug the hole, we didn't know. But we knew were facing large budget deficits.

I'm particularly happy, Mr. President and anybody listening, to see that this budget deficit mitigation package with two and half months left in the fiscal

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year, which is a little bit embarrassing but it does not include any tax increases on income tax, the estate tax, the hospital tax. All taxes that, despite the fact that, yes, they do raise revenues for the state of Connecticut, they are incredibly harmful to the long-term health of the economy of the state of Connecticut. And if, again, we hurt out tax base, we are hurting the state of Connecticut.

We've seen the relationship that we've all been predicting -- not all of us but many of us have been predicting here for the last year or so -- that when you raise taxes, you're not necessarily going to see a rise in revenues to the state of Connecticut. In fact, often times what happens is you see the exact opposite happening. Why is that? Well, obviously, you have some economy conditions that aren't as conducive to supporting larger revenues to the state of Connecticut and yes, part B, is that the tax base says we're 'sick and tired of paying those kinds of increased tax rates and there are greener pastures throughout the rest of the United States of America. And in fact, companies, partnerships, and individuals and families leave the state of Connecticut to our detriment and that is the fine line that we are

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walking here in Connecticut.

We also have to keep in mind that Connecticut lags the national economy by approximately 12 to 16, maybe 18 months or so, in terms of when Connecticut goes into a recession after the national economy goes into recession and conversely when the U.S. economy comes out of a recession, it takes at least 12 to 18 months for Connecticut to also come out of that recession. So therefore, I don't think any time soon we're going to see revenues going back up.

If we do everything right in the state, we're going to see revenues rise without increases tax rates and without implementing some of these devastating taxes that were talked about, as recently as ten days ago, such as the hospital tax and the estate tax, which I believe would have put us into the highest taxed state in the country with respect to estate taxes.

The -- there were whispers in the building over the last day or so that these concepts of tax increases may come back and I plead to everybody in the circle here and everyone downstairs that we don't go that direction. What makes a state truly a great state is a progrowth strategy in which businesses can

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thrive. They can employ. The productive sector can expand rapidly and we do have some competitive advantages here in Connecticut versus the rest of the Northeast that we are losing rapidly.

We need to protect those but the good progrowth approach is one that allows us to grow the tax base that allows Connecticut government to not only exist but also grow so that all of these programs that we have in the state of Connecticut and hold so near and dear to our heart are ones that we can continue to support. Who in this circle wouldn't want to and including you, Mr. President, wouldn't want to support. Who wouldn't want to support the people in need in the state of Connecticut.

Worse case scenario, and we could be looking at that, if you look at in the out-years, the forecast of roughly \$4 billion per year in deficit, they are based on some fairly optimistic projections. We're not out of the woods yet in this recession, this great recession that we've been experiencing here for almost two -- a little over two years actually. And we need -- and we absolutely need to be doing the right things in terms of preserving what is great about the Connecticut economy. What's great about the

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employment situation right here because right now,
it's pretty dismal.

So the environment is what we have to protect and
we have to make sure that we don't lose the
corporations and partnerships that would move to
greener pastures and never have a chance of ever
getting them back. There's really no way out of it.
We've seen this happen with other states more
recently, one that's a neighboring state of
Connecticut, one that's on the opposite coast, one
that's south of us. We don't actually neighbor them
but they're south of us and i think you know which
ones we're talking about.

We need absolutely pay attention and do the very,
very best we can in terms of --

THE CHAIR:

Hold on a second, Senator Frantz.

The noise level is getting very loud in here.
I'm having a tough time hearing Senator Frantz and
he's right to my left. So if you have some chatter to
do please take it outside.

Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

I appreciate that, Mr. President. It was

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starting to remind me of my household and I was wondering if I could borrow the gavel tonight.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. And I know we'd rather be in our households now.

Go ahead, Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

My -- my point, Mr. President, was that if we -- if we protect integrity of the Connecticut economy, if we protect what's been great about this state for 375 years, we stand a chance, a fighting chance of coming out of this as a strong state with stronger employers and great, more employees on the rolls, who are paying taxes to the state of Connecticut at reduced rates. Hopefully, we can get to the point where we can reduce rates. Reduce income tax rates and see our coffers swell here in Connecticut so that we can continue to fund the programs that all of you want to -- to fund.

So with that, Mr. President, I think in looking forward to the negotiations that take place with respect to fiscal year 2011, which will undoubtedly effect 2013 and 2014, we have to do everything we possibly can to foster a progrowth strategy and a progrowth environment.

This is what we've been working so hard on in the Commerce Committee under Senator LeBeau's leadership and Representative Berger's leadership, is how do we for the long-term as well as the short-term, how do we protect what's great about Connecticut. How do we keep companies from leaving? How do we protect the companies that have had to layoff 100,000 people here for the last 18 months? How do we keep them interested in staying in Connecticut? How do we allow them to keep their doors open? Believe me, they are trying everything they possibly can, Mr. President, to survive this very difficult time and we know it's going to be at least another year to a year and half before Connecticut fully recovers if, in fact, we're going to fully recover. And I'm optimistic that we will.

But, again, it all -- it depends on what we're doing in this circle here, downstairs and across the way in the Executive Branch in terms of making Connecticut a friendly, wonderful and lucrative and profitable place for businesses to exist. So I applaud everybody for coming together on this budget deficit mitigation plan. I think it's the right thing to do. Every budget deficit mitigation plan has

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things in it that we aren't going to like. There are lots of things I don't like in it either and I'm going to run through every single one of them.

However, the important thing is that this sets the tone for moving forward when we go to address 2011, '12, '13 and years beyond that because it is imperative, imperative that we send out the right message and it is also imperative that we everything we possibly can to (inaudible) off the concept of insolvency in the state of Connecticut. And we've heard about that concept in other states. We know the one on the west coast has faced it. We know that the one to our south is facing it and we know the one to our west, our neighboring state to the west, is one that is facing it. And believe me, if you talk to legislators there, and I'm sure some of you have, it's a scary proposition.

Mr. President, thank you for my time. I appreciate that. Congratulations to everybody for coming together on a deficit mitigation bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

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Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, if I may, just a couple of questions
to Senator Harp.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

The first question I have for Senator Harp does
she have in front of her a copy of the fiscal note.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Through you, Mr. President, yes, I do.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President..

And what I'm trying to understand is get a clear
picture of what we're doing here today so that those
that are watching at home on TV might kind of follow
the general parameters of the work that's been done.
So through you, Mr. President, to Senator Harp, it
appears that we are reducing spending to the tune of

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\$77 million in fiscal year '10, which ends on June 30th. Through you, Mr. President, to Senator Harp, does she read the fiscal note the same way that I do?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Through you, Mr. President, it says that we are reducing fiscal year 2010 by \$77.6 million.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And the column under that is entitled "other expenditure savings, paren, cost" and that appears to be an ad vac of \$12,882,915. And through you, Mr. President, to Senator Harp, could she explain briefly what that represents.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you very much. I'm just trying to see -- what page is that on? Through you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

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SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, it's on page 1 of the fiscal note in the column -- or the table that you --

SENATOR HARP:

Okay.

SENATOR RORABACK:

And the second line in the table shows --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you.

I do see that and there probably are other costs that are here. I can't really indicate to you exactly what they are. Hold on for a minute. Let me see if I can look at something else that will give me some sense of what those might be. Oh, yes, yes, yes. It's the SAGA change.

Because this is based upon this year's budget and we're implementing SAGA as of April 1st instead of July 1st, as we did in our biannual budget. The federal health care legislation allows us to implement it April 1st and so the amount that you see there represents our implementing the SAGA into Medicaid

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April 1st -- as of April 1st.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

So I guess we have to front load some of the cost -- there's an additional cost for us to convert from SAGA to Medicaid, which this number represents.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Through you, Mr. President, the -- the SAGA program currently caps hospital costs and -- which means that we have a certainly amount that we pay for hospitals no matter what the expenditures are and I'm assuming that this takes the cap off of hospital costs for this quarter.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And that -- that -- thank you, Senator Harp, for that explanation. That makes a sense. So we're obviously going to incur greater costs with the

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elimination of the cap but the offsetting revenues that we get by the Medicaid participation are going to more than offset that additional cost.

I thank, Senator Harp, for the explanation and I thank the Chamber for its indulgence. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Roraback.

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I've listened as many legislators spoke about this deficit mitigation bill and although I agree that we close the deficit gap for 2010, before we pat ourselves on the back too hard, this was the easy part. This is something that we could have done three months ago, fourth months ago, five months ago, six months ago. This was, with all due respect, a no-brainer in our obligation to the state of Connecticut and the tools that we used to close this gap would have been that much easier under the same theory and policy we used to close gap to do it three or fourth months ago.

But we didn't. There was some notion that we

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could do it by raising taxes. In fact, we were here, as I recall, in the wee hours of the morning voting to raise taxes or not, to close the gap for 2010. We realized perhaps we didn't have to do that. But our obligation is much, much more than 2010. We have over a \$700 million deficit in 2011. And if anything, we must have learned is that the longer we wait the harder the chore is. And we waited till April 14th to tackle a 2010 problem. Had we tackled six or eight months ago and chipped away at it, we wouldn't have had this problem. Or if we did, certainly, not at the magnitude that exists today.

So before we get too jubilant and excited about doing our job as we're obligated to the state of Connecticut, we have a bigger responsibility ahead of us and that's a \$700 million deficit. And much like Citizens' Election Fund, we can't wait. We should not leave this chamber, close out this session, until we fix 2011 because you save \$10 in July 2010, because start July 1st with our new budget, then it's \$20 in August and so forth and so on and it compounds.

But if wait to enact legislation to save money until September, October or hopefully not at a time after the election, the we failed the citizens of this

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great state. We need to be conscious of that awesome responsibility. We need to be diligent in what we do. So I am happy that we closed '10. Extremely frustrated that we have even come to some sort of resolution on '11.

I know it's been touted in our finance committees with respect to securitizing energy and we all know what that means, the stranded costs that were supposed to disappear in 2011 are not going to disappear, we're going to use that money and sell that income stream for money now for 2011. And as I mentioned to you before, I think a week ago, Marlin Firearms closed 265 jobs and the Freedom Group that bought Marlin back in 2005, I believe, came to the capitol last Friday and we talked about why they left. I'm going to tell you what they said. It's not conjecture. It's not hypothetical. It's not Len Fasano or Republican Party.

I'm going to tell you what they said in the meeting. They said, conversations of unitary tax told us what this state was doing. Conversation of electrical tax told us what you're doing. Conversation of increasing taxes without reducing expenses told us what you're doing. Connecticut is a

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great state but we deserve a return on our investment.
That's why we left. That's why we left.

He closed up shop, Freedom Group, in Massachusetts, the difference I might add, is he met with several people in Massachusetts after closing up shop and they were critical as to why he was leaving. In other words, they gave him a lot of guff for leaving. The group that we met with, Representative Steve Fontana was there as well, treated him with respect. Showed we want to work with them. What can we do to help you and his attitude was that was very gracious of the state and he's not reconsidering staying but what he's thinking about is maybe we can do something in Connecticut at that plant. That's amazing.

But the policies that we put out there, whether or not they become law, the fact that they go through committees tells people what we're thinking. It tells people how we're going to treat them. He told me that he hires people, Freedom Group, to look at legislation in every state they're in to see what they're doing to get an understanding of the direction the state is going. And he said, quote/unquote, Connecticut's not a business friendly state.

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And I don't think we should bend over backwards for businesses to the point that we bleed but I do believe that we need to make businesses understand that we're not going to harm them and we're not going to harm the taxpayers. Because the more we tax people, the more we raise the cost of living, the more we raise the cost of businesses, the less employment we have.

Nine thousand businesses moved out. Unemployment is at 9 percent. We're in trouble. So when we look at 2011, we have to act now because cannot be caught April 14, 2011 to come up with a plan that's going to save 700 million without causing significant burden on the people of the state of Connecticut.

So although I'm happy about this gap and this deficit mitigation plan and we all got together and talked and that's great, this was really, really easy. This was the easy part. We squeezed every juice we could to solve 2010 but we better start thinking about 2011 in a hurry. And we better make a pledge that we don't leave this chamber, we don't close this session till we fix 2011. The people of the state deserve it and we're obligated.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further?

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I'm speaking in support of this bill. I think this brings us this evening, or this late afternoon, early evening, to the end what has been painful but ultimately successful process for 2010. That this is a responsible plan. It does make, as was said earlier, judicious cuts where necessary to recognize that in this current economic crisis where Connecticut has been effected by the national recession where we have lost nearly -- or over 90,000 jobs and seen of our major revenues effected by that.

It is something that we share with the rest of the nation except for those few fortunate states that have their own natural resources to -- to tax base -- rather than the conventional revenue systems that -- that most states have. But this process is one I think that we need to recognize has been one that has brought to this responsible conclusion today.

And I'd like to commend Senator Harp for all of

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her work throughout, Senator Daily, also, in working hard. The two fiscal chairs have done extraordinary service in lengthy, lengthy hours behind -- behind the scenes. But especially, I would like to commend our Senate president. Senator Williams, I think more than anyone else on the Legislative side was the person who had a strong sense of urgency about moving this process forward and I think the difficult evening and morning that we spent on March 26th and March 27th was very important in moving this process.

That has helped, I think, create a framework that there is an absolute need to get a resolution for fiscal '10. That time should not be allowed to drift any longer and I think Senator Williams deserves unique credit for being the catalyst to move this process forward and to overcome the inertia that existed in many quarters in that direction.

This bill, as Senator Meyer and others said, there are a number of cuts. There are also a number of areas where policy decisions have been made to protect various important elements in the budget and some proposed reductions and cuts that had been made had been suggested earlier on by the Governor and others that might have negatively impacted children

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and elderly were rejected and certain funds that would promote job creation and help residents avoid foreclosure were protected. So that there was rejection of a proposed cut to early childhood learning and proposed cut to school transportation for children and a proposed cut to school-based health centers in the amount of \$250 and a proposed increase in Medicare Part D copays for low-income elderly individuals on Medicaid.

So some of the earlier proposals that would have been most harsh and most draconian in terms of having an impact on those, who are the most frail in our society, were rejected. There was also a protection of money for biomedical research, which promotes high-tech innovation and helps create twenty-first century jobs in the state and funding, also, to continue the state's successful foreclosure mediation program, which is also going to be important and has been a landmark of ways to assist people who are in the throws of the worst aspects of this financial crisis.

So, as was said earlier, our work in this stage now will be completed with the -- with this consensus bill, which I hope will have strong bipartisan support

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in this chamber, as it did in the House of Representatives, descended along to the Governor and complete this leg in our -- in our marathon race in this session.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney.

Will you remark further?

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise in support of the emergency certification before us. Mr. President, Senator Fasano said it, we all know it. The longer we wait to deal with our problems, the harder the solutions become. We failed to timely deal with our problems in 2009 and, as a result, borrowed a significant amount of money. I think we failed to deal with our 2010 budget deficit in a timely manner, as well.

Senator Looney is right. There are painful decisions. Decisions no more painful today than they would have been in October and that is the one lesson. I want to take less than 30 seconds looking backwards because I think we all need to look forward. But that

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is the lesson. We need to look back at history of the last two years and say to ourselves, we cannot let our problems continue to linger before it gets too late and we're backed into a corner where all of us end up with bad choices.

Looking forward, there is a lot of positive today. I think there's a lot of credit that belongs to a lot of people. After that painful night, the Governor stepped forward and offered her own package. There was a leadership meeting, a good discussion amongst all parties. I share many of Senator Looney's compliments to Senator Williams. Our communication has been excellent through this process. He has pushed, as I know the Governor has, to find a solution and we are, as the House did, in a bipartisan fashion going to vote for a difficult package to try to balance our books for 2010.

That has to be the momentum that we take over the next couple of weeks. That has to be how we attack the 2011 budget deficit that's looming before us. And we all know what everybody is saying. I've even said it. Everybody in this building, everybody in the real world, is saying you guys aren't even going to deal with it. It's an election year. There's going to be

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a new governor elected, a new legislature, you solved 2010, just let it go and let someone else deal with it in the future. That would be a terrible mistake and we cannot let that happen.

There are tough decisions to be made. There will be differences between our approach and your approach. That shouldn't come as a surprise but that also shouldn't be a barrier to us trying to reach a solution that all of us can support at the end of the day.

So, Mr. President, I'm happy that we are here with a bipartisan solution. I don't necessarily -- I wouldn't characterize it as successful but I think it's an important step to say to the people of the state of Connecticut that we can come together, we can work together and, as Senator Fasano and others have said, we must come together to solve our 2011 problems before 2011 starts because that is our obligation to do that. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Mr. President.

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I rise to support the bill before us here. It is not the end of our fiscal challenges, as we pass this bill, but it is a milestone. Senator McKinney is right, you know, three weeks ago, people would have been surprised if they had been told that in short order we would have an agreement to close the 2010 budget deficit and that that agreement would be bipartisan, supported by both Democrats and Republicans in the Legislature and supported by Governor Rell. And yet, here we are. It does prove that we can solve these problems, difficult as they may be.

And I would like to thank very much, Toni Harp, our Appropriations chair, Eileen Daily, our Finance chair, Marty Looney, our outstanding Majority Leader. Behind the scenes, there was a lot of work to find the cuts, to do what we had to do to economize, slim down government, find the savings, just as families around this state and small businesses around this state are forced to confront the economic realities and to tighten the belt. We have done that as well here in the state of Connecticut. There is more to do but today, we can say that we came together to solve the problem for 2010.

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Now, we have been chipping away. Now, this isn't the beginning because we did pass a balanced budget in 2009. We did pass a deficit mitigation plan at the beginning of this year. Unfortunately, there wasn't an agreement at that time. I think we can learn going forward that to solve these problems we do need to confront the fiscal realities, not get mired in ideology but look at the problems with a realistic and practical view. That's what families do. That's what small businesses do when they decide to expand in this area, to contract here, to cutback there.

They don't do it on the basis on some rigid ideology, on the left or the right. They do it on the basis of what makes sense. That's what we're doing and that's what we need to do in the future.

Now, I want to thank the Governor because after we spent that long night and we passed a balanced deficit mitigation plan that wiped out the 2010 deficit, two weeks ago, here in the Senate, the Governor did respond. She did say, you know, here's my updated plan. She incorporated many of our cuts as we had incorporated her cuts into our plan. Our colleagues in the House came to the table and said we want to partners and everybody stepped up. That's

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what made this a success.

So Senator McKinney, you were right when you say there's been great communication. We've been talking. We don't always agree and we're not always going to agree. That's our democratic process. The founders didn't expect agreement all the time but they did expect us to try to work together and where we could find agreement to go forward on that basis. So that's what we do here today.

I want to thank very much all the members of the caucus and the circle. Let me say everybody, Democrats, Republicans in this circle here, who stayed that long night, who participated in that long debate. It was messy. It wasn't easy. We were all tired the next day but it did move the process.

And to my caucus, I want to say thank you. Thank you for having the courage to face up to our responsibilities, to acknowledge that we have to close the deficit, to take action and then reach out. That's what you all did. That's why we're here today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on House Bill 5545? Will

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you remark further?

If not, Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted?

If all Senators have voted, please check your vote. The machine will be locked. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on passage of Emergency Certified Bill 5545.

Total Number Voting	36
Necessary for Adoption	19
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

It's unanimous. The bill passes.

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Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

We should take a picture for posterity purposes of that -- of that vote on the board.

THE CHAIR:

I would be happy to sign it for all of you also.
There you go.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Mr. President, I would move for immediate transmittal of the unanimously adopted Emergency Certified House Bill 5545 to the Governor.

THE CHAIR:

Without objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. Governor -- Mr. President.

I believe that --

THE CHAIR:

(Inaudible.)

SENATOR LOONEY:

We all live in hope, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Yes, sir. Thank you.

SENATOR LOONEY: