



State of Connecticut

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

March 9, 2009

Senator Toni Harp
Co-Chair Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700

Representative John Geragosian
Co-Chair Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700

Dear Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian:

Thank you for your letter and report of March 9, 2009. We appreciate the difficulty of your charge, and the speed with which you completed the task.

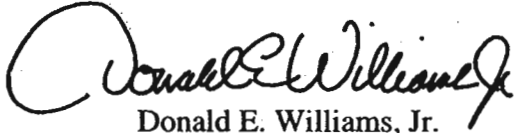
Your work gives families, lawmakers and advocates a more accurate picture of what the Governor's budget would have looked like had she balanced the budget in keeping with her Constitutional requirement to do so. This gives us a more realistic understanding for pursuing solutions that will not cripple the state or inflict even more devastating pain on Connecticut families.

After review, we agree that this is the wrong way to move forward. Cuts of this magnitude, hurting primarily the poor and the middle class, conflict with fundamental values of fairness. It is clear that addressing an actual budget deficit of \$8.8 billion will require a more comprehensive framework than Governor Rell's approach, with everything on the table as we have consistently said. This includes not only spending cuts, but bringing maximum efficiency to all state programs and agencies, and reducing unfairness and loopholes in our revenue structure – as Governor Rell started to do in her budget through the elimination of certain tax expenditures. The first step in addressing this problem is to acknowledge and confront the true extent of our fiscal shortfall. We hope that Governor Rell will now agree that the deficit we face is far greater than that addressed by her budget. If the governor does not agree that her budget would require the cuts that you have identified in your report, we would ask that she identify the alternative cuts she would make to balance her budget.

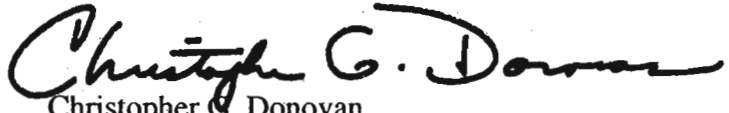
The work you have done is not merely an "exercise" as some have suggested. If we were to follow the governor's approach, cuts of this magnitude would absolutely be necessary to balance the budget. Legislators and the people of Connecticut need to know this basic truth. We continue

to believe, however, that we must work together to find a fairer way to meet the demands of this economic crisis. We will ask to meet immediately with the Republican leadership and the Governor to begin bipartisan discussions now on how to best achieve a balanced budget. These unprecedented times will require sacrifice – but that burden must be shared in the fairest possible way for Connecticut families and businesses.

Sincerely,



Donald E. Williams, Jr.
Senate President Pro Tempore



Christopher G. Donovan
Speaker of the House