

# The Connecticut General Assembly

## House Democrats



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## Rep. Gilchrest Responds as Appropriations Committee Releases Their Budget Proposal

The legislature took the next key step in the budget making process on Tuesday. After weeks of budget hearings and working groups, the Appropriations Committee, of which **State Representative Jillian Gilchrest** (D-West Hartford) is a member, released [their proposal](#) in response to Governor Lamont's budget, which was released on Feb. 20.

The Appropriations Committee budget attempts to balance the need to pay off Connecticut's debt, the result of years of fiscal mismanagement, while supporting vital services and investing in Connecticut's future. This proposal includes many key priorities supported by those in the 18th District, including;

- Paid Family & Medical Leave;
- Increased funding for K-12 education and full funding of the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula;
- Safeguards for seniors, including the removal of the Governor's proposed asset test for the Medicare Savings Program and an increase for Meals on Wheels;
- Services for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, including employment and day services for new high school graduates, as well as individuals aging out of the Department of Children and Families and residential schools;
- Maintaining funds for mental health and substance abuse grants;
- Making health care more affordable through a "public option" to allow small businesses and residents to join a state health insurance program; and
- Staffing of welcome centers and restoration of hours at rest areas.

"Connecticut cannot afford to kick the can on our outstanding debt and financial obligations," stated Rep. Gilchrest.

The Appropriations Committee proposal pays the actuarial required contribution (ARC), state employee retiree health insurance, and debt service. This proposal also seeks ways to find cost savings. The Appropriations Committee budget includes staffing for the Contract Standard Board, an entity charged with finding efficiencies in state contracting and reducing state dependence on consultants. It is anticipated that staffing of this Board will result in millions of dollars in savings. This budget proposal also continues efforts to convert

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group homes from public operation to private providers, resulting in cost savings.

The Appropriations Committee recognizes that while we must find efficiencies, we also need to invest in Connecticut's future. This proposal makes vital investments in workforce development through programs such as the manufacturing pipeline initiative. The final step in the budget making process is negotiations between both branches of Government on the proposal to be voted on by the Legislature before the close of the Session on June 5.

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