

State of Connecticut

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November 9, 2015

The Honorable Jim Himes
United States Representative
Fourth Congressional District
211 State Street, 2nd Floor
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Dear Congressman Himes:

In a recent article published in the New Canaan Advertiser you were quoted responding to the following question: Can you share conversations you've had with GE regarding its relocation? In your response, you stated, "I think we can't trust what we hear out of Hartford. GE can get no predictability."

While I agree with that sentiment, I was surprised to hear you expressing discontent with what has been happening in Connecticut state government. I have never heard you say anything before about the budget that raised GE's concerns when it was passed by the Democratic majority and signed by our Democrat governor. I don't recall any remarks from you when Democrat legislative leaders defended the budget by attacking GE saying things like, "I think they doth protest too much," and accusing GE of "using the [budget] bill as a cover" for previously planned layoffs and calling GE's relocation talks "a convenient way to blame someone else for their own corporate decisions to make changes using a stalking horse like a tax environment."

I don't believe you had any comment about any of those remarks being unwarranted at the time, yet you say now that you are very involved with GE's possible departure. If I am wrong about that, can you please provide me with any statements made or correspondence you may have sent to Democrat leaders or to the governor raising these concerns?

What is troubling to me is that year after year, while you have served as congressman, the Democrat majority in Connecticut has created and passed budgets that resulted in deficit after deficit. These budgets are what caused of that lack of "predictability" you now reference. Your recent comments also recognize that some of the real problems for GE are Connecticut's "long-term pensions and other financial issues," but you have never before been a vocal critic of the policies passed by Democrats that created these issues.

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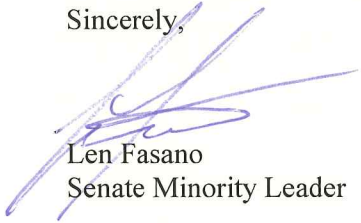
I understand the mechanics of politics and party affiliation, but until we put politics aside and collectively face the real problems in this state, Connecticut will remain stuck in "permanent fiscal crisis," to use the words of OPM Secretary Benjamin Barnes. Politics should never play a more important role than actually trying to make a difference. Your failure to publicly question the actions of members of your own party, and your failure to hold them accountable for the long-term debt that Connecticut continues to ignore is disappointing.

Now, as our state faces losing one of its biggest corporations and largest employers, you are just beginning to find a voice.

If we are to change this state and address the issues that you identified are the reasons a company like GE might leave, I hope rather than just engaging in political rhetoric you are willing to stand with those of us who want to take action. As lawmakers are in the midst of bipartisan budget negotiations I hope that you will join Republicans in advocating for a new budget approach that realistically tackles long-term pension reform, debt and spending. I am asking you to have the courage to put aside your political slants and help solve the problem by clearly identifying to the Democratic majority the real issues at play.

I hope I can secure your support in advocating for long-term, structural, substantive changes Connecticut needs to make to move forward. I would be willing to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss how to turn your words into real change.

Sincerely,



Len Fasano
Senate Minority Leader