

SENATOR ROB SAMPSON
SIXTEENTH DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 3400
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Capitol: (860) 240-8843
Toll Free: (800) 842-1421
E-mail: rob.sampson@cga.ct.gov
Website: www.senatorsampson.com



State of Connecticut

SENATE

SENATE REPUBLICAN WHIP

RANKING MEMBER
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION &
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

April 6th, 2020

Office of Governor Ned Lamont
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Lamont,

These recent weeks have been incredibly challenging. I recognize your effort to use your office to contain and slow the spread of the virus and the difficult decisions you have made throughout this process. Unfortunately, as I am sure you are aware, the changes made to protect public health are impacting the state's financial situation, creating a second growing crisis.

Today, I am requesting you consider redirecting further action to alleviate the financial burden on the taxpayers of our great state.

In addition to the heartbreaking reality of Covid-19's impact across the world, I am hearing tragic stories from constituents every day of a financial nature. These stories come from unemployed workers, small business owners, municipal government leaders, and many others affected by each executive order. Some of our constituents are now backed into a financial corner wondering how they will ever recover. Business closures have caused workers and owners to question whether they can stay solvent through these dark times. Municipal leaders are wondering how they can help the residents they serve.

These are the people we both represent. In a free society, it is our job to offer the people the information to make their own choices and assess their own risk. Social distancing and precautionary sanitary measures have proven effective and our citizens are doing so voluntarily. Many also offer suggestions, and we cannot afford to let their guidance fall on deaf ears. Their voices matter more than ever in this dire situation.

Stimulus packages and more government programs simply mean more taxes and more weight for our future economy to bear. As an alternative, I want to recommend policies that reduce the short- and long-term burden on taxpayers.

1. The greatest weight on our economy is the cost of government itself. How can our state government ask the people it represents to go without a paycheck for an undetermined period while their government continues to pay every employee regular wages and benefits whether they are working or not? I suggest that if non-essential businesses must be closed and leave their owners and employees to seek help from unemployment or in many cases, fend for themselves, then non-essential government offices should also be required to do the same. Are they not also just as susceptible to the spread of the virus?

2. There should be no increase on unemployment insurance rates for businesses mandated to close or significantly alter their business operations as a result of government action. Special consideration should be offered to all businesses struggling as a result of the virus and government action.
3. Professional licenses and fees should simply be waived for those in good standing. When things eventually begin to return to normal, let's not have a state license fee be an impediment to businesses and professionals returning to the workforce.
4. Local property taxes are already a disproportionately large burden in our state. I suggest using your authority to freeze union salaries at last year's rate so that towns can pass budgets without increases. They should also be furloughing non-essential employees at this time. The number one complaint of those who were leaving Connecticut before this crisis is that their state and local governments continue to make them tax poor. This is an opportunity to show those citizens that their tax dollars are appreciated and well managed.

My heart breaks for the many who will succumb to the virus and those that grieve for them. Every loss is significant, though we will have to wait until the virus runs its course to know its real impact and severity. The severity of the measures made by our government in reaction is also real and will be felt long into the future.

Many of our constituents are facing the losses of their wages, jobs, and businesses. Others will end up bankrupt taking on debt to stay afloat. When government leaders make decisions such as closing businesses and dictating the movements of free people, then they are also responsible for eliminating their ability to support themselves and pay taxes.

It is wrong to prioritize fully funding an expansive state government or union obligations while the private sector is forced to operate at a minimal level. Such a policy is unsustainable and will inevitably force an economic crisis, including the loss of both private and public sector jobs.

Though difficult, these four proposals are necessary to restore faith in our state government and allow for an intelligent economic recovery.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Sampson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

State Senator Rob Sampson
16th District