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2018 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Government As Usual Won't Solve Connecticut's Fiscal Crisis

Northwest Connecticut's Chamber of Commerce members recognize that our state is faced with an historic fiscal crisis that threatens our quality of life. Neither government nor employers can continue to do business as usual if we are to solve this problem.

Consequently the **Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce 2018 Legislative Agenda** is different. The following sets forth principles that our members believe are essential for Connecticut to begin digging out of the ongoing fiscal nightmare. Additionally it identifies specific issues that are important to our Northwest Connecticut region.

Principles

- ◆ Fiscal predictability and reducing the increase in both the cost of living and doing business in Connecticut are essential to reviving our economy.
- ◆ Government must prioritize services and deliver them more efficiently. Our spending policies must distinguish between wants and needs.
- ◆ The process for setting public sector employee contracts, including pensions and benefits, must be improved. Without change to existing contract approval and arbitration procedures, we will bankrupt our state, municipalities and future generations.
- ◆ Re-examine the State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition agreement to achieve savings that will reduce the state budget deficit.
- ◆ Whenever essential state and local services can be provided more efficiently and cost effectively, public-private partnerships or privatization should be supported.
- ◆ Reduce transportation administrative costs prior to increasing taxes and spending related to the Special Transportation Fund.
- ◆ Support balanced unemployment compensation reform to reduce costs.
- ◆ A new Education Cost Sharing formula that cost effectively addresses the needs of all students throughout Connecticut must be adopted.
- ◆ Continue to improve the provision of mental health and opioid abuse services.

Northwest Connecticut Issues

- ◆ A member from Northwest Connecticut should be added to the State Board of Regents.
- ◆ Meaningful course offerings and programming by Northwestern Connecticut Community College are crucial to our region and must be supported.
- ◆ Torrington should be reimbursed for the state reduction to its' motor vehicle taxes.