

Good afternoon, my name is Rick Bush.

I am a lifelong resident of Connecticut, A husband, a Father and a small business owner and I am here today to speak against the proposed tax increases.

As I began to draft my testimony it felt to me like I was having a conversation with my own family and I'm sure that as you work on the details of this budget it probably feels similar to you as well.

When my wife asks me how much do we have in our budget for summer camp or for winter vacation I explain to her our income and our expenses and together we arrive at a budget. She constantly complains that we don't have enough money and that we can't afford to do all the things we want or need to do. She complains about the spending cuts we have to make to balance our own budget. She wants me to work harder, yet spend more time with my children. She wants to take a vacation but doesn't want me to work overtime. So I simply tell her that we cannot afford it. I don't make up creative ways to kick the can down the road or fabricate some fancy plan for our children to pay off the debt when they graduate from college. I don't show her some creative accounting where I take our retirement savings and reclassify it so it falls outside our family budget. We make hard choices and reduce our spending. We don't apply for another credit card and transfer the balances of our debt to raise my personal spending cap; we cut up the credit card. We set our expectations reasonably and live within our means.

It is the responsible thing to do for our family and our state. We cannot continue to give into the all of the voices crying for money. They will never stop. It doesn't matter how much I do for my children they always want more.

The state of Connecticut needs to act like a responsible parent and say No!

We should not raise our spending cap. We should not raise taxes. We need to make the same hard decisions that my family and many families in Connecticut have to make and do without until we get our fiscal house in order.

When times change and we have additional money to spend then we can increase our spending. But it is not just, not prudent, not responsible for us as a state to continue to make our deficit worse and then to exacerbate the problem by adding an unfair, additional burden to our citizens, especially small business, in these difficult economic times.

This is how our government should work. We should not make up fancy ways to account for "off budget items" and we should not steal our future to pay for today. As a state we need to demonstrate leadership and set an example for our families. "If you cannot afford something, do not buy it."

Higher taxes do not solve our fiscal problems they create additional problems not only for the people who have to pay them but also for the people whose cost of living will increase as a result of them.

Thank you for your time.