



State of Connecticut

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Representative Brendan Sharkey
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Legislative Office Building, Room 4100
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Speaker Sharkey:

In multiple media reports from last night, I read your sharply worded statement criticizing Republicans as follows:

"After demanding to be 'in the room,' the Republicans proved today they had no intention of staying until the job was done. Although we agreed on many items in the bill Democrats passed today, Republicans walked away because they were unwilling to compromise and insisted on trying to shut down our government until they got their way. As a result, Republicans voted against restoring hospital funding and tax changes to encourage GE and other Connecticut businesses to grow here. After demanding to be given the opportunity to help lead, Republicans showed they were not up to the challenge."

I understand political rhetoric, but I will not stand for blatant lies. Everyone in the negotiation room knew the conditions for which we would come into negotiations. These were conditions which you affirmatively agreed to before we began to negotiate the budget. One of those main conditions was to implement structural changes to move Connecticut forward and create a stable and predictable budgeting environment. Let's also be clear, you as well as the other leaders accepted that condition in order to keep us as part of the negotiations. You agreed that you would fulfill that promise of structural changes during negotiations. Even when it became absolutely clear that you were not going to make those structural changes and we all agreed that there was no common ground for which we would supply votes for this budget, you continued to suggest we try. No one walked out on the negotiations. All parties realized that we couldn't come to an agreement, so we ended those discussions together. Republicans compromised, we negotiated, and we revised our proposals several times. But there came a point when there was no more movement possible from either side on the long-term structural changes Republicans wanted to pursue. Any attempt to re-write history in a partisan, disrespectful and completely false narrative will be rejected, repeatedly, if necessary.

If I can refresh your recollection, it was back in the summer, you were proud of the budget you passed and you mocked not only me, but General Electric as well, when we were critical of the business taxes and the budget in general. In less than four months I, as well as many others who predicted the budget would fail, were proven accurate. As a result, you had to grovel your way back into the chamber in an attempt to make amends for the failed budget you passed. You had to reverse course on the business taxes that your blind, partisan approach enacted. Less than six months after you claimed these were terrific ideas, you had to repeal them.

Representative Brendan Sharkey
December 9, 2015
Page 2

You and I, as well as everyone else in the negotiation room, know that Republicans made a difference. I know in your partisan world the truth is tough to accept. The evidence of our positive influence is clear, because as soon as it became apparent that a bipartisan deal could not be reached you decided to use roughly \$65 million of one-time revenue and sweeps, including taking money from 2017 to put in 2016, in order to balance the 2016 shortfall.

Even your fellow Democrats, who understand the importance of bipartisan discussions and process, had the self-confidence to say the following:

- Governor Malloy said: "While we couldn't achieve a bipartisan vote, we had a bipartisan process to lead us to the vote tonight...I appreciate the willingness of Democrats and Republicans to engage in this important discussion, one that I hope will continue in the months and years ahead. The legislation passed tonight is not perfect, but it helps make progress for the State of Connecticut this fiscal year and beyond."
- Senator Duff said: "While this may or may not be a bipartisan vote, it is a bipartisan package in the sense that a number of things that we talked about over the past month on both sides of the aisle have been incorporated into this final package."
- Senate President Martin Looney said while there wasn't a bipartisan vote on the package, it did "reflect bipartisan thinking."

In comparison to your statements, perhaps this will provide some insight into the real reason why the State of Connecticut cannot move forward. The process of negotiations was extremely productive. But it was the end result of what Democrats put forward that does not help our state.

I assure you that the amended budget passed last night has not changed the course of this state, but in fact has added to our budget problems and sent a message to the people of Connecticut that you, as leader, continue to send Connecticut into a economic death spiral. I would be willing to debate the ideas and our differences with you at any time, at any place and let the public judge who really has the best interest of the State of Connecticut in mind.

Sincerely,



Len Fasano
Senate Minority Leader