



State of Connecticut

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December 14, 2017

Senator Martin Looney
President Pro Tempore
Legislative Office Building, Room 3300
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Representative Joe Aresimowicz
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Legislative Office Building, Room 4100
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear President Looney and Speaker Aresimowicz:

I am very concerned about recent events regarding the bipartisan efforts to restore funding for the Medicare Savings Program. All legislative leaders worked together in good faith negotiations and agreed on a specific plan to identify savings to allow us to restore the Medicare Savings Program. Unequivocally, we agreed on a plan and we also agreed on the need to pass this solution sooner rather than later. The rationale for doing it quickly was to relieve 113,000 seniors and disabled individuals of the anxiety that they experienced and shared with all elected officials. We understand the depth of that anxiety and that's why we all worked together quickly to come up with a solution, and why we also decided to hold a session on December 19, 2017.

Following our meetings, you both expressed that you as leaders could not call us into session, a position I disagree with, but nevertheless we all agreed to move forward with a petition process to initiate a session before the new year. Now, however, I understand we may not come in to session until on or after January 5, 2018, which will be orchestrated by Senate Democrats not submitting petitions until a later date. Further, I've learned that you now no longer want to solve the MSP issue as a standalone, but you have linked it with solving the current deficit.

Let me be very clear. Holding seniors hostage for a deficit mitigation plan is simply unconscionable. Waiting to adopt a bipartisan solution for MSP that is already agreed upon, just so you can tie this issue to solving a deficit, a process which could take weeks or even months, will only create chaos and more uncertainty for thousands of seniors and disabled individuals across our state. This was never our agreement or our understanding. We need to work in good faith with one another, especially once we have agreement to take action. That is why I am shocked by what has happened over past three days.

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My concerns were also heightened by a statement made by the Speaker in a radio interview this morning in which he indicated that a sales tax increase is needed to fix the MSP problem. Although it is unclear as to what year he is referring to, a tax increase to restore Medicare Savings Program funding in fiscal year 2018 and/or 2019 clearly was not what any leader, Republican or Democrat, agreed to at the table.

In light of all of these concerns, I again must repeat that we need to go into session on December 19. All leaders need to sign a letter asking the governor to call us into session on the date we all agreed to in order to fix this problem as quickly as possible. Irrespective of the governor's answer, we cannot combine MSP and deficit mitigation because we are working against the clock when it comes to restoring this funding. We have a bipartisan solution today that was negotiated in good faith. Let's pass it as we agreed to.

While I believe our priority must be to call a session through Gov. Malloy for December 19, should the governor refuse I want you all to know that the Senate Republicans have submitted 17 petitions to the Secretary of the State as of yesterday. The record will show we now only need two Senate Democrats to submit petitions to reach the required 51% to call a session before the new year. If Sen. Looney and Sen. Duff submit their petitions, two leaders who negotiated and agreed to a speedy resolution for MSP this year, we can still resolve this issue before the end of the year. And, since this is a bipartisan agreement, we do not need full attendance in either chamber to do so. So any excuse not to hold a session because certain lawmakers are not around during the holidays is a flawed argument, because we do not need a full chamber to adopt a bipartisan fix, which was the same position all leaders took when we corrected the renter's rebate program.

The Medicare Savings Program should not be used as leverage for deficit mitigation. We need to resolve this issue and give peace of mind to 113,000 seniors and disabled who are awaiting action. That must be our priority.

Sincerely,



Len Fasano

Senate Republican President Pro Tempore

cc: Representative Themis Klarides, House Republican Leader