

Op-Ed: Welcome Back to Normal(ish)



Baseball, Barbecues and Crushing State Deficits

After a difficult spring, I like most am happy to welcome the start of summer. As we gradually return to normal, however, we must also realize that we are picking up where we left off — i.e., stagnant job growth, a decade of depressed home values, wealth and opportunity fleeing Connecticut, and multi- billion dollar state deficits that result in the perpetual underfunding of important education, infrastructure and environmental programs.

Sadly, our chronic overspending and deficits will again prompt the Democratic majority in Hartford to seek additional tax increases and job-killing policies, all while simultaneously pushing through state worker wage increases. Indeed, for more than a decade we have watched Hartford cannibalize a struggling private sector to feed a glutinous and unapologetic public sector. We can not let this old normal continue on as the new normal.

When I began serving as a state representative in 2011, Connecticut was running multi-billion dollar deficits while carrying a 53,000-plus state workforce. The majority Democrats thus passed the largest tax increase in state history, grew the government, and layered on oppressive job-killing regulations all in the name of “helping workers.” Of course these policies only made the problems worse, leading to more deficits in 2013, 2015, 2017 and beyond (despite record tax receipts!) followed by more private sector job

losses and repeated tax increases.

Here we are again: multi-billion dollar deficits, and needed programs going unfunded, all while a state union contract (which is way more expansive and expensive than advertised) grants pay raises that ignore what the Connecticut private sector is experiencing and can afford. Meanwhile, after months of shutdowns and vague guidance from Hartford, Connecticut employers will likely suffer yet another “assessment” to pay for extended unemployment benefits and timelines.

The solution is proven and clear. Hartford must stop changing the rates and rules every year, and let our economy, job creators and job seekers regain momentum. A stable tax and regulatory structure will return confidence, investment and prosperity to our state, which in turn will allow us to pursue needed social policies with real action instead of empty words.

Simply put — talk is cheap, but great schools, a functioning infrastructure and a clean environment are not. We thrive as a community when the private sector thrives, and our state policies need to start and end on this undeniable tenet.



Former State Representative John Shaban is running for election to the 135th General Assembly District seat he held for three terms from 2011 to 2017. Shaban did not run for a fourth term, opting instead to run for U.S. Congress against Jim Himes. The 135th District includes Easton, Redding and Weston.