

Dear Legislators,

I am extremely concerned for our state. Every day I am hearing about a new person or family that is leaving this state or is planning to leave as soon as they can. We are continually seeing businesses leave for states that are more tax friendly and business friendly. There are so many mandates and regulations on small business in CT. I am a Controller for a small business so I see firsthand how the high taxes, mandates and regulations have the business struggling to survive. We have high unemployment taxes and our workman's compensation and health insurance costs are through the roof and we are told that has a lot to do with CT mandates and regulations. The business is a sub chapter S corporation and the taxes we pay each year are very high. The business is located in Hamden and the property taxes are also very high.

On a personal level, we feel squeezed with ever-rising property taxes. We purchased our home in 2000 in Wallingford. The property taxes were \$3,600 a year, now they are nearly \$8,000. I have recently read that we are only one of five states that have a property tax on vehicles. I believe the property tax credit has been reduced to \$100. Democratic legislators have also done away with the clothing and footwear exemption. We all are aware that our gas taxes are one of the highest in the country. We are being suffocated with high taxes. My husband and I have three children and two of them are currently in state colleges, UCONN and Central, funding to state schools has decreased, which has increased the tuition bills, further burdening our situation. It is a very expensive state for a middle class family.

I recently read that CT has the same budget as CO, a state with 1.5 million more people. How are they doing it with so much less money for their population? CT has a bloated public workforce with pensions and health insurance benefits that are way too generous and out of hand. Why do I see so many public employees retiring with 70% of their former salary at age 50 or 55. How is this fair to people with no defined benefit pension plan that will not be able to retire until 67 years of age!! Why do public employee sick time accrue so they receive a huge payout in addition to their pension upon retirement? Why do public employees still have Columbus day off? Why are public employee's health insurance plan second to none? Why is overtime considered in pension calculations??? It seems that the unions have a chokehold on CT. These pensions are equivalent to winning the lottery and everyone knows it. We know what we would have to have in our 401k plans to draw that kind of money in an annuity for that many years. It is truly disgraceful and there is so much that can be cut especially since CT pensions are only 49% funded. There was 1 billion in promised lost concessions that the public unions failed to deliver on, why weren't these pursued instead of raising taxes?

In the mid-eighties, CT ranked as one of the top states to do business in. We are now at the bottom of every business ranking out there. How can you legislators continually raise taxes when it's driving out hard-working residents and businesses. NY is actually becoming a cheaper state to do business in and MA has a thriving economy and made many positive changes. It is mind boggling the damage that is being done to CT.

Sincerely,
Lisa Viscardi
Wallingford, CT Resident

