

Chairmen Cibes and Widlitz, and members of the Spending Cap Commission,

Too often politicians say one thing and do another. And, this is why the public has such a negative opinion of them. There is no better example of this than the spending cap:

In 1991, the state did something rare. There was an issue that was so important that the legislature left it in the hands of Connecticut citizens to decide what we should do. And, 81% of voters cast their ballots in support of a constitutional spending cap.

What did the legislature do with that vote?

Nothing! The majority party ignored it and has ignored it for 24 years. And, we wonder why the public doesn't trust politicians.

With the formation of this commission, it appears that some action will be taken to implement the constitutional spending cap; although, I won't hold my breath waiting for it to happen.

With the state our economy and projected deficits, due in no small part to our pension liability, I implore you to implement the spending cap as the constitutional amendment is written; as the legislature intended; and as the voters understood it at the time. The amendment requires the legislature to set a reasonable rate of growth on all spending, except debt service. And, debt service is the only specified exception. Please, in your deliberations and final recommendations, do not pull other spending out of the cap calculation. It will only render the cap useless.

The reason for the cap is not to put great restraints on spending just for the sake of keeping spending down. Rather, it is there to protect taxpayers. The spending cap is more like an alarm that tells us we're taking too much money out of the pockets of families and businesses. That's why we tie the rate of spending growth to personal income growth. A strong spending cap keeps our state on strong economic ground and keeps us competitive with other states.

Instead of getting upset and outraged about the legislature's inability to keep taxes low by controlling spending, families and businesses are choosing to vote with their feet. We've seen almost no population growth and even less job growth, and this trend will continue until we make some major changes. Implementing the constitutional spending cap as it was intended would be a good first step to reversing that trend.

Thank you for your consideration,

Darline Perpignan