

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

SENATOR
DANIEL Da PONTE
District 14

Room 211 State House
Providence, Rhode Island, 02903

Office: 401-222-3438
Fax: 401-222-4753
Email: sen-daponte@rilin.state.ri.us



Senate Chamber

Chairman
Committee on Finance

September 24, 2009

The Honorable Leonidas P. Raptakis
2080 Nooseneck Hill Road
Coventry, RI 02816

Dear Lou:

I'm writing in response to your letter to Senate President Paiva Weed this date regarding the state's fiscal crisis. I would point out to you that the press was in receipt of the letter before Senator Paiva Weed received it. Thus, it must be admitted that the suspicion that your letter is motivated more by politics than public policy, is not easily dismissed.

However, giving you the benefit of the doubt, I readily agree with you that the issues of the day, financial and otherwise, are sobering and serious in their impact on our state and our citizenry. There is a highly developed awareness by President Paiva Weed, the Senate leadership and the members that our state and country face increasingly difficult choices in combating the worst economic downturn in eighty years. You can rest assured that we who are in the state house are grappling with these problems every day. In fact, had you not missed the special session of the Senate Finance Committee last week while you were on your latest trip to Greece, you would have seen some signs of these efforts. We held hearings which examined the activities of the Department of Administration in light of current budget shortfalls. We continue to work every day toward solutions which hopefully bring about the best results with the least amount of damage to our way of life here in Rhode Island. An example of this work is the legislation which I submitted during the past session and which passed the Senate mandating consolidation of duplicate services in local government. For your reference the bill number was Senate bill 1012 passed on June 30, 2009. This bill will cause communities such as yours to combine backroom operations of their school and municipal systems and will of course provide real and significant savings. I count on you to explain to your town fathers the benefits of such consolidation to help overcome any turf protection mentality.

You are welcome to sit in on any hearing that the Senate Finance Committee holds which should allow you to see first hand the efforts that are being undertaken. Of course that is the same invitation that is available to any Senator at any time. So I hope that you will avail yourself of the opportunity and not miss out like you did the entire last session. The fact that you failed to attend any of the budget hearings except to testify in support of your own well thought out legislation was I'm sure a disappointment to the entire committee.

Looking forward to seeing you at our hearings, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Daniel Da Ponte
cc: Senators