

For Immediate Release

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September 13, 2018

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Oz Griebel Releases Multi-Pronged Plan to Boost Business Confidence, Jump Start Job Growth and Restore CT to National Preeminence

***Griebel-Frank Plan: "Respect for Every Individual and Family, Straight Talk,
Honesty, Inclusion and Collaboration, Focus on the Common Good"***

Primary Goal: 200,000 Net New Private Sector Jobs Over Ten Years

Oz Griebel, independent candidate for governor today released a comprehensive plan to restore Connecticut to national preeminence by creating 200,000 net new jobs by 2028, a goal that will be achieved by reigniting private sector confidence, addressing Connecticut's unfunded state employee and teacher pension and health care costs, marketing Connecticut's assets and competitive advantages, investing in education, transportation and workforce development, and privatizing certain State services.

The plan, "Connecticut: We're All in This Together" provides an assessment of Connecticut's strengths and weaknesses, an analysis of the current State budget situation and a detailed plan for leveraging Connecticut's strengths and addressing its fundamental economic weaknesses. The plan also recognizes the inter-related nature of all of the social and economic issues facing our state.

Connecticut's strengths include:

- a highly educated and productive workforce
- an abundance of smart people committed to a fair and vibrant economy
- proximity to Boston and New York -- a competitive advantage because of lower real estate costs and less congestion compared to NY and Boston

The state's weaknesses include:

- no net new job growth in 30 years
- lack of private sector confidence
- aging workforce
- new taxes, fees, and increased rates
- an exploding State budget deficit
- unfunded state retiree pension and health care costs
- redundancy in municipal services
- underinvestment in education, social services, and transportation

“The reality is that Connecticut’s fiscal situation is dire, with a \$4.5 billion budget deficit in FY ’20 and FY ’21 and growing in the out years,” Griebel said. “The problem is compounded by unfunded state employee and teacher pension and retiree health care obligations in excess of \$80 billion. As a result we also face the potential for further cuts to municipal aid and cuts to agencies serving those in need -- and it all adds up to no realistic prospects for substantial tax cuts in the near term.”

As part of addressing the next biennial budget and stabilizing state government’s finances, Griebel said he would use the full Rainy Day fund balance to minimize damage to municipalities, social services agencies, education, and transportation. He also said he would postpone contributions to pension funds in exchange for contributing lottery funds and funds from the securitization of State assets as part of a pension reform package.

“My plan will restore private sector confidence in Connecticut and it will reform state retiree pension and health care benefits to address both the threat to retirees and to the future of their grandchildren, the so-called “three year-old” generation,” Griebel said. “It will also privatize certain state services, promote the regional delivery of certain municipal services, prioritize state investment to create an environment for job growth and greater achievement, and promote tourism and the arts.”

Griebel emphasized that the political process in Connecticut has contributed to the severity of Connecticut’s problems with annual budget stalemates, budget gimmicks and short-term fixes that have exacerbated the state’s structural budget problems.

“The two-party system is broken and both parties are focused only on dogma and re-election,” Griebel said. “Only the Griebel-Frank ticket has the experience to bring both parties together with leaders of the business, education, health care, labor, and nonprofit sectors to develop and execute a multi-year strategy to promote Connecticut’s robust strengths and address its daunting fiscal impediments.”

“The fundamental flaw of Bob Stefanowski’s approach is that a governor can use business principles but cannot run government like a business since the purpose of government is to serve people and not shareholders,” Greibel said. “A governor cannot demand the legislature to follow orders, to relocate a division to India or to eliminate unprofitable customers. Bob’s plan to eliminate the income tax is a hollow promise and he should admit to voters that his plan to eliminate it cannot work.”

“Ned Lamont’s promise to support State employees’ pension and benefit programs in their current form through 2027 will make Connecticut insolvent,” Griebel said. Ned’s property tax credit plan will do nothing to solve CT’s serious problems. It is a bald-faced attempt to garner votes, a simple deduction off the income tax that won’t save property owners much money and will do nothing to help towns reduce mill rates.”

Griebel also said that as governor, he will serve as the state's chief marketing officer and he will engage employers, residents and local officials by implementing a "Governor's Office" day each week in a different region of the state.

"Monte and I will let residents, employers and local governments from all regions of the state know that their concerns are every bit as important as the concerns of the powers that be in Hartford," Griebel said. "We – as in all of our 169 cities and towns and all of our residents and employers – are all in this together."

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- ATTACHMENT -

State Employee, and Teacher Pension, and Retiree Health Care

The 800-pound gorilla in the budget discussions – highlighted by the amount of the unfunded element of both state and teacher retirement funds and the threat of continued employment and economic stagnation to the state's ability to honor those obligations over the next 20 years

All non-unionized state employees and legislators will be moved to a defined contribution plan by July 1, 2019 (e.g. Commissioners and legislators)

Begin discussions with union leaders on November 7, 2018 on the 2020 negotiations on base compensation and work rules and include the key elements of the SEBAC agreement in those discussions

Determine the monetary values of the state lottery (with and without sports betting) and of state owned office buildings and similar non-essential real estate (excluding state parks, conservation property, and true public buildings such as the capitol) for the purpose of discussing contributing the proceeds to the state retiree and teacher retiree pensions funds by July 1, 2021 to begin to address the actuarial shortfall of both funds and the gap that will still remain

Discuss, in exchange for such contributions, a number of items to be effective on July 1, 2021: reductions in existing pension benefits (e.g. COLA increases) and higher co-pays for retiree health care coverage; privatization of certain functions to engage the private sector to enhance the quality and reduce the cost of services.

Tax Policy Objectives

- Hold the line on the personal income tax as key component of revenue with a focus on more people paying taxes rather than more taxes at higher rates
- Reduce personal income tax rate steadily to original 4.5% of 1993 in conjunction with progress toward goal of 200,000 net new jobs by 2028
- Eliminate 50% of the \$250 business entity tax on July 1, 2019 and the remaining 50% on July 1, 2020
- Reduce the gift and estate tax to 0% by June 30, 2022 via incremental reductions effective on July 1st of 2019, 2020, and 2021

- Eliminate gross receipts taxes on certain for-profit entities

Transportation

- Reestablish the Transportation Strategy Board with private sector representation
- Support the constitutional “lockbox” on the November 6th ballot
- Eliminate the \$10 million toll study
- Start the process on January 1, 2019 to secure the federal approval necessary to establish a limited electronic tolling system by July 1, 2021
- Implement an electronic tolling pilot with a private sector partner on the HOV lanes on I-84 and I-91 by July 1, 2019 using congestion-based pricing

Energy

- Protect the state’s energy efficiency fund and green bank from fund sweeps by the General Assembly
- Develop and track annual progress against realistic goals for moving steadily toward greater reliance on renewable energy sources
- Achieve greater energy security through micro-grids and other distributed energy systems
- Leverage the state’s considerable financial and technical expertise in renewable energy to drive job growth

Regional Delivery of Municipal Services

- Acknowledge that property taxes are a major component of the high cost of doing business in Connecticut
- Recognize that cuts to municipal aid will be needed to balance the budget which could result in continued increases in mill rates and reduction in services
- Eliminate prior unfunded mandates where appropriate and reduce use going forward
- Leverage councils of government (COGs) by providing 50% of municipal aid to municipalities and 50% to the COGs

City of Hartford and XL Center

- Have the state enter into sale-leaseback arrangements to return office buildings to the commercial property roles
- Implement numerous other recommendations set forth in the [June 21st press release](#)
- Establish integrated partnership with CRDA, city, state, and major employers to determine design, purpose and funding of renovated XL Center, as outlined in [June 28th press release](#)

● Housing Affordability

- Strive to maintain funding as housing affordability is a factor in reigniting employment and economic growth
- Amend, do not end, section 8-30g
- Include transit oriented development (TOD) as a key agenda item for the reconstituted Transportation Strategy Board
- Work with agencies with responsibility for reducing homelessness on the eviction issues in Hartford and Waterbury

Enhancing Public Safety

- Support the Second Amendment right of individuals to own firearms for protection, hunting, and sport with reasonable restrictions permissible by law
- Support and strengthen state laws to reduce the incidents of gun violence in schools, urban neighborhoods, workplaces, and public spaces, as well as with suicides and in domestic violence situations
- Coordinate with other governors to develop consistent legislation on background checks and other matters related to the purchase of firearms and trafficking of illegal firearms
- Work with our federal delegation to pursue national legislation on background checks and oversight of other contributors to gun violence
- Integrate support of mental health and substance abuse providers with gun violence reduction efforts

Connecticut Air Service

- Develop integrated strategy among Bradley and the other CAA airports, Bridgeport-Sikorsky, and New Haven-Tweed that includes, among other initiatives, actions to reduce total operating costs
- Maintain Aer Lingus service and strengthen Bradley's recruitment of additional non-stop service to cities west of the Mississippi and in Europe
- Expand mass transit options to Bradley
- Allocate a portion of DECD marketing dollars to augment CAA's budget for recruiting additional routes

Opioid Crisis

- Establish a substance abuse task force that includes leaders of state agencies and private providers to be chaired by the Lt. Governor
- Establish a central data base to facilitate sharing of all relevant information among private and public providers
- Follow Massachusetts in making Narcan available over the counter
- Accelerate evaluation and implementation of using medical marijuana to address pain issues in lieu of opioids and to wean individuals from methadone and suboxone
- Reduce the stigma around medically assisted treatment

Relationships with the Federal Government

- Emphasize governor's fiduciary duty to work with the President and his or her administration and with our federal delegation to ensure engagement in the federal budget discussions that impact Connecticut's employment and economic vitality
- Similar duty to advocate with The Administration and Congress on behalf of those Connecticut entities and individuals with the expertise and creativity to address some of the nation's and world's biggest opportunities and challenges
- Establish regular D.C. visits to pursue both #1 and #2

Roe vs Wade Decision

- Secure the codification in Connecticut of a woman's right to choose

- Reduce the incidents of unwanted pregnancies with appropriate school education and access to contraceptives

Immigration and Sanctuary Cities

- Advocate for comprehensive federal legislation that provides for appropriate security along both national borders and that provides a clear path to citizenship for current and future immigrants to contribute their vital intellect, energy, and patriotism to Connecticut and the rest of the country
- Fulfill responsibilities to federal agencies responsible for enforcing immigration laws as appropriate
- Stand up for justice, equality, safety, and community by limiting the state's unnecessary participation in the federal government's deportation program.
- Support strengthening Connecticut's TRUST Act to prohibit state and local law enforcement from serving federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainers without a valid federal judicial warrant
- Ensure that the rule of law and due process applies to all deportation and related issues and that those facing deportation have effective legal representation by supporting such efforts as the campaign led by the Connecticut Lawyers for Immigration Justice
- Support efforts, as appropriate, to provide assistance and humanitarian relief to refugees and asylum seekers

Health Care

- Establish an inventory of entities and individuals in Connecticut with expertise in one or more elements of health care
- Aspiration of Connecticut to provide the most affordable, accessible, highest quality health care to all residents
- Build on and expand the efforts of the Connecticut health council to bring all players together to build a strategy that achieves that goal
- Leverage the financial and technical expertise in Connecticut to expand employment opportunities in all aspects of health care

Crumbling Foundations

- This is an example of the purpose of government – we are all in this together.
- Support FEMA or other funding to determine the number of homes actually affected by the presence of pyrrhotite in their foundations
- Support the bonding of \$20 million annually for five years to fund Connecticut Indemnity Company (“CFSIC”)
- Support the \$12 annual surcharge on homeowner policies for 10 years
- Organize a work group of insurance companies, other businesses, the appropriate state agencies, and legislative leaders to evaluate whether to create a form of “rainy day” for to provide some relief for such unanticipated economic blows

Public Financing of Campaigns

- Eliminate public financing for all primary or general election campaigns for the six constitutional offices
- Provide public financing for truly contested legislative campaigns to the extent that Connecticut taxpayers check off a contribution on their annual tax returns
- Increase the amount that an individual can contribute to the primary and general election campaigns for the constitutional offices to \$5,000 each
- Eliminate the prohibition on “state contractor” contributions to campaigns for constitutional offices and strengthen the requirement that the contributor and the receiving campaign disclose such contribution within 24 hours and that said contributions be noted on any response to a state or municipal RFP.
- Provide adequate funding of the SEEC and the Secretary of the State to ensure enforcement of the relevant statutes and regulations

Education

- Evaluate the consolidation of UConn with the Board of Regents (CSCU) to form a more integrated state system that drives more money into the classrooms and not to support redundant levels of administrative functions
- Develop a system that admits into UConn any student graduating from a private or public high school with a specified GPA and/or standardized test score.
- Pursue the opportunities for more regional school systems to address cost, quality, segregation and the opportunity gap
- Support the adequate and equitable funding of charter schools, especially in our larger cities, to provide greater choice for parents and students
- Enable Connecticut parents to use funds from the federal 527 plans to pay private school tuition for grades K-12
- Support the training and apprenticeship programs in our community colleges and technical schools for the sectors of advanced manufacturing, hospitality, and insurance and financial services
- Develop a more integrated approach to workforce development needs and opportunities between leaders in education and employers

Arts, Culture, and Tourism

- Recognize the importance of these sectors to current employment and taxes and the state’s overall quality of life
- Secure the hotel tax for support of these sectors in recognition of the increased funding provided by Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island
- Develop partnerships where the arts, culture, and tourism entities can augment public education with classroom instruction and apprenticeships

Millennials and Generation X

- Stay focused on ensuring 200,000 net new job opportunities
- Enhance entrepreneurial efforts
- Shar “best practice” initiatives among employers to retain and attract young talent
- Evaluate amending various regulations impacting entertainment venues to keep urban areas more vibrant (e.g. keeping the last call at 2:00 a.m. at bars on weekends, but the closing hours to 3:00 a.m.

- increase housing affordability in our cities, including TODs
- improve public transportation and increase bike lanes and greenways

Legalization of Recreational Marijuana

- legalize recreational marijuana with appropriate legislation and regulations that specify the age of purchase, address public safety matters such as the ability to detect driving under the influence and pass legislation regarding other items such as the amount that a homeowner can grow legally for personal use
- Dedicate all tax revenues to support agencies and programs dealing with the opioid crisis, substance abuse, and mental health issues
- Investigate the concept of facilities to produce hemp for commercial purposes