

Mend

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alternative also applied to Rell.

An ambitious Democratic legislative agenda evaporated in the session's final days as a surplus once projected at more than \$200 million turned into a burgeoning deficit.

When Rell suggested that legislators respond to the shortfall by leaving intact the second year of a previously approved two-year budget, Democrats quickly agreed.

Gone were the first real spending increases planned for the understaffed Department of Environmental Protection, as well as new revenue,

oversight and staffing rules for nursing homes.

Republicans, who hold fewer than one-third of the 187 House and Senate seats, quickly pounced on the plan as the "do-nothing budget."

They countered with a proposal to cut the state payroll by \$163 million through early retirements, then use the savings to reduce the gasoline tax and eliminate some business taxes.

But Rell quickly dispatched her budget chief, Robert Genuario, to shoot down the early-retirement plan as unsound, saying it would cost the state money.

Rather than give the Republicans that chance to put Democrats on the defensive, Rell seemed more intent on making sure her own deal with the Democrats was not threatened.

Some Republicans privately complained that Rell resisted early retirements because she may need to offer her own plan next year to balance the 2009-2010 budget.

House Minority Leader Lawrence F. Cafero, R-Norwalk, and Senate Minority Leader John McKinney, R-Fairfield, saw the rebuke as undermining their efforts to establish an identity for the GOP this fall.

"I was very disappointed that happened," Cafero said. "I was angry."

Rell, the most popular Republican in the state, never has shied from breaking with the legislature's small GOP minority when her interests and theirs diverge.

"I think there is going to be continued tension between Republican legislators and Gov. Rell," said Senate

President Pro Tem Donald E. Williams Jr., D-Brooklyn. "Gov. Rell has to govern. She doesn't have the luxury of proposing things that she never wants to see enacted into law."

Chris Healy, the Republican state chairman, said Rell and the Republican minority leaders are not antagonists, but they have different roles to play.

"I think what you see here is the governor performing her duties and the opposition leaders in the legislature performing theirs and showing there is a clear option," Healy said.

Rell faces a difficult year:

To keep the new budget in balance, Rell may have to use her powers to unilaterally cut spending. Rell can cut various accounts by up to 5 percent without legislative approval. State aid and entitlements are exempt.

Unlike her deal with Democrats not to add spending in the second year of the biennial budget, Rell will have no bipartisan cover if she starts making cuts that go deeper than limiting travel and minor purchasing.

"They want her to be the villain," Cafero said.

In a meeting with the governor, Amann said, he has promised not to criticize any cuts Rell is forced to make.

But Amann is leaving the legislature when his term expires. He will be succeeded in January by House Majority Leader Christopher G. Donovan, D-Meriden.

Donovan has made no such promise.

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Mike

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The Accident

On Feb. 9, 2007, Mike Bubnash was driving home from visiting a friend in Canton when his car left the road and hit a telephone pole. He was flown by Life Star helicopter to Hartford Hospital. Mike survived the night, and the next day, Steve created a page on the social website Facebook. Mike had finished one semester at Union College in New York, and Steve figured he'd alert Mike's college friends.

The responses began as a trickle, and quickly erupted into a deluge. Simsbury — quiet, affluent town where one can almost believe Talcott Ridge will hold back bad news — reacted first with hot meals that came to the Bubnash home for more than a year. Checks started to roll in. The town's first selectwoman hosted a fundraiser: Classmates burned CDs, left Internet postings, called and visited. People fell over themselves to do something for this quiet family and their smiling kid.

The outpouring stunned the Bubnashes; Davi hasn't caught up writing thank-you notes, though she desperately wants to.

"Use whatever adjectives you want. I can't even come up with the words," Davi said. "We all get so involved in our daily routines, and then something happens and somebody needs help, and a lot of people want to do the right thing. I'm really grateful for that."

The Thief

Brain injury is a thief — it takes a person's ability to live independently, and then it takes their money. Though traumatic brain injuries disable more people than spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, HIV/AIDS and breast cancer combined, Connecticut lacks adequate services, said Julie Peters, executive director of the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut. There's not enough accessible, affordable housing — especially for young people like Mike.

Insurance is a nightmare. While an MRI can assess damages, nothing can predict recovery — either rate or quantity. Healing can be at a snail's pace, where only a parent would notice — or it can be miraculously quick. Insurance companies want to see definable progress.

When Mike was dismissed from Hartford Hospital in

March 2007, no Connecticut nursing home or rehab center had the long-term services he so desperately needs, Peters said. So Mike went first to Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Boston, and then, last July, to Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center in Greenfield, N.H. Travel costs — financial, physical and emotional — are high. "This family just wants to be together," Peters said. "And they can't be."

Peters went to the town's first fundraiser, held at First Selectwoman Mary Glassman's house. She said it was heart-warming, but "for so many people, that kind of thing just doesn't happen."

One woman with a brain injury whom Peters' association has helped lived in her car for a time after her injuries prevented her from paying her mortgage. "We're the place of last resort," Peters said. "We don't charge anything; we try to connect people. The most frustrating thing is when there's no place to send them."

At Crotched Mountain, Mike is still working on walking and talking, but he recognizes family and friends, and mouths words along with favorite songs.

Glassman, a family friend, got involved to help defray costs of renovating the family home for Mike's eventual return, and their travel.

"We as friends and neighbors and as a community have tried to help," Glassman said. "They are not going through this alone."

Scout Fundraiser

She asked town Scout leaders to turn their June 15 adventure race into a Mike Bubnash fundraiser. The race will include running, canoeing, orienteering, and — ode to "Pyro" Bubnash — fire-building. They'll wear bracelets with the legend: Scout Strong Mike Bubnash.

Brad Mead, leader of Troop 175, said, "It's a great opportunity for our guys to be — as John McCain says — part of something bigger than themselves. I keep getting calls from people saying, 'Can I help? Can I help?' I have a feeling we may have gotten into something that can really explode."

"It's pretty amazing the way people have really come forward and put their hearts on the line for Michael and his entire family," said Rabbi Howard Herman, of the Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom, where Davi taught school and Mike was bar-mitzvahed. But that's not surprising, Herman said

— Mike's talent is relationships. "What made him great was I think everyone valued his friendship," said Herman. "I think kids intuitively knew that if you were Michael's friend, everything was OK."

Last weekend, friends from Mike's old Scout troop brought lumber and built a ramp at his house. The Bubnashes plan to add a first-floor shower in hopes of bringing Mike home.

How do you repay all that? So far, for Greg, it's meant going in front of legislators in March to talk about the need for more services for people with traumatic brain injuries.

And how far will be Mike's journey? That's impossible to say, but every once in a while, playful Mike shines through. A video from New Hampshire shows the bandannaed young man using an elbow-high walker, painstakingly making his way down a hallway with the help of a therapist. She asks, "Hamming for the camera?" to which he replies, never slowing, "Yeah."

For more information on Mike Bubnash, see www.mike-getuwell.com.

Contact Susan Campbell at scampbell@courant.com

How Connecticut Representatives Voted					For the week of April 14
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	MORTGAGE REFINANCING: Members expanded, 266-154, the Federal Housing Administration's backing of home loans in order to induce mortgage firms to voluntarily rework up to 500,000 loans now headed for default. A yes vote backed the plan as part of a housing-relief package (HR 3221).
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	HOMEOWNER TAX BREAKS: Members adopted, 322-94, a measure that authorizes \$7,500 tax credits for first-time home purchases and allows taxpayers who do not itemize to treat \$700 of their 2008 property taxes as a federal tax deduction. A yes vote backed these provisions. (HR 3221)
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	HOME FORECLOSURES: Members voted, 239-188, to provide \$15 billion through 2013 for a program to help communities and non-profit groups buy foreclosed, vacant homes and then sell or rent the properties to families below the region's median-income level. A yes vote was to pass HR 5818.

How Connecticut Senators Voted		For the week of April 7
N	N	WIND DAMAGE: Senators rejected, 19-74, an amendment expanding the National Flood Insurance Program to cover damages caused by wind as well as those caused by rising water. A yes vote backed the amendment over arguments it could drive the insurance program into insolvency. (S 2284)
N	N	COVERAGE LIMITS INCREASE: Senators defeated, 27-66, an amendment to S 2284 that sought to increase National Flood Insurance Program coverage limits by 35 percent while not raising premiums. A yes vote backed the measure over arguments it would fiscally weaken the shaky program.

Key: **Y** Yea **N** Nay **A** Absent or did not vote **P** Present

Find a Congressman's voting history at www.courant.com/rollcall

SOURCE: Thomas' Roll Call Reports THE HARTFORD COURANT



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Obituaries Continued from B9

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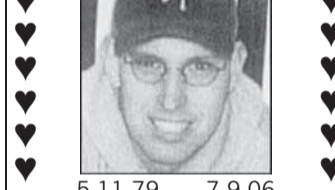
In Loving Memory of **DONELLA PARKER THORNTON**



8/5/1924 - 6/3/2006
Happy Mother's Day
Mommy Missing you everyday.
Love You Always,
Your daughter, Janice

IN MEMORIAM

In Memoriam **DEREK RICHARD SULLIVAN**



5-11-79 7-9-06
Happy Birthday Derek
Mother's Day just won't be the same without you here. We all miss you every day. You'll be forever in our hearts.
Mom, Dad, Doug, & Ryan

IN MEMORIAM

TAYON MUFF



5-11-70- 10-18-03
Wishing you a Happy Birthday as well as a Happy Mother's Day in Heaven
John, Mom & Children

IN MEMORIAM

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥
LEE FORYAN

Happy Mother's Day Mom



If I had a single flower for every time I think about you, I could walk forever in my garden.

Love you 65-11,
Tess

IN MEMORIAM

MARY ELLEN TYSON



Happy Mother's Day

Ma, words cannot explain the pain, keeping your memories helps me to get by. Saying "wish you were here" just doesn't express how much I miss you. Thoughts of you always make me smile.
Your daughter

Happy Mother's Day

M. ELLEN HOLLOWAY NANCY CARTER MELISSA TYSON
Always loved, never forgotten.
The Family

IN MEMORIAM


NINA PAGLIUGH

Even though we are mothers it's hard to enjoy today without out. We want our mother to wrap our arms around and tell you how much we love you. Instead... we'll close our eyes and remember a special time and place with you. Thank God we have many! Happy Mother's Day We Love You, Laura, Terri, Paula, Gina & Family


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