

To my neighbors in the 34th District:

As our Town Council and Boards of Education and Finance met in joint session to begin this year's budget deliberation in East Hampton, one thing became increasingly clear.

State aid to education (known as Educational Cost Share) has not kept paced with the cost of living, and worse, is even fewer dollars than we received eight years ago.

When state government does not live up to its responsibility as a full partner in public education, the burden falls hard on property taxpayers to hold our services together. It smothers what we can and should do in other services vital to our town, such as roads, public safety, land use and senior citizens.

It has become clear to me that this retreat from state funding is beginning to threaten the very nature of who we are as small towns; and not just for us, but for the tens of small towns in our state which comprise the real spirit of Connecticut.

This problem can only be solved in our state legislature. In this time of fiscal strength for our state, it is time to bring the fight for long-overdue funding for our towns to the forefront.

This is why I have accepted the Democratic nomination to run for the 34th Legislative Seat serving East Hampton, East Haddam and Salem.

Educational funding is not the only issue. As we focus on what small towns need to thrive and be who they want to be, we need to focus on giving them the tools they need to do so. That is the responsibility of state government.

Let's be the voice that will make that happen.

Rich Knotek

Democratic candidate for State Rep for the 34th