

# THE MIDDLETOWN PRESS

AN EDITION OF THE NEW HAVEN REGISTER

WWW.CTINSIDER.COM/MIDDLETOWN

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026

SINCE 1878

\$3.00

## Tax rebate checks now unlikely

By Paul Hughes  
STAFF WRITER

HARTFORD — Instead of sending state rebate checks to Connecticut property owners, top state legislators and Gov. Ned Lamont are now discussing sending extra state aid to towns and cities to possibly lower local property taxes.

House Speaker Matt Ritter, D-Hartford, outlined the lat-

est plan under consideration for providing relief from some of the highest local property taxes in the nation during a news briefing Monday on the status of state budget negotiations. A short time later, House Minority Leader Vincent Candelora, R-North Branford, confirmed the limited details that Ritter shared with reporters earlier.

“I think we’re going to make towns and boards of ed

happy, but you never know,” Ritter said.

The legislature and governor will be making changes to the \$28.6 billion budget for the upcoming 2027 fiscal year that was adopted last year as part of a two-year, \$55.8 billion package. The state and municipal fiscal years run from July 1 through June 30.

Ritter said legislative leaders and Lamont discussed a plan over weekend budget

talks to direct nearly \$170 million in additional education funding to school districts that local leaders and education advocates have been seeking, plus an unspecified amount of additional one-time state funding to town and city governments. Local governments that have adopted municipal budgets and tax rates by the start of the new fiscal year on July 1 would be given the option to reduce tax

rates and property tax bills, he said.

“Instead of a check going to someone, let’s let the towns reduce their mill rate, and everybody gets that impact and that benefit,” Ritter said.

Candelora said he suggested that any additional revenue going to towns and cities be used to reduce property taxes, and that local governments be given the ability to

*Rebate continues on A5*



Dave Zajac/Hearst Connecticut Media

Specialist Blake Stone, of Naugatuck, hugs girlfriend, Caylee DeMEO of Franklin Square, N.Y., during a send-off ceremony Tuesday at Bradley Air National Guard Base in East Granby. Both are UConn students. About 130 soldiers of the 192nd Military Police Battalion of the Connecticut National Guard are deploying to an undisclosed location overseas in support of Operation Epic Fury.

## ‘It doesn’t feel real’

Conn. National Guard troops deploy to Middle East for Operation Epic Fury

By Austin Mirmina  
STAFF WRITER

EAST GRANBY — The call came with very little warning.

On March 26, about 130 soldiers with the 192nd Military Police Battalion of the Connecticut National Guard were told they would be deployed in the coming weeks to the Middle East as part of Operation Epic Fury — the U.S.-led effort to dismantle Iran’s military and nuclear capabilities.

The timeline was unusually fast — soldiers say they’re usually given at least a year of notice before activation — underscoring the urgency of the mission and the unpredictable nature of the ongoing war with Iran.

When the day of departure arrived, the scramble of the past month — condensed training, final paperwork and last moments at home — finally caught up with them.

Families and state officials gathered

*Deploy continues on A4*



Gov. Ned Lamont shakes hands with National Guard members on Tuesday during a send-off ceremony at Bradley Air National Guard Base in East Granby. Approximately 150 soldiers of the 192nd Military Police Battalion of the Connecticut National Guard are deploying to an undisclosed location overseas in support of Operation Epic Fury.

## For Trump, Connecticut is flyover country



Philip Bump

COMMENTARY

On a beautiful day in May 2017, the Coast Guard Academy in New London held its graduation. To send the newly commissioned ensigns off, the commencement address was given by President Donald Trump, then barely four months into his first term. He recognized local elected officials, gave typical graduating-from-school advice and offered what by current standards counts as a restrained assessment of his triumphs and tribulations. And then he left, never to return to Connecticut as president.

Can you blame him?

Those aren’t my words, mind you. They’re the words of Walt Woodward, Connecticut state historian emeritus. By phone, Woodward explained the rich history of presidential visits to the state, from a newly inaugurated William Howard Taft attending Yale University’s commencement in 1909 to Teddy Roosevelt appearing in a Hartford parade in a newfangled electric car. And that’s just presidents themselves; candidates have made numerous stops, including John F. Kennedy’s rainy visit immediately prior to the 1960 election.

The Bushes have a long legacy in Connecticut. George H.W. Bush was raised in Connecticut and his son, George W. Bush, was born in the state. But these days, presidents have been visiting less frequently.

By my tally, Barack Obama — who made an effort to visit every state during his presidency — paid seven visits as president and Joe Biden, despite his shorter tenure, made four. Trump, though, has only made that one.

That’s despite Trump being much more likely than his two predecessors, both Democrats, to both travel to states outside of D.C. and to spend time there. Trump’s spent all or part of more than 840 days outside of the capital but in the U.S., surpassing Biden’s 707 days and Obama’s 543. That’s largely because Trump has made so many more trips to other places.

So why not Connecticut? Well, this brings us back to Woodward’s comment: Why come here? After all, Connecticut is not exactly Trump-friendly territory. The last time it voted for a Republican for president was when H.W. Bush was on the ballot. Since 1992 — when Yale Law School graduate Bill Clinton was the top Democrat — the state has gone blue. Even the younger George Bush failed to come within 10

*Bump continues on A4*

## \$712 million overhaul of I-91, I-691, Route 15 interchange enters new phase

By Brianna Gurciullo  
STAFF WRITER

Joined by state officials, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal tried to assure Connecticut residents Monday that while backups will continue at the Interstate 91, Interstate 691 and Route 15 interchange for the next few years, “they’re going

to be worth it.”

Blumenthal, Gov. Ned Lamont, state Department of Transportation Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto and other officials touted the progress made toward overhauling the interchange in Meriden, with about three years down and four to go.

“Anytime we’re trying

to do a project of this size while keeping lanes open is always going to be difficult,” Eucalitto said about the ongoing backups. “Traffic protection is one of the hardest parts of any project, especially something this large, with this many vehicles. So I think the team has staged it to the best of our ability to

keep traffic moving.”

State officials have long said the three-phase project will cost a total of more than \$500 million, but on Monday they gave a new, more specific figure of more than \$712 million.

The state funded the two-year, more than \$83 million first phase of the

*Phase continues on A5*



Courtesy of the Connecticut Department of Transportation

An aerial view of the newly built Route 15 northbound bridge at the Interstate 91, Interstate 691 and Route 15 interchange in Meriden.

Advice/puzzles.....B7  
Business.....A6  
Classified.....B9

Comics.....B8  
Obituaries.....A4  
Opinion.....A9

Public notices.....B9  
Sports.....B1-3  
Television.....B6



© 2026  
Hearst Media  
Services CT  
LLC



Weather: Morning rain;  
otherwise cloudy and cooler.  
High: 59. Low: 42. Page A10