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Instead of Working on the Transportation Mess, CT Politicians Demagogue About It: Cameron on Transportation

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I used to believe in Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy and politicians. I actually thought the first two brought me gifts and the latter cared about me and my community. Well, those days are gone.

We are now neck-deep in the primary round of campaigning for our state's top officials and I hope you've been paying attention. The promises and the B.S. are piling up pretty fast, especially when it comes to the issue of transportation.

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A few candidates have been brave enough to endorse the idea of tolls while others just mouth vague platitudes like “we should have free-flowing traffic on I-95...”. No explanations of how or who’d pay for it, just the pandering promises. Why not a chicken in every pot, too?

For the past few years I have had a standing offer to meet with anyone running for public office to talk about transportation. Republican, Democrat, independent ... I don’t care. If you want to build an informed platform on this issue, I’ll give you the history and perspective and you take it from there.

I’ll explain Metro-North’s complicated relationship with the Connecticut Department of Transportation. I’ll give you the facts about the pilfering of money from the Special Transportation Fund by both Republicans and Democrats. I know all this stuff, having immersed myself in it for over 20 years. And I know there are no easy answers.

So far this election I’ve met with two gubernatorial candidates and several folks running for state rep and state Senate. I won’t reveal the names, but I will tell you I’ve found two things to be true: 1) Regardless of party affiliation, most candidates know nothing about transportation, and 2) their “solutions” to the problem they don’t understand are facile.

One-party rule is a dangerous thing as the Democrats have shown for the past eight years. Holding a super-majority breeds arrogance and zero interest in the minority party’s views. If the Republicans flip things to their favor in November I’m sure they’d be just as arrogant. A pox on both their houses.

Here’s what I do not understand: why are Democrats and Republicans unwilling to work together, especially on issues of common interest, like transportation? Did you know that there is no caucus in the state legislature of D’s and R’s from Fairfield County?

With all the issues this transportation-crippled corner of Connecticut shares in common, the state representatives and state senators from this area do not meet together to strategize how to fight for our area’s interests. Instead, they caucus only with the members of their own party and snipe at each other and whoever is governor.

It’s so much easier to blame than to fix.

I knew that party politics on the national level was bad, but this is ridiculous. Whether Republican or Democrat, if you represent voters in Fairfield County you should be meeting with your fellow pols and fighting for the region, not scoring political points by Tweeting attacks to your base.

So pardon my cynicism as we get ready for the Aug. 14 primary. I’m just losing faith in the whole system.

Cameron on Tolls and State Transportation Policy

- [Forestalling Tolls and Tax Increases Won't Keep Bridges from Rotting: Cameron on Transportation](#) (May 27, 2018)
- [Jim Cameron Speaks to Greenwich Audience About CT's Transportation Funding Crisis](#) (March 31)
- [State Legislators Hold Ultimate Responsibility for Funding, Improving Roads and Rails: Cameron on Transportation](#) (March 21)
- [No Free Ride: Connecticut Needs Tolls and Gas Taxes: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Feb. 25)
- [Don't Blame Gov for Transport Project Delays, Blame the Legislature: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Feb. 7)
- [Predictions for Roads, Rails and Air Transport in 2018: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Jan. 21)
- [CT's Prospects Get Ever Darker for Transport Funding, Even for Maintenance and Plowing: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Jan. 2)
- [Think Gridlock on the Roads Is Awful? Wait'll You Consider Political Gridlock: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Dec. 11, 2017)
- [Big Transportation Improvements? CT Needs To Play Budget Catchup First: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Nov. 17)

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