



## Camilleri Addresses Possible Leadership Bid, Road Funding, More

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It's 18 months away, but it's hard to avoid the ever-present inter-caucus jockeying for leadership posts. So when Sen. [Darrin CAMILLERI \(D-Trenton\)](#) was asked on [Off the Record](#) today if he was interested in being the next Senate Democratic leader, the Downriver Democrats said:

"It's very early to have that conversation. Again, (I'm) focused on getting a budget done. There's no other way around it. I've been in this town for 10 years. I've won competitive elections in every single one of my elections. Of course, it's something I'm going to be taking a look at."

Camilleri is the chair of the Senate Democrats' leadership effort, which instantly makes him a focus for leadership discussions. Under the state's term limit law, the best case scenario is that the Senate D's can return about half of their current caucus. Senate Majority Floor Leader [Sam SINGH \(D-East Lansing\)](#) and Senate Appropriations Committee Chair [Sarah ANTHONY \(D-Lansing\)](#) are also being eyed as potential candidates. However, either one of them could opt to run in the 7th Congressional seat in 2026 against U.S. Rep. [Tom BARRETT \(R-Charlotte\)](#).

In other news from Camilleri's appearance on *Off the Record*, the Senator was asked his personal preferences for raising additional money for road funding.

"Speaking for myself," he said, "there are various loopholes we have not examined in the tax code and could raise revenue off of. We have solutions here that do not impact everyday people. Let's talk about that."

He also embraces Gov. [Gretchen WHITMER](#)'s call to beef up the corporate income tax, earmarking those new dollars for roads, as well.

"It is far too low. The Governor raised it. Let's have a conversation about what that would look like," he said.

Asked by the [Off the Record](#) panel to comment on the inter-house leadership dispute between the Senate Majority Leader and the House Speaker, the Senator observes that it is [Matt HALL \(R-Richland Township\)](#) who is holding up any substantive negotiations on a road revenue plan.

For weeks, the Speaker has used his weekly news conferences to berate Majority Leader [Winnie BRINKS \(D-Grand Rapids\)](#) for not offering a road fix plan while suggesting she doesn't have one.

"The rancor and the insults really don't help anybody. It's a problem," Camilleri said. "The Speaker has not accepted any of the Majority Leader's requests to meet. None. Zero." (See ["Brinks, Hall Have Yet To Meet Face to Face,"](#) 3/26/25). The two were in the same meeting with the Governor in late January when leadership pounded out the final details on the Earned Sick Time reform, but the two have not met one-on-one. Discussion began this week at the staff level on a potential future meeting, *MIRS* has learned.

Also from today's interview, Camilleri, who chairs the K-12 School Aid budget, talked about the House Republicans wanting to use the sales tax money collected at the gas pump for highways. There appears to be strong bipartisan support for that idea, but the Trenton Democrat noted the GOP has not disclosed which portions of the state's General Fund would be cut to "back-fill," taking away school money at the pump.

Asked if he thought the House's roads plan added up, he said:

"It doesn't add up. We don't see the details. We don't see a specific plan on how they would come up with \$3 billion."

On a different revenue-generating front, Hall has confirmed that if the Governor wants to hit EV owners with higher fees -- while it is not his plan -- he said, "I think every idea is worthy of discussion" along with his strong desire to revamp P.A.51, the ancient state formula for allocating road fix dollars around the state. He wants more populated regions to get a bigger slice of the road pie, which traditionally has been slanted, the Democrats argue, to more rural, outstate GOP-controlled districts at the expense of Southeast Michigan and other urban areas.

On whether the Governor should call a special election to fill the vacant 35th state Senate District, Camilleri said there are no elections scheduled in those communities, and it's "something that may happen at some point."