

Meriden's Fair Share

I'm pleased to say that educational funding for Meriden has increased to \$53,739,154. PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) payments have reached \$1,983,143. Meriden's share of the Pequot/Mohegan revenue is \$1,431,115. The Town Aid Road appropriation is \$334,481 and Meriden will be receiving \$522,742 in LoCIP funds. **The total state appropriation to Meriden FY07 is \$58,020,635, which is an increase of \$5,193,458 over last year's appropriation.**

Electricity and Energy Efficiency

When it comes to comprehensive energy policy, there were major accomplishments this session. PA 07-242 requires that electric companies implement a net metering system which will credit customers for power they produce from renewable resources and employs real-time pricing, which gives customers control over their bill if they are willing to take advantage of reduced pricing during off-peak hours. In addition, the following will now be available:

- A \$500 rebate on replacement boilers or furnaces that are energy efficient.
- Rebates on replacement energy efficient air conditioners.
- A sales tax exemption on hybrid or other fuel efficient cars.
- Permanent sales tax exemptions on:
 - programmable thermostats.
 - energy efficient windows and doors and light bulbs.
 - energy efficient water heaters, furnaces, and boilers.

Removing Electronic Waste From Our Landfills

Making Connecticut greener is easier thanks to PA 07-189, a mandatory recycling program for discarded computers and televisions. Manufacturers must create programs to recycle CEDs (covered electronic devices) monitored through the Department of Environmental Protection in accordance with environmental standards.

Renewable Energy

- We appropriated approximately \$25 million to the Clean Energy Fund from the FY07 surplus.
- We increased the proportion of power that must come from renewable resources.
- We established a \$50 million grant program for small scale generation projects in businesses and state buildings powered by solar energy, fuel cells and other forms of renewable energy.
- We exempted several renewable energy technologies from the sales tax.
- We established mandatory property tax exemption for renewable energy technologies.
- We extended net metering. Net metering is the practice of running the meter backwards for customers who generate power using renewable energy.

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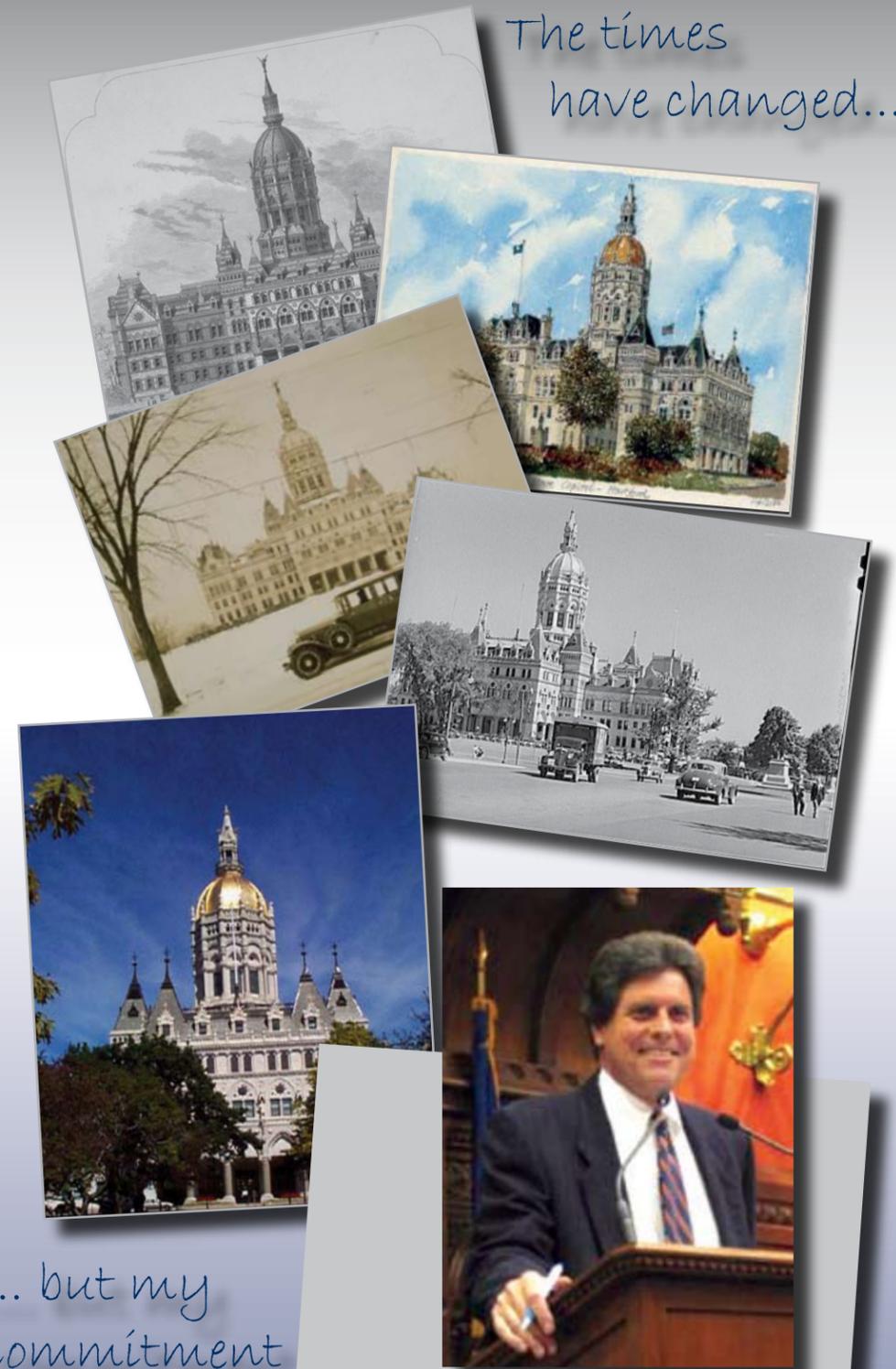
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... but my
commitment
remains.

State Representative
Emil "Buddy"
Altobello, Jr.

PROUDLY SERVING
MERIDEN 82ND DISTRICT



The times
have changed...

Representative Buddy Altobello

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Adequate Funding Of The Teachers' Retirement System

Citing the need to address the growing unfunded liability in Connecticut's Teachers' Retirement Fund (TRF), House Democrats supported a comprehensive proposal that would strengthen the financial footing of the Fund and ultimately save taxpayers money. The plan, with savings of \$2.8 billion over 25 years, represents the biggest and best deal for taxpayers in recent history. Essentially the state is taking advantage of lower interest rates and refinancing the mortgage. The proposal calls for a \$2 billion pension obligation bond (POB) sale, payable over the next 25 years at current interest rates (approximately 5.6%). The debt from the POB sale would cost less than the rate the state is currently being charged (8.5%) on the unfunded liability. In addition to the savings that could be realized through lowering debt service payments, the proceeds of the POB sale would be invested in the Teachers' Retirement Fund, which has historically earned an average of 8.9% (based on average earnings over the past 15 years). PA 07-186

Creating a BioDiesel Industry in Connecticut

This legislation establishes a biodiesel industry in Connecticut and clearly defines a uniform quality standard for the industry while providing grants for production and construction within the state to ensure that the product produced and sold in Connecticut is uniform and reliable. Additionally, the state is directed to study the use of biodiesel for heating purposes in all state operated buildings and facilities under the custody and control the state. PA 07-4

Cellular Towers in Residential Zones

PA 07-222 requires the Siting Council to develop a town-specific telecommunications coverage assessment upon the town's request. The assessment must identify locations in the town with bad coverage and analyze current and future coverage demand. Each telecommunications services provider is required to submit this information to the council if it asks. Towns may now have a greater say in where cell towers are placed. If a town is the proposed site of a tower, it must submit its location preferences or criteria to the Siting Council within 30 days after a tower application is filed with them. The Siting Council is funded from an assessment on the electric and telecommunications companies in its jurisdiction. The maximum annual assessment is now increased from \$1 million to \$1.5 million for companies with retail electric sales over \$100,000. As the supervisor of power line construction projects, the Siting Council may now order the restoration of plant-life in the right-of-way paths of overhead power lines, especially in residential areas.

Noncompete Agreements

The bill bans non-compete clauses in employment agreements between network television and radio employees and under certain circumstances, security guards and their employers. The legislation excludes sales and management personnel. A non-compete agreement is an agreement between an employer and an employee which prohibits the employee from working in a similar occupation or geographical area for a set period of time after ending employment. PA 07-237

Connecticut Center For Advanced Technology

Technology is an integral part of today's world of industry and commerce. To further integrate technology into Connecticut's business environment, the legislature now requires that the Connecticut Center of Advanced Technology (CCAT) provide its services to smaller and medium sized businesses. This will allow the businesses to adopt the latest digital technology and cost-cutting production techniques. These services were previously only available to small and medium sized businesses that were in danger of losing business to larger defense firms, but are now available to all small and medium sized businesses.



Modernizing ECS and Providing Property Tax Relief

Reforming the Education Cost Sharing formula was crucial to provide a fairer funding mechanism for public schools and relief to local taxpayers. Meriden will see a 10 % increase in ECS funding, bringing the total amount to \$51,517,513 for FY 2007-2008. Also, "need" weightings, accounting for students' educational and economic needs, were amended. Now, more weighting is given for low-income students and limited-English proficient students.

School Security Assessments and Assistance

School districts applying for school construction grants for new schools or major school alterations, extensions, renovations, or replacements will now need to include security infrastructure for any entrances involved in the project plans. Further, a competitive grant will be established for FY 08 to improve security infrastructure in schools, install security systems in schools' primary entryways, purchase portable security devices, and train school personnel in the use of these devices. PA 07-208

Health Care

This session, access to affordable, quality health care was highlighted by changes to the state's HUSKY Plan and designed to bring health care to every child in Connecticut.

Highlights include:

- An increase in reimbursements paid to hospitals and private Medicaid providers like physicians and dentists – the first such increase in these Medicaid fees since 1993.
- Expansion of parent eligibility of HUSKY insured children..
- Automatic HUSKY eligibility and expedited enrollment for uninsured newborns, with no premiums due for the child's first four months of life.
- Enhanced outreach programs to better promote the HUSKY Plan and maximize enrollment among eligible residents, particularly in the Latino community.
- Funding to expand the reach of Connecticut's school-based health centers.
- Investment in the state's fledgling electronic medical records program, designed to cut waste and increase efficiency in medical delivery.

Protecting Consumers' Privacy In Mortgage Applications

When consumers apply for loans, they should have the expectation that their personal information will remain private. Instead, information generated by credit reporting agencies during the loan process is often used by other mortgage lenders to solicit consumers later. PA 07-118 prohibits deceptive practices and the misuse of private information by lenders in loan solicitations.

Veterans' Bullet Points

- National Guard members with 20 years of service may now be buried in state Veterans' Cemeteries.
- New legislation creates a bilingual Hispanic service officer in the Department of Veterans' Affairs.
- New protections against wearing unauthorized military medals or fraudulently leading others to believe that an individual received military valor awards were enacted.
- A new law protects military members from discrimination.
- The legislature has created a service bonus for National Guard members called to active duty and more than doubled the service bonus for National Guardsmen serving in a combat zone.
- We honored our fallen heroes by enacting legislation to protect funerals from disruptions by protestors.
- A new Office of Military Affairs was created to protect and bolster the use of the state's military assets.
- State employees serving in "Operation Jumpstart" are now eligible for additional benefits.
- Servicemen and women called to active duty receive a grace period for renewal of professional licenses.
- A new Veterans' Health Registry will study the effects of environmental hazards on military personnel.
- The Department of Motor Vehicles will now be able to offer a "Gold Star Family" license plate for families of fallen soldiers.