



Dear Neighbor,

I'd like to share some of the highlights of the 2013 legislative session. This year was a difficult one, where we dealt with tough issues over the five-month session. My priority remains, as ever, to serve the towns of Meriden, Middlefield and Rockfall, and the people of Connecticut.

During the session we focused on the biennial budget. I currently serve on three legislative committees that directly affect our towns - Finance Revenue & Bonding, General Law, and Insurance & Real Estate.

Additionally, this session we passed several bills that help small businesses and grow job opportunities. We moved an additional \$20 million of state funds into the already-successful Small Businesses Express Program to help our small businesses prosper. Small businesses are the backbone of Connecticut's economy and giving them the help they so desperately need is important, especially in these economic times.

It is my pleasure to serve you. Please contact me, or my office, for more information or with any concerns you may have.

Best wishes,

Buddy

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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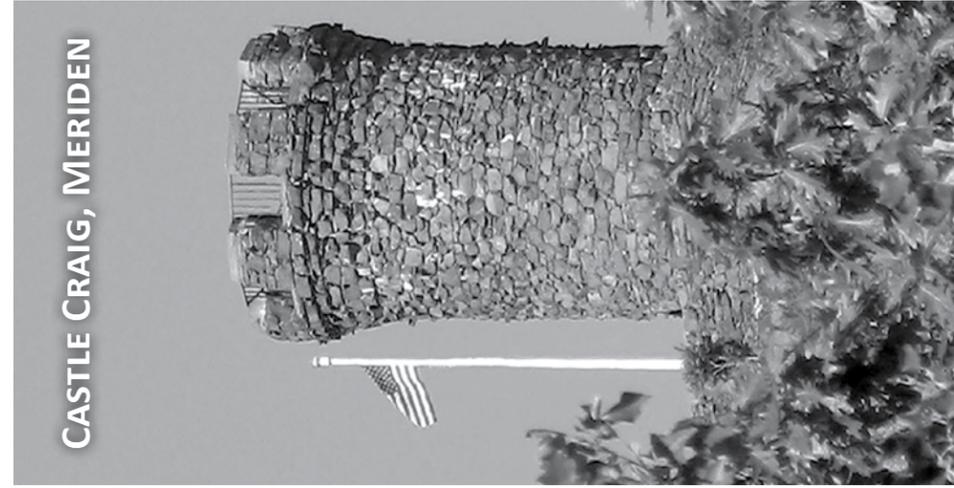
STATE REPRESENTATIVE / ASSISTANT DEPUTY SPEAKER

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MORE TIMELY PARENTAL NOTIFICATION WHEN A CHILD IS ADMITTED TO A HOSPITAL FOR DIAGNOSIS OR TREATMENT OF A MENTAL DISORDER

Parents will now receive more timely notification when 14 or 15 year olds have admitted themselves to a hospital for mental health treatment without the consent or knowledge of the parent. This allows these teens to receive more immediate emotional support from their families. **(HB 5727/PA 13-130)**

INCREASED PENALTIES FOR FAILING TO STOP FOR SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS

This legislation strengthens the penalties applied when the operator of a motor vehicle fails to immediately stop when directed to do so by a school crossing guard. Any person who violates this law may be fined up to 450 dollars. Upon receipt of a written report from a school crossing guard identifying the vehicle observed violating this law, a written warning or summons will be issued by a police officer. **(HB 5117/PA 13-22)**

DISTRACTED DRIVING AND REVISIONS TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE STATUTES

The use of cell phones while driving is an increasingly common complaint. Public Act 13-271 addresses distracted driving while also making changes to several motor vehicle statutes. Fines are increased for using a hand-held cell phone or other electronic device while driving: A first offense for distracted driving is now \$150, the second offense is \$300 and a third offense and subsequent offenses are now \$500. These violations will now appear on the offender's driving history and will be made available to insurers. A task force is also being created to study how to prevent distracted driving. Other changes to motor vehicle statues include; subjecting individuals who give driving tests to a national criminal background check; and drivers age 60 or older who have completed a four-hour, DMV-approved, accident prevention course can now qualify for reduced insurance premiums. **(HB 6033/PA 13-271)**



Rep. Altobello and the Meriden delegation announce state grant funds to alleviate flooding in the central business district.



Rep. Altobello confers with colleagues on the floor of the House.

MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY TRAINING AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR STATE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

As our neighbors serve in the various branches of the military, they gain valuable experience and skills that can be applied to secure employment, and these skills should be recognized. This act establishes a task force that will be responsible for reviewing military occupational specialty training experience to determine if such training is equivalent to that required for state expedited licensure purposes. **(HB 5387/Special Act 13-5)**

HELPING VETERANS

Streamlining access to programs and assistance for our Veterans was one of our priorities this session. A new law requires cities and towns that do not have one to appoint a town employee to serve as a Veteran's service contact who acts as an ombudsman who can guide veterans to the appropriate local, state or federal resources. **(HB 5388/PA 13-34)**

ESTABLISHING A MUNICIPAL OPTION TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DISABLED VETERANS

Connecticut's Veterans have sacrificed to protect the freedoms that we enjoy today. Previously, Veterans who are 100% disabled received an exemption of up to \$6,000 on their property taxes if their income, excluding Veteran's benefits, is less than \$18,000 if single, or \$21,000 if married. Municipalities are now able to increase this exemption to \$9,000 if they so choose. Municipalities will be reimbursed by the state for any lost revenue due to these exemptions for 100% disabled Veterans. **(Public Act 13-224 - SB 383)**

WADSWORTH FALLS

Conditions at Wadsworth Falls have vastly improved after problems developed this past summer prompting residents to complain about the consumption of alcoholic beverages, guests staying past the park's curfew hours, and piles of garbage being left near the walkway of the park.

State and town officials came together to remedy the ongoing issues along with help from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. They responded by removing picnic tables, prohibiting picnicking and swimming around the falls area, increasing patrols of the area by the agency's Environmental Conservation Police, including enforcement of the park closing at sunset and working with local officials to reduce illegal parking and speeding in the area.



LAKE BESECK DAM REPAIRS BEGIN

The State Bond Commission approved \$2.46 million for repairs to the 150 year old dam at Lake Beseck. The new dam will be constructed of concrete poured on the inner portion of the dam preserving the historic brownstone facade. The facade will be re-mortared and chinked to stabilize the brown- stone. The money will allow the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to move forward with the project, which began late-summer. The DEEP expects the project to be completed by Dec. 2014.

Data is being collected regarding aquatic plants at the lake. A study is being led by Dr. Mark June Wells, a Limnologist and Plant Ecologist with New England Environmental.

