

EDUCATION

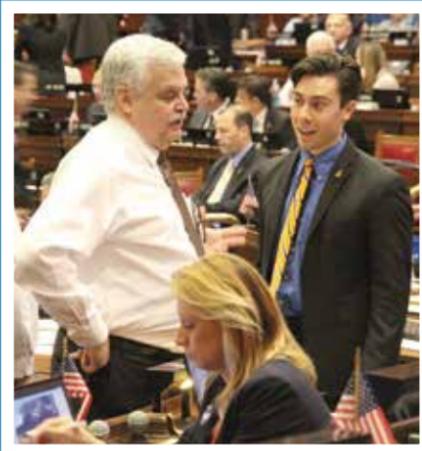
REDUCING REQUIRED TESTING IN SCHOOLS

Since the rollout of No Child Left Behind almost 15 years ago, standardized testing has come under a lot of scrutiny. One area of concern is that there are simply too many tests. For example, juniors in high school are currently required to take the SBAC exam at a time when many of them are taking the SAT or ACT college admission tests. As we work statewide and across the country to improve the use of standardized tests, the legislature took another big step forward this year by allowing schools to waive SBAC testing for any students taking these college admissions tests.

BIG NEWS IN COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Student loan debt is an issue that impacts many Connecticut families. Sixty-four percent of college graduates in our state have student loan debt. This year, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to create a Student Loan Bill of Rights, which establishes an Office of the Student Loan Ombudsman. This office will regulate student loan servicers, compile data on borrower complaints, develop a financial literacy education course for students, and will help student borrowers and their parents navigate the loan process.

In addition, the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) took historic steps toward increasing college affordability by announcing that it will offer its lowest fixed interest rate yet at 4.95%, down from its current rate of 6.75%. This rate is also significantly lower than the Federal PLUS loan rate of 6.84%.



Rep. Arconti shown with Rep. Godfrey (Danbury) in House Chamber



Rep. Arconti debates a bill on the House Floor



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DAVID ARCONTI JR

PROUDLY SERVING THE 109TH HOUSE DISTRICT | DANBURY

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for your support. It has been an honor to represent you in the General Assembly for another term. There have been many intensely debated issues this legislative session and it has been a privilege to represent the people of Danbury in each of those discussions.

Connecticut's economy continues to recover, and looking back at the 2015 legislative session, I am proud of the steps the legislature took to grow our state's economy.

We have continued to make important investments in Connecticut's Small Business Express Program, which has succeeded in helping to grow our small business community. The property tax burden has also remained a primary concern for many small businesses, and thankfully we worked to increase municipal aid in order to ease property taxes.

We have also made historic investments in our transportation system and increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding for many cities and towns. These investments are critical to growing our economy as businesses will not come to Connecticut if their employees cannot get to work in a safe and timely manner and if we do not have an educated workforce ready to fill 21st century jobs.

I hope you find this information to be of use and please do not hesitate to call my office if you have any questions.

David Arconti Jr



DANBURY

STATE AID FOR FISCAL YEAR:	2015	2017
Education Cost Sharing	\$29,554,523	\$31,698,975
Grants for Municipal Projects	\$1,624,148	\$1,726,901
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$2,413,997	\$2,413,997
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$1,344,343	\$1,344,343
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$951,066	\$951,066
School Transportation	\$691,476	\$683,655
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$557,492	\$557,492
Town Aid Roads	\$855,534	\$855,534
Adult Education	\$255,108	\$262,249
PILOT Increase & Sales Tax Distribution	-----	\$3,614,184
Total State Funds Danbury	\$38,247,687	\$44,108,396

GROWING CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMY

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT TAX CREDIT

Corporations receive business tax credits for making contributions to municipal and tax-exempt organizations. To encourage charitable giving, we increased the annual cap on the Neighborhood Assistance Act tax credits to \$10 million.

ENSURING CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

The new Commission on Economic Competitiveness was created to develop policies that promote economic growth and grow jobs in the state. They will analyze the impact state tax policy has on state business and industry, and will also examine the needs of large and small state businesses and industries and their ability to maintain economic competitiveness.



Rep. Arconti helps announce Danbury Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic

IMPROVING SAFETY ON COMMUTER RAIL LINES

Connecticut's rail lines are a vital part of our transportation infrastructure and there is much that we can do to ensure they are operating safely and efficiently. The Department of Transportation (DOT) will begin a study of the options the state has for operating its rail lines. It will allow operators and contracting agencies to come to the table with their ideas to improve how we operate our state's rail lines. Also, branch lines in New Canaan, Danbury, and Waterbury are going to be improved to increase access to the lines, including further upgrading and electrifying the rail lines.

HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES

This year, we allocated more funds for the highly successful Small Business Express Program. We are also requiring the Department of Economic and Community Development to dedicate funds to develop a program for construction projects for minority business enterprises. These moves will create jobs and better economic opportunities for Connecticut families.



Rep. Arconti with House Majority Leader Rep. Aresimowicz

SUNDAY BOW HUNTING

As of October 1st, bow hunters will now have more flexibility in the hours that they may hunt since bow hunting will then be allowed on Sundays, as long as the hunting takes place on private property in overpopulated deer management zones. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) expects to issue more permits for bow hunting as a result of expanding these hours.

PROTECTING ELECTRIC CONSUMERS

This year, the legislature stood up for consumers by giving electric ratepayers more say in the process of changing rates and protecting consumers from exploitative variable electric rates. Now, when an electric provider is changing costs, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) must hold at least two public hearings, which will allow consumers to speak directly with the regulating authority. Connecticut residents are also now protected from electricity providers who offer very low introductory rates that rapidly increase. Connecticut is the first state in the nation to enact this important consumer protection law. Competitive electric suppliers must now give their customers a notice of the end of their contracts and must allow customers who want to switch to standard service the ability to do so within 72 hours.