



Joe speaking at PCSW's Annual Women's Day at the Capitol press conference.

Dear Neighbor,

Enclosed are summaries of bills we passed last year that are intended to support women in our state.

My colleagues and I worked together to deliver legislation that enhances the lives of women in terms of economic security, health, safety and gender equality. I am also proud that we have continued to support the work of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) - a strong resource providing research and advocacy on women's issues. For more information about the great work that they do, visit their website at [www.ctpcsw.com](http://www.ctpcsw.com).

While great work was done last year, we will continue to create legislation and initiatives that best support and benefit the women in Connecticut. As I continue to work on behalf of our community, I encourage you to contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions you may have relating to these laws or any other issue you think I can help with.

Sincerely,

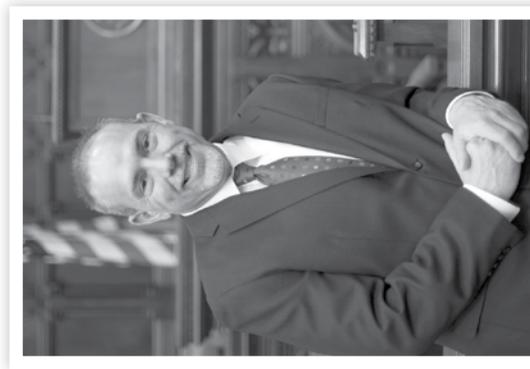
Joe Aresimowicz  
State Representative

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE | MAJORITY LEADER

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REPRESENTING BERLIN & SOUTHTON | 30TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



STATE REPRESENTATIVE | MAJORITY LEADER

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## PAY EQUITY AND FAIRNESS

PA 15–196 passed with bipartisan support in both chambers (votes tallied in the House were 104-40 and in the Senate 29-7). This legislation is a solid first step in addressing the lack of transparency in the workplace concerning wages. It means employers can no longer prevent employees from voluntarily discussing their own wages or retaliate against anyone who does. This is critical because we cannot fight gender-based pay discrimination without being able to compare salaries.

## PROTECTING INTERNS FROM WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

PA 15–56 received unanimous bipartisan support in both the Senate and the House. Unpaid interns, by virtue of their very status, as well as the power differential between an intern and a supervisor, are in particularly vulnerable positions with regard to sexual harassment. Previously, unpaid interns did not fall within the definition of “employee,” and had no recourse in cases of sexual harassment. This bill will give these workers a voice.

## THE CONNECTICUT WOMEN VETERANS’ PROGRAM

For too long, our veterans programs were designed without recognizing the unique needs of the more than 16,000 women veterans living in Connecticut. PA 15–8 requires the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to develop outreach programs specifically for our female veterans to make sure they know about the services that are available, and to tailor the department’s programs to better serve this population.

## STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

PA 15–195 takes a significant step forward in recognizing that minors engaged in the sex trade are victims. The underage youth that law enforcement find engaging in sexual acts are not there willingly or to make a profit. We need to change the way we approach these cases to connect those forced into sexual acts with appropriate services and spend our resources on cracking down on the traffickers that are forcing these children into horrific situations.

## INVASION OF PRIVACY

PA 15–213 strengthens the state’s laws against voyeurism and outlaws the sharing of intimate images without the subject’s consent. This bill passed both chambers unanimously.

## THE PROCESSING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT EVIDENCE COLLECTION KITS

A study that began in the fall of 2014 by the Connecticut Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations found that there were 879 untested kits, most of them sitting in municipal police departments. Almost 40 percent of these kits had been sitting there for more than 5 years. This was outrageous. I am glad that we passed PA 15–207, legislation that expedites the handling of critical evidence in sexual assault cases and sets up strict timelines during which police must retrieve rape evidence kits from hospitals and bring them to the state’s forensic lab for testing. This will ensure that key DNA samples will be available to prosecutors in rape cases.

## QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? THOUGHTS?

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