

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

ANDRE F. BAKER, JR.

PROUDLY SERVING THE 124TH HOUSE DISTRICT | BRIDGEPORT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

House Democrats led the way in passing significant legislation during the 2016 session of the General Assembly to help protect and improve the quality of life for Connecticut families.

This was a session dominated by the budget. Although there were no easy solutions, we approved a budget that is balanced, without tax or fee increases, without borrowing, and without dipping into the Rainy Day Fund – that cuts \$830 million.

Improving public health, increasing access to education, and encouraging financial security for everyone were featured elements of some of the major bills approved by the legislature this year.

One of the issues I advocated for this session was **Retirement Security**. With over 600,000 private sector Connecticut workers lacking an employer-based retirement plan, we created a voluntary program to help encourage and assist people to save for retirement. There is no cost to taxpayers for the program, and the bill was a top priority of AARP.

Keeping Connecticut a great place to live, work, and raise a family is our ongoing responsibility. Though the 2016 legislative session presented one of the toughest budget challenges in decades, we succeeded to help move our state forward.

Sincerely,



Andre F. Baker, Jr.



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NATUROPATHIC ALTERNATIVES

Increasing Scope of Practice for Naturopathic Practitioners

A new law will allow naturopathic doctors in the state to prescribe various medications consistent with their training. This is an important economic benefit to Bridgeport as it will increase enrollment and expand The University of Bridgeport's College of Naturopathic Medicine. Additionally, this legislation will improve continuity of care and will decrease the overall cost of healthcare by allowing proper medications to be prescribed in a timely manner. This will help move Connecticut's medical options into the 21st Century.

IN-DISTRICT STUDENT SERVICES

Seeking to improve socio-behavioral conduct to allow for a successful transition to the mainstream and reduce out-of-district referrals, we have established a Regional Therapeutic Highly Structured Alternative Program at the Bridgeport Early Intervention Center. Children in grades K-4, demonstrating severe behavioral needs that would otherwise be placed in an institutional setting outside of Bridgeport, will now be able to conveniently receive required services at a predesignated in-district location. This will help to improve upon behavioral development of our community's youth, as well as, facilitate the holistic educational process. The program will begin enrollment in the 2016 school year for Bridgeport students and is then indefinitely scheduled to expand as a regional service in 2017.



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ENERGY

Promoting Clean, Reliable Energy

We are making a great deal of progress in promoting clean, reliable energy. Several laws provide incentives in the form of credits for excess electricity generated through clean energy sources such as solar and wind. These monetary incentives will help to expand the use of clean, renewable energy while protecting our environment.

RECRUITING MINORITY TEACHERS

Research has shown that a diverse teaching workforce that reflects the students they serve improves outcomes and inspires students of color and English language learners to pursue higher education. As in most states across the country, teachers of color are underrepresented in Connecticut schools.

We passed a law to help recruit more minority teachers by improving the existing Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force that:

- Increases the size and scope of the task force
- Requires a review of existing state-sponsored recruitment efforts
- Explores pathways for existing school employees to gain teaching certification

We also passed legislation encouraging minority students to pursue a college degree in education by creating a pilot program in towns that are home to state universities and teacher preparation programs. The program would allow minority students to:

- Earn college credits while still in high school
- Take an introductory course in education



Rep. Baker attends a CT Green Bank Kickoff. PosiGen, a New Orleans-based solar energy and energy efficiency company, has established its first local headquarters in Bridgeport.



Rep. Baker Leading the Opening Pledge in the House Chamber.



Rep. Baker with Michael Askew, manager of the Bridgeport Division of Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR).