

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ANDRE BAKER

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As your representative, I have been honored to be your voice from Bridgeport helping to keep Connecticut a great place to live, work, and raise a family. This legislative session, we worked to pass bipartisan legislation that improves the lives of our seniors and working families, encourages economic growth, and makes critical investments in the future of our children and our state.

Each year, our goal is to forge a path for a stronger Connecticut, and the 2019 session was no different. From a plan for debt-free community college and no income tax on Social Security, our biennial budget – which was delivered on time and within the parameters of the constitutional spending cap – includes these important advancements, and more. Additionally, you will find that the Bridgeport delegation works tirelessly to pass other key bills that fortify the city's standing as a local and national leader in business and entertainment. These bills stand to have a positive effect on the city and its residents, and will help propel Bridgeport's success for years to come.

I hope you find the enclosed information helpful and that you will feel free to call or email me for any reason. It is my pleasure and honor to serve as your state representative and I welcome the opportunity to hear from you.

Sincerely,



124TH DISTRICT STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ANDRE BAKER
PROUDLY SERVING BRIDGEPORT - 124TH DISTRICT



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ANDRE BAKER

PROUDLY SERVING BRIDGEPORT - 124TH DISTRICT



CAPITOL UPDATE 2019

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE ANDRE BAKER

STATE BUDGET

The budget provides fiscal stability with no increase in the income tax or broad-based sales tax rate, and does not cut municipal aid. It's balanced and protects taxpayers now and into the future. We continue to protect our most vulnerable citizens while investing in the middle class and encouraging economic growth for all of Connecticut.

This legislation:

- Maintains the tax exemptions for Social Security income and phase-in of a tax exemption on pension income to make CT more affordable to seniors
- Keeps the "Passport to the Parks" fund
- Increases education funding
- Protects the Care4Kids program
- Re-opens highway rest stops
- Repeals the Business Entity Tax starting near year
- Increases access to health care
- Provides a tax credit to craft beer breweries
- Protects the Medicare Savings Program, and increases funding for Meals on Wheels
- Establishes a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Health and Human Service Network

(HB 7424 / Public Act 19-117)

SUPPORTING OUR SENIORS

In order to ensure the proper care for seniors, we modified continuing education requirements for physicians to include diagnosing and treating cognitive conditions, including Alzheimer's disease, dementia, delirium, related cognitive impairments and geriatric depression. *(SB 827 / Public Act 19-115)*

In addition, we expanded access to background checks to help identify potentially dangerous individuals seeking jobs that require contact with our elderly population. *(SB 832 / Public Act 19-116)*



GREEN JOBS AND NET METERING

Seeking to use innovative ideas to help us address environmental and energy challenges, we created a website for jobs in the green technology industry, including a listing of careers and the jobs available in the state.

We encouraged the construction of high performance green state buildings that have reduced emissions and conservative water resource management. We hope to create new and viable career opportunities, benefit the environment, and help protect our planet for generations to come.

This legislation will:

- Extend renewable energy programs, including traditional net metering and the Green Bank's renewable solar investment program
- Expand virtual net metering cap to reduce energy costs for municipalities
- Require DOT to put together an inventory of property that is suitable for Class I energy resources; for example, solar energy on lands adjacent to state highways. *(HB 5002 / Public Act 19-35)*

OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY

We have cleared the path for offshore wind energy generation so Connecticut can become a leader in green energy technology and help achieve the state's renewable energy goals. We anticipate a positive economic impact with the creation of good-paying jobs and economic development in New London, New Haven and Bridgeport. Under this bill, Connecticut will procure up to 2,000 megawatts of offshore wind power. This will help achieve our goal of 40% renewable energy by 2030. It also includes provisions to protect and minimize impacts on the environment and fisheries.

(HB 7156 / Public Act 19-71)



*Rep. Baker with constituents in the
Legislative Office Building*

*Rep. Baker in House of
Representative chambers*



GUN SAFETY

ETHAN'S LAW

Named after Ethan Song, Ethan's Law, requires the safe storage of all firearms in a home with children under age 18. Ethan Song tragically lost his life due to an improperly stored gun. *(HB 7218 / Public Act 19-5)*

KEEPING GUNS IN CARS LOCKED AWAY

Due to the increase in gun thefts from cars, we are now requiring drivers to keep guns locked away. Having an unsecured gun in plain sight increases the risk of theft, as well as gun injury and death. We hope to reverse this trend by requiring guns to be kept out of sight, locked away. *(HB 7223 / Public Act 19-7)*

BANNING GHOST GUNS

This year, we banned "ghost guns" – homemade weapons that have no serial numbers and circumvent our background check laws. The bill also regulates guns made on a 3-D printer. *(HB 7219 / Public Act 19-6)*

EARLY VOTING

Voters should have options for exercising their right to vote. We took the first step to allow early voting with a resolution to amend the state constitution. The amendment would allow for in-person voting prior to any state or municipal election or referendum. The resolution passed in both legislative chambers, and if approved again in the 2021 legislature, will appear as a question for voters on the 2022 general election ballot. Early voting is a great way to increase voter participation. *(HJ 161)*

MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

It is important for minority students to have teachers who reflect the diversity in our state and who understand the challenges they face in obtaining a good education. This year we passed legislation for the annual hiring of 250 new minority teachers and administrators across the state.

To accomplish this goal, the legislation includes:

- Expanding reciprocal teacher certification with other states
- Re-employing retired teachers who are graduates of colleges and universities that serve minority students
- Allowing for flexibility in certain teacher certification requirements
- Removes subject matter assessments requirements for teachers seeking to be recertified after their certification lapses in certain cases
- Broadens the minority teacher incentive program to make eligible these applicants who are in an ARC program administered through SDE *(HB 7082 / Public Act 19-12)*