

## PUBLIC HEALTH

- Extended telehealth through June 30, 2023 to allow services utilized during the pandemic to continue, thus requiring insurance companies to cover virtual visits to prevent patients from paying out of pocket.
- Protected healthcare workers and patients by requiring nursing homes and dementia-care units to employ a full-time Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) specialist; maintain at least a two-month supply of PPE for staff; raise staffing levels to require at least three hours of direct care to residents; and allow residents to designate an “essential support person” to visit even during general visitation restrictions.
- Cut prescription drug costs by requiring manufacturing discounts to go directly to the consumer, rather than the insurance company.

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

- Modernized the Bottle Bill by expanding the qualifying list of beverages to include hard cider, juice, tea, coffee, sports energy drinks, and nips beginning January 2023, while increasing the deposit from 5 to 10 cents starting January 2024.
- Enacted new restrictions on electric suppliers, including increased oversight, and a prohibition on termination fees and/or early cancellation fees for residential customers.
- Protected firefighters and consumers from PFAS, known as Class B firefighting foam, by widely prohibiting its use and, also banning food packaging with PFAS.

## HELPING SENIORS

- Expanded the eligibility for the Elderly Tax Freeze Program at the local level, by giving municipalities the option to decrease the minimum age requirement from 70 to 65 years.
- Protected working seniors by removing a prospective employee’s age, birth or graduation date on an initial employment application, to prevent age discrimination.
- Expanded the Nursing Home Patient Bill of Rights to include the right of residents to treat their living quarters as their own home; and requires nursing homes to provide residents with free Internet access.

## SUPPORTING WOMEN

- Banned deceptive advertising practices by limited services pregnancy centers, defined as centers that do not provide medical reproductive services, referrals, or information.
- Modernized existing breastfeeding laws by requiring employers to provide a private area with access to a refrigerator and electrical outlet, and eliminated sales tax on supplies.
- Strengthened domestic violence laws to ensure immediate assistance for victims and their families.
- Established a council to improve sexual misconduct reporting on college campuses with a goal of protecting students who report an assault from disciplinary action for possibly violating a university’s drug and alcohol policy.



## STATE REPRESENTATIVE AIMEE BERGER-GIRVALO PROUDLY SERVING RIDGEFIELD

### CAPITOL UPDATE 2021

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Dear Neighbor,

COVID-19 has created many challenges for us over these last eighteen months, and it certainly changed how we approached our jobs as legislators. Whether it was assisting people in obtaining state services, answering questions about unemployment, locating vaccination sites and testing, or answering questions about upcoming legislation, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve you and our Ridgefield community during my first-term.

This session, my colleagues and I worked to pass impactful legislation and a bipartisan budget that will pay down a record of pension debt (nearly a billion dollars), while investing in infrastructure, education, seniors, and small businesses. In this newsletter, you will find more detailed information about the issues and bills I championed and supported.

As always, if you or your family need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [Aimee.Berger-Girvalo@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Aimee.Berger-Girvalo@cga.ct.gov) or my office at 860-240-8585.

Best,

Aimee Berger-Girvalo



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE AIMEE BERGER-GIRVALO

## CAPITOL UPDATE 2021



### FOCUSING ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES

- Eliminated birth-to-three fees making the program free to Connecticut families
- Expanded mental health services to include youth suicide prevention training and created more outpatient services; required social emotional learning as part of teachers' professional development, as well as requiring schools and hospitals to offer information about behavioral and mental health services for children.
- Required comprehensive background checks for employees 18 years or older who have unsupervised access to kids at OEC-licensed youth camps, operators of youth athletic activities, volunteers, coaches, instructors, and athletic trainers.

### GROWING CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMY

- Supported restaurants by creating 3 possible weeks for restaurants to keep 1% of their collected taxes, and simplified the process of making outdoor dining a permanent option.
- Expanded the Small Business Express Program, enabling local businesses to grow by providing additional resources and funding.
- Reformed unemployment laws through a bipartisan, labor union and business-backed plan that lowers taxes on 73% of businesses in Connecticut
- Expanded Equitable Broadband accessibility across the state, making Connecticut the first state to do so.
- Created a Workforce Pipeline Program to help individuals with disabilities find meaningful work.



### A BIPARTISAN, ZERO TAX INCREASE BUDGET

The budget package for FY22 and FY23 resulted from working together and across the aisle to honor Connecticut's fiscal responsibilities to our taxpayers, while also providing services and programs that help our children, families, and loved ones. This biennium \$43 billion budget is one that we can **all** be proud of.

- ✔ **Paid down over a billion dollars toward the pension debt with federal dollars**
- ✔ **Record \$3.5 billion allocated to Connecticut's Rainy Day Fund**
- ✔ **Fully funded municipalities**
- ✔ **Restored the social safety net**
- ✔ **Increased tax benefits for seniors**

## ALL ACCOMPLISHED WITH ZERO TAX INCREASES!

### EDUCATION & HIGHER ED

- Created a new Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities to provide guidance for reading assessments in kindergarten through grade three to include new methods for reading proficiency.
- Established the CT Remote Learning Commission to analyze remote learning and to develop a plan to create a K-12 statewide remote learning school option.
- Protected town education funding by enacting a new law where each town will receive at least as much education cost sharing (ECS) money in FY22 and 23 as they did in FY21.
- Created a "Fee-Free" Day that requires the Board of Regents and UConn Board of Trustees to establish a day where high school students can apply to state colleges and universities without paying the costly application fees.
- Established a council to conduct assessments with a goal of protecting students from receiving disciplinary action if an assault occurred while the student was under the influence of drugs or alcohol.



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