

PROTECTING THE ELDERLY

This legislative year, we passed many more laws to protect our seniors from potential abuse. In situations where abuse or neglect is suspected, the Department of Social Services can now petition a probate court to gain access to that person's home to make an assessment. For the purpose of these investigations, the definition of neglect has also been expanded to include elderly people who do not live alone, but whose caretaker fails to arrange for the necessary services to keep an elderly person healthy. We also passed laws that will keep nursing home and residential care home residents safer by requiring the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services to notify a resident's designee of suspected abuse or neglect within 24 hours.

LOWERING TOWNS MILL RATES

Waterbury families currently pay the second-highest car tax rate in Connecticut. Relief is on the way, as the car tax in Waterbury will be cut almost in half by July 2017. A family that owns a 2012 Toyota Highlander will save more than \$1,000 in taxes over the next two years; a family that owns a 2007 Ford Taurus will save about \$200 over the next two years. This is real tax relief that will put money back in the pockets of the hard-working families of Waterbury, save small businesses that own vehicles significant money, and help jump-start our local economy.



Blessed Sacrament Basketball Team celebrating their championship at the Capitol



Representative Berger with local SEIU 1199

GIVING TOWNS SAY IN THEIR SCHOOL BUDGETS

Since the state first implemented a Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR), school enrollment numbers have steadily declined. The rigid requirement that towns spend the same amount (or more) on education than they did the year before was creating a disincentive for towns to deliver education efficiently and corroboratively. This year we offered flexibility to towns with low rates of poverty that are experiencing declining enrollment. These towns can now set an education budget down to 3% below their MBR. The top 10% of our state's highest performing districts are now exempt from MBR; all other schools that are not in an Alliance District will be allowed to go up to 1.5% below their MBR. (Our state's lowest performing schools, those designated as Alliance Districts, are not allowed to reduce their MBR.)



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JEFFREY BERGER

PROUDLY SERVING THE 73RD DISTRICT, WATERBURY

CAPITOL UPDATE 2015



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Dear Neighbor,

I am pleased to share with you this update on the recently concluded legislative session.

Each year brings a new set of challenges, and the 2015 session was no different. Despite a serious budget deficit and the need to encourage economic growth, my colleagues and I passed a balanced budget that provides property and car tax relief for middle-class families and small businesses, consumer protections, and programs that empower Connecticut's families. We also created the framework for a once-in-a-generation investment in our transportation infrastructure, which will spur more growth in our economy and create thousands of jobs. The result of all this will improve quality of life for residents who use our roads and rail system and easing the ride into Waterbury.

In addition to delivering property and car tax relief, we passed legislation that protects seniors and consumers, and we brought transparency to the rapidly changing health care landscape.

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

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Berger

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JEFFREY BERGER

PROUDLY SERVING THE 73RD DISTRICT, WATERBURY



CAPITOL UPDATE 2015



Downtown re-vitalization with Waterbury NEXT.

PROPERTY TAX REFORM

Most car owners will see a cut in their motor vehicle tax beginning in 2016 as we capped the car tax mill rate statewide at 32 mills for 2016 and 29.36 mills in 2017. No one's car tax goes up under this plan.

In addition, increased state aid for every city and town will allow municipalities to lower their mill rates. Private colleges that own off-campus property, and larger non-profit hospitals that begin to buy property, will begin to contribute to a town's tax base to help pay for services they use such as fire, police, and public works. This lessens the property tax burden currently borne solely by families and small businesses in our communities.

Towns with a larger number of tax-exempt properties (e.g. state property, churches, colleges, and hospitals) receive additional aid for further property tax relief as well.

HELP FOR OUR VETERANS

This year, the legislature supported and advanced legislation that recognizes the important sacrifices veterans have made while defending our country. Military veterans' retirement pay will now be 100% exempt from the state income tax. We also passed a new law establishing the Veterans to Agriculture Program, which will give a tax credit to veterans that have a gross income from agricultural production of over \$2,500.

We increased services for our women and college veterans. The Department of Veterans' Affairs will now be required to conduct benefits and services outreach for women veterans, and offer recommendations to the legislature on what types of services would be best for them. Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service (OASIS) helps members of the Armed Services receive grants and scholarships to purchase necessary school supplies when enrolling in educational programs. A new law asks for a study of how our colleges could implement the best services and practices into the OASIS program.



Representative Berger discussing increased town aid and property tax reform.

DELIVERING FOR CONNECTICUT'S MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES

We worked to adopt a budget that represents the wide-ranging priorities of our diverse state, and sets us on a path that encourages continued economic growth. We protect hard-working, middle-class families by providing property tax relief through additional aid to our communities, and funding vital services people rely on every day.

The budget is balanced, under the spending cap, and invests in Connecticut's transportation infrastructure, which is critical to our future economy. By investing in transportation projects, such as the Mixmaster in Waterbury, and other roads, bridges, and ports, we are encouraging smart growth, addressing traffic congestion, and bringing sustainable jobs home to Connecticut.



Waterbury Veterans and Representative Berger at Memorial Day Parade.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 AID

Education Cost Sharing	\$134,528,710
Priority School Districts	\$3,208,654
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$4,498,583
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$5,773,418
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$3,054,884
School Transportation	\$1,407,933
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$1,305,413
Town Aid Roads	\$1,078,651
Adult Education	\$1,978,658
DECD Tax Abatement and MRSA Payments	\$9,510,959
Total State Funds to Waterbury	\$166,345,863

ENCOURAGING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF BROWNFIELDS

To encourage the development of more brownfields, we made some changes to the Department of Economic and Community Development's (DECD) brownfield remediation program, which provides grants to municipalities and economic development agencies to assess and remediate contaminated properties. We are now allowing DECD to make grants for ongoing projects. In addition, state-owned and formerly state-owned brownfields that had been transferred to other parties that were previously ineligible for DECD's programs can now participate. This will allow municipalities to take advantage of existing brownfields in their neighborhoods while not placing the costs on the taxpayers.

State Representative Jeffrey Berger

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