



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**MATT BLUMENTHAL**

Dear Neighbor,

I'm pleased to share this update on the recently concluded legislative session. Together, we passed bipartisan legislation that will improve the lives of Connecticut's families, encourage economic growth, and make critical investments in our state's future.

We crafted a fiscally responsible two-year budget that also takes care of Connecticut residents. It protects seniors by maintaining the tax exemptions for Social Security and pension income, as well as by rejecting an asset test for the Medicare Savings Program. We also rejected a proposal to shift teachers' pension costs to municipalities, thereby saving Stamford and Darien from a local tax hike. In fact, state funding for Stamford public schools will increase by \$1.1 million in FY 2020 and \$2.2 million in FY 2021.

We also worked to improve our state's business climate by repealing the Business Entity Tax, expanding the Angel Investor Tax Credit, and creating a new tax credit for craft breweries in order to help this booming industry continue to grow. We invested in the future through a plan for debt-free community college and a tax credit for employers who help workers repay their student loans.

Meanwhile, the Rainy Day fund has soared to over \$2 billion. We have also taken steps to rein in our state's pension liabilities: new state employees now receive hybrid 401(k) retirement plans. These steps are already producing results. Our state's bond rating has increased twice in four months, decreasing our long-term borrowing costs. We are moving in the right direction.

While we accomplished a lot, much more remains to be done. Thank you for the honor of serving our community.

Sincerely,

*Matt*

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**MATT BLUMENTHAL**

PROUDLY SERVING STAMFORD AND DARIEN - 147TH DISTRICT



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# STATE REPRESENTATIVE MATT BLUMENTHAL



## IMPROVING HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

**Sensible Gun Laws** | As Vice-Chair of the Judiciary Committee, I helped lead passage of three new gun laws that will further reduce gun violence in our state. We **banned “ghost guns”** – home-assembled weapons, often made from kits sold over the internet, that lack serial numbers and circumvent our background check laws. (Public Act 19-6). We passed Ethan’s Law, which requires the **safe storage of all firearms in a home** with children under 18. (Public Act 19-5). Finally, we passed a law requiring **safe storage of guns left in a vehicle**, ensuring they’re kept out of sight in a locked safe or compartment. This will reduce the number of stolen guns that end up on our streets. (Public Act 19-7)

**Mammogram Coverage** | We passed legislation requiring health insurance to cover ultrasound breast-cancer screenings for any woman over 40 years old at risk for breast cancer. It prohibits insurers from charging co-insurance, co-pays, deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses for breast ultrasounds and mammograms. (Public Act 19-117)

**Tobacco 21** | If you aren’t smoking by age 21, it’s unlikely you’ll ever start - 95 percent of smokers started when they were young. This session, we passed legislation banning the sale of cigarettes and vaping products to anyone under 21. The law also contains a number of measures to increase enforcement and to keep tobacco products out of the hands of minors. (Public Act 19-13)



## CONNECTICUT IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Our two-year budget is fiscally responsible, invests in the future, and has great benefits for Connecticut’s businesses and residents.

### FOR BUSINESSES:

- We **repealed the Business Entity tax** starting next year. This will help small businesses and encourage start-ups.
- We passed policies **encouraging investment in underutilized property**, which will allow tax base growth for our towns and cities.
- We expanded the **Angel Investor Tax Credit** to small businesses, minority and women-owned businesses, and more industries.
- We created a **new tax credit for craft breweries** to help grow this booming industry.

### FOR RESIDENTS:

- We required the Board of Regents to develop a plan to provide a **debt-free community college** program for certain high school graduates who enroll as first-time, full-time students so they can improve their skills and Connecticut businesses can have the skilled workforce they need.
- We continue to phase in the **income-tax exemption for Social Security and pension income**, helping our seniors retire comfortably.
- We **rejected proposed sales tax expansions** on items such as groceries, non-prescription drugs, and legal and accounting services.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Student Loan Tax Credit** | A company that makes student loan payments on behalf of an employee will be eligible to claim a tax credit against the corporation business or insurance premium tax, or the insurance and health care center tax. Qualified employees must have earned their first bachelor’s degree within the last five years and be working at least 35 hours per week at the company. (Public Act 19-86)

**Computer Science Instruction** | We now require that schools teach computer science, specifically making computer programming a required part of computer science classes. Computer science is a fundamental skill for 21st century jobs and impacts nearly every industry in the state including manufacturing, financial services, cybersecurity, health care, law, construction, and technology. We must make sure our students are prepared to succeed in the digital age. (Public Act 19-128)

**Advanced Manufacturing Certificate Program** | In order to ensure that we are properly educating and training our students to take advantage of the good-paying, high-tech jobs currently in demand, we expanded the current Advanced Manufacturing Certificate pilot program to additional public high schools and allowed both public and private higher-education institutions to participate. (Public Act 19-103)

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & GREEN JOBS

**Green Energy** | We passed legislation to continue deployment of solar energy, increasing green jobs and economic activity. It **extends renewable energy programs**, including the **Green Bank’s renewable solar investment program**. It **extends and expands net metering**, thereby reducing energy costs for municipalities and homeowners. It also requires the Department of Transportation to put together an inventory of state property suitable for solar-energy utilization (Public Act 19-35). Additionally, we passed a program clearing the path for Connecticut to procure up to 2,000 megawatts of **offshore wind energy**. This will help achieve our goal of 40% renewable energy by 2030, and create good-paying jobs and economic development in the process. (Public Act 19-71)

**State Water Plan** | This year, we finally passed the State Water Plan, which **defines our state’s water supply as a “public trust”** to ensure clean drinking water is accessible for all. (House Joint Resolution 171)

**Fracking Ban** | This legislation widens and makes permanent the state-wide fracking ban to apply to all gas and oil extraction activities to also include the sale, acquisition, application and processing of fracking, natural gas, and oil waste. (Public Act 19-112)



## SUPPORTING CONNECTICUT FAMILIES

**Paid Family & Medical Leave** | No one should have to choose between a paycheck and their health, greeting a new child, or caring for a sick or dying family member. That is why I was proud to support passage of the new Paid Family and Medical Leave Program. It provides for up to 12 weeks of paid time off for workers with a documented medical condition or family hardship. It will allow families to address medical challenges, emergencies, or recovery from injury with peace of mind. The program is funded by employee contributions. (Public Act 19-25)

## STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY

**Early Voting** | This session, we took the first step toward early voting by passing a resolution to amend our state constitution. This amendment would allow for early in-person voting for any state or municipal election or referendum. It passed by a majority of both the House and Senate. If approved again in the 2021 legislative session, it will appear as a question for voters to decide on the 2022 general election ballot. (House Joint Resolution 161)