



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
MATT BLUMENTHAL
 PROUDLY SERVING STAMFORD AND DARIEN

Dear Neighbor,

On March 8, Connecticut confirmed its first case of coronavirus. The Governor declared Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergencies the next day. Our lives were radically altered in the time that has followed.

My commitment to you and your family, however, has not changed. Along with my colleagues, I've successfully pushed the Governor to adopt measures to protect renters, homeowners, patients, voters, healthcare providers, and those who have faced unemployment or reduced income. I've worked to connect countless Stamford and Darien residents with the unemployment benefits and other state resources they need and deserve.

I've also been pushing to ensure our state takes a science-based, cautious approach to our COVID-19 response and reopening. We are seeing the benefits of that approach: as our reopening of our state's economy has progressed, our rates of infection, hospitalization, and fatalities have continued to decrease.

This newsletter contains further information and resources, as well as an overview of my office's work during this time. As always, please don't hesitate to call or email me with any questions or concerns.

All the best,

Matt Blumenthal
 147th Assembly District

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COVID-19 RESOURCES

For the most up to date information please visit portal.ct.gov/coronavirus.

Please Wear A Mask

Wearing a mask helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep us all safe. The CDC and Governor Lamont have therefore required that people wear masks in public when they're unable to social distance by staying more than 6 feet away from others. So please wear a mask: it's the kind — and the right — thing to do.

Unemployment Assistance

Helping residents apply for and receive unemployment assistance has been a major focus of my office these past few weeks and months. Our state and federal systems were not prepared for the massive, sudden spike in claims, as well as the new processes required to distribute the aid passed by Congress. This led to backlogs of claims. Too many people have gone weeks without receiving the promised help.

Thankfully, I have been able to help resolve these issues quickly for many people. We've used our direct line to the Department of Labor to escalate claims, help sort out confusion, and collect needed information. Please contact us if you are having any issues. If you have not filed yet, you can do so at www.FileCTUI.com or one of the following numbers: 860-263-6975, 203-455-2653, 860-263-6974 or 203-455-2650.

Business Assistance

If you are a business owner, the Department of Economic and Community Development is developing and updating guidelines on safe ways to operate your business: business.ct.gov/Recovery. They have also opened a small business hotline: 860-500-2333. If you have any questions on how these rules apply to your business, contact me.

Mortgage and Rent Assistance

If you are having trouble paying your residential mortgage or rent, we have worked with banks and landlords to provide you additional time to put together payments. For more information on these programs, visit portal.ct.gov/coronavirus/information-for/homeowners-and-renters. I know that seeking information or benefits from state agencies and our partners during this time can be complicated, confusing, or frustrating. Call or email me anytime, and I promise I will do all I can to help.

ADVOCATING FOR YOU DURING THIS TIME

This has been a remarkably challenging time for our community. My office has worked with many of you to fix issues with your unemployment applications, help your business apply for financial aid, or help you get your car registered with the DMV. During these challenging times, it is more essential than ever that we ensure government services are available to you. Through our advocacy, we have also expanded tele-medicine, brought additional COVID-19 testing sites to our community, expanded affordable childcare options for front-line workers, and extended due dates for state income taxes and municipal property taxes. We've advocated for and implemented many of your suggestions — if you have more, please don't hesitate to reach out.

THE UPCOMING SPECIAL SESSION

Leading on Legislation to Ensure Safe Voting

No one should have to choose between their health and their vote. That's why I've helped lead the effort to ensure that we increase absentee ballot access in our state. This May, I drafted a letter to legislative leadership with one of my colleagues, urging leadership to call a special session to pass legislation ensuring Connecticut residents can vote safely this November. We were joined by more than 70 of our House colleagues. The leadership have agreed to call a special session on the matter.

There's some good news: the Governor's executive order provides for expanded absentee balloting in the November election. All party-registered voters should receive an absentee ballot application for the August primary in the mail. But a special session is still necessary to pass legislation ensuring that everyone who has a reasonable fear of contracting or spreading COVID-19 can vote by absentee ballot this November. I will continue to help lead the effort to ensure this legislation is passed.

Transparency & Accountability in Policing

The murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis has galvanized and awakened our nation. It echoes many other episodes of racist violence and injustice against Black Americans. Over the past weeks, I have attended, spoken at, and most importantly, listened to protesters at a number of marches and rallies in Stamford and Darien.

What I witnessed at those meaningful, peaceful protests strengthened my faith in our community — and clarified the urgency of reform. It is absolutely essential that there be trust between all our communities — especially communities of color — and law-enforcement agencies and personnel. That trust will only be achieved when there is transparency and accountability in policing. Along with my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, I will be evaluating potential legislation to ensure that transparency and accountability, including reforming police disciplinary procedures, requiring body cameras be used by all our state's police, reforming certain police policies and use-of-force procedures, and many other potential reforms.

As we work to manage the COVID crisis, expand voting rights, and implement reforms to ensure more accountable and transparent policing, please don't hesitate to contact my office and make your voice heard.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Your feedback and experiences are important to helping us improve quality of life and the state's response to COVID-19. How well did the safety net work for you and your family? How can we do better? What needed services were unavailable or difficult to access? Your stories help us craft better policy and advocate for you.

To stay up to date on the latest COVID-19 updates and other information, please sign up for my e-newsletter updates at:
www.housedems.ct.gov/Blumenthal

COVID-19 Assistance Info

The State of Connecticut is partnering with the United Way of Connecticut to answer COVID-19 related questions. Call 2-1-1 or text "CTCOVID" to 898211 for more information.

Stamford

For non-emergency assistance related to COVID-19, residents can call the City of Stamford COVID-19 information hotline at 203-977-8840. Stamford Public Schools has announced its Seamless Summer Food Program to provide meals to children when school is not in session. For questions about the program please call 203-977-4737.

Darien

Residents in need during the COVID-19 crisis should contact Darien Human Services at 203-656-7328 to inquire about assistance. Families with children currently receiving Free or Reduced Lunch through the Darien Public Schools will be eligible for a grocery store gift card through the Human Services Department. Please call 203-656-7328 for more information.

