

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# BETTY BOUKUS

PROUDLY SERVING PLAINVILLE & NEW BRITAIN - 22ND DISTRICT

Dear Friends and Neighbors:



The following is an update on recent legislation. During the 2014 Legislative Session we faced challenges which resulted in our working toward a leaner, more efficient state government – all while increasing local municipal aid and school funding.

Working together, Democrats and Republicans increased funding for education, and invested in job-creation programs. One such program, STEP-UP, encourages employers to hire veterans

and the unemployed. Working with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) we passed legislation to stimulate small and large business throughout our communities. Plainville and New Britain companies have benefited from these grants and low cost loans through our Small Business Express and similar programs. Please call my office for further information on these valuable tools for local business.

The aerospace and manufacturing sectors are driving forces in our economy. Key legislation expanded aerospace research and manufacturing facilities across Connecticut. This in turn will have a domino effect on suppliers and related business in our communities. More jobs in aerospace and manufacturing means more demand at our colleges and universities. Schools will work with DECD, the Department of Labor and other agencies in providing students with the skills they will need to meet the needs of advanced manufacturing jobs.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your past emails, correspondence and visits to my office hours. Please do not hesitate to call or email me with your input. While the General Assembly may not be currently in session, I am available to you. Please call my administrative aide Aurora at 860-240-8466.

Sincerely, *Betty Boukus*



Bonding Subcommittee Chair Boukus, Rep. Esposito & Rep. Santiago discuss state bonding

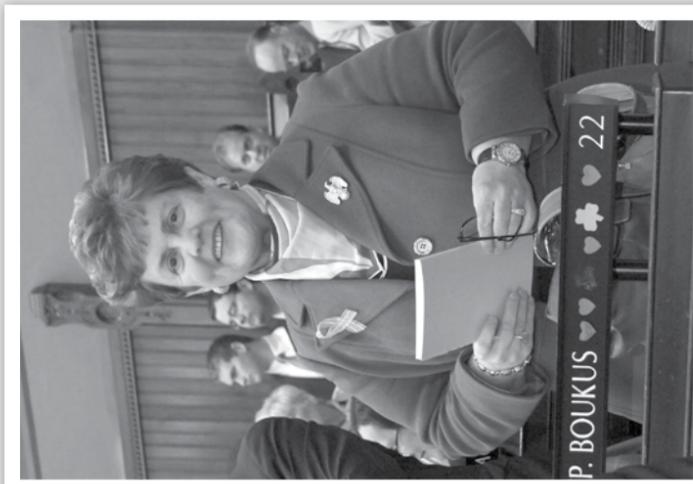
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# ELIZABETH “BETTY” BOUKUS

PROUDLY SERVING PLAINVILLE & NEW BRITAIN | 22ND HOUSE DISTRICT

# CAPITOL UPDATE 2014

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Rep. Boukus, Gov. Malloy, Ronda Guberman, Helen Marinelli, Shawn Cohen, Carol Perry, Tina Wishart, Dan Hurley & Jack Cassidy celebrate \$105,000 in state funding for improvements to the Plainville Senior Center



Sen. Gerratana and Rep. Boukus discuss the \$1.2 million state investment in New Britain's A-1 Manufacturing with A-1 employees to keep jobs in Connecticut

## EDUCATION

### EXTENDING HOURS AT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS

We established a pilot program to provide expanded educational opportunities for job seeking citizens by extending the hours at technical schools, including E.C. Goodwin Tech. The purpose of this program is to provide academic enrichment in trades for secondary and adult students. The program is now being developed by the Department of Education.



New Britain Alderman Carlo Carozzi, Jr. Rep. Boukus at E.C. Goodwin Technical School reviewing 2014 education legislation

### A COMMITMENT TO EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early childhood education is critical to a child's development, providing a solid foundation for future learning. This year we formally established the Office of Early Childhood which will develop a plan to improve access to preschool programs and achieve universal Pre-K in Connecticut. It will administer programs and funding that affect our children from birth to elementary school.

Pre-K helps prepare children for grade school academically and socially, and is a great long-term investment. Pre-K not only increases the chances of future success in and out of the classroom, but helps meet the ongoing challenge of providing equal educational opportunity to every child.

### GO BACK TO GET AHEAD

The Go Back to Get Ahead initiative will encourage Connecticut residents who have some college credits, but have not attained either an associate or bachelor's degree, to return to the state's universities, community technical colleges or Charter Oak State College to complete their degrees. Students who are eligible for the program will be able to receive up to three free college courses at a Connecticut state college or community college.

## SENIORS

### RENTERS REBATE PROGRAM

This year we re-opened the Renters Rebate program to eligible seniors and individuals with permanent disabilities to receive partial reimbursements related to rental payments. \$6.5 million in rental relief will be available to seniors, allowing an additional 12,700 seniors to receive a renter's rebate.

### HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED CARE

We authorized a study of private funding sources for home and community-based care for the elderly and those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease. The Commission on Aging will identify the availability of state-funded home and community-based care and the cost effectiveness of those programs.

## HEALTH

### STREAMLINING HEALTH ASSESSMENT FORMS FOR YOUTH CAMPS & DAY CARE CENTERS

Currently, children must complete a physical examination to attend youth camps and day care centers in addition to the physical examinations already required by schools. This law will ease a burden put on parents and health care providers by permitting licensed youth and day care facilities, to use a child's physical examination already required by school to satisfy physical examination requirements.

### PREVENTING CONCUSSIONS IN YOUNG ATHLETES

Concussion rates are on the rise and we are only now beginning to understand the potential devastating effects they can have on children. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, will develop a concussion education plan for student athletes, coaches and parents.

### PUTTING YOUR HEALTH FIRST

We passed a new law that limits copays for breast ultrasound screenings and occupational therapy, two important services that lower long-term costs and improve outcomes. Health insurance policies that are required to provide ultrasound coverage will be prohibited from imposing a copayment of more than \$20 for breast ultrasound screening and \$30 for in-network occupational therapy.

## BUSINESS AND JOBS

### INVESTMENTS IN MANUFACTURING

Connecticut is a leader in advanced manufacturing. We continue to invest in small shops – like A-1 Machining in New Britain – to help them expand, and giants – like UTC – to make sure Connecticut's largest private employers continue to call Connecticut home.

We are constantly looking for ways to advance the manufacturing sector through training, education, and upgraded equipment and technology. This year we created a way for companies to save money in order to invest in new equipment.

### ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY

Connecticut's three deep-water ports have long been neglected and underutilized. This year we established a Connecticut Port Authority to improve our ports - increasing trade throughout our state, growing our maritime economy with newly created jobs, and reducing the strain and congestion on our roads and bridges.

The Port Authority will take advantage of Connecticut's unique geographic position to offer niche services for freight shipping across the eastern U.S., and serve as an alternative to New York and Boston. This quasi-public agency will be fully operational in October 2015 and will promote commerce and thoughtful development along our major coastal cities.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

While we have already created a Do No Call List to address unwanted sales pitches at home and on our cell phones, some companies continue to make unwanted calls. This law increases the penalty for violating the Do No Call list to \$20,000 from \$11,000. In addition, we added text messages to the Do No Call List. To add your name to the National Do No Call List you can register at this webpage: [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)

## VETERANS

Our veterans and those serving in the military deserve all the support we can provide. We created the Veterans' Opportunities Pilot Program which provides grants to nonprofit housing agencies to hire job placement specialists trained in veterans' issues and establish a statewide coordinator to manage employment services for veterans re-entering the workforce.