



Dear Neighbor,

From jobs to education to improved response to natural disasters, the legislature helped citizens across our state in many ways in 2012.

It started last October when we passed comprehensive, bipartisan jobs legislation that invested hundreds of millions of dollars in small businesses, gave firms hiring incentives, aligned education programs with jobs-in-demand, encouraged entrepreneurship and innovation, and eliminated red-tape for growing companies.

This spring, we balanced a budget by keeping our funding promise to cities and towns without raising taxes. Historic changes were made to our educational system so our children can succeed. We made it easier for people to exercise voting rights, and demanded that utility companies respond better when storms and crises hit. We also protected victims of domestic violence.

Along the way, we gave new hope to children with special needs by improving Individualized Education Plans and creating a study on workforce development, training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

In addition, I worked on several bills important to Waterbury.

I am proud to have supported a budget that includes \$4.3 million in additional ECS funding for Waterbury. This additional funding will address local education reform.

I hope this report is informative. I'm happy to answer any questions about these issues or any others facing our state or your family. Together we can create a better future for our families.

*Larry B. Butler*

State Representative

**LARRY B. BUTLER**

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## CAPITOL UPDATE 2012

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## 2012 Budget Is Historic

The 2012 session of the General Assembly was “a truly historic session,” and brought exciting changes to education, elections, utility storm response, and the state’s Blue Laws.

We faced historic challenges and passed historic legislation. Education reform, storm response by utilities, job growth – all of these policy initiatives are in a word: historic.

One of the hallmarks of the 2012 was the passage of a fiscal year 2013 budget adjustment bill that did not raise additional taxes.

A year ago, we dealt with a shortfall in excess of \$3 billion – 15 percent of our total budget. This year, the House passed a budget adjustment that keeps appropriations under the state’s spending cap and continues our investments in education and job growth.

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## Storm Response

In the aftermath of the October Nor’easter and Tropical Storm Irene that left much of the state without power, the legislature passed sweeping reforms to better prepare for future severe storms and avoid wide-spread and lengthy loss of utility service, where:

- Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response
- Noncompliance could result in penalties of up to 2.5 percent of an electric or gas company’s annual distribution revenue, approximately \$25 million in the case of Connecticut Light & Power.

## Jobs Are Priority #1

We created new job opportunities for young people by funding the Youth Employment Summer Jobs program. We also supported adult evening education programs, as well as the Small Business Express program and a Connecticut Made initiative to promote products from local businesses.

Additional, high level job opportunities will result from economic development funding for the Jackson Labs project that builds on our decision to become a world leader in bioscience and biotechnology.

We recognize the challenges facing cities and towns and secured funding for municipalities, relieving pressure on local property taxes. Loosening budgets can support local projects and job growth.

### Job Creation Through Brownfield Cleanup

Allows swifter conversion of contaminated and long-abandoned properties to productive sites for economic development, open space and other public uses. This session, we directed the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to perform an in-depth analysis of the state’s brownfield remediation and development programs and recommend changes to those programs.

### Lakewood

I made good on my promise to annually stock Lakewood Lake. The DEEP delivered about 1,200 Arkansas Channel Catfish to Lakewood as part of the agency’s Community Fishing Program. More people can enjoy fishing all summer without having to leave the Brass City.

## Education Reform

Our education initiative will provide new support to help turn around under-performing schools. The education reform package has long-term implications for our children and for the state’s economic well-being. The better we prepare children for the 21st Century workforce, the stronger we’ll make Connecticut’s economy. The bill:

- Includes more funding for school-based health centers and family resource centers.
- Recognizes the critical importance of early childhood education by underwriting 1,000 school readiness slots for preschoolers and funding initiatives to improve early reading success.
- Creates the Commissioner’s Network, to provide the intensive supports and interventions needed to turn around 25 of the most chronically low-performing schools.
- Gives the state commissioner of education the needed authority to develop or modify plans with teachers and parents at “turnaround” schools.

## Housing Discrimination

As Housing Committee Chairman, I led passage of a law prohibiting the eviction of individuals 62 years or older who are mentally disabled or family who has a member disabled because the lease expired. The law does not supercede current good cause eviction rules, it merely prohibits mental disability as the sole reason for the eviction, while protecting our most vulnerable.

## Phosphorous Reduction

Improves the quality of state waters and allows towns to seek reimbursement from the state’s Clean Water Fund for planning, design and construction of wastewater collection and treatment projects.

## Racial Profiling

Says that too many individuals in our communities continue to suffer from bias based on their appearance. This bill strengthens an existing law aimed at stopping police from profiling motorists based on race during traffic stops.



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