



STATE REPRESENTATIVE | DEPUTY SPEAKER

# Michelle L. Cook

PROUDLY SERVING TORRINGTON

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Facing this pandemic has been a challenge for all of us. Because of this unprecedented time, we were unable to finish the 2020 legislative session. However, my commitment to you and your family has not changed. We will get through this period and by working together, we will come out of this stronger.

Thank you to our frontline workers who have put their lives at stake to ensure our safety. It does not go unnoticed.

Since March, my office has been sending out daily eblasts to provide you with daily statistics, new executive orders and any information that we receive regarding reopening the state. If you would like to stay up to date on this information, please subscribe to my eblasts.

This newsletter is intended to provide you with helpful information and resources, as well as an overview of some of the work my office has been doing during this time.

If you have any questions, concerns, or if I can be helpful to you in working with any state agency or understanding how any of our state laws or regulations can affect your work, our schools, or your opportunities, please call or email me anytime.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Cook



STATE REPRESENTATIVE | DEPUTY SPEAKER

# Michelle L. Cook

PROUDLY SERVING TORRINGTON

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HARTFORD, CT  
Permit No. 3937

STATE REPRESENTATIVE | DEPUTY SPEAKER

# Michelle L. Cook

PROUDLY SERVING TORRINGTON



Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Capitol: 860-240-8500 • 800-842-8267

[www.housedems.ct.gov/Cook](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/Cook)



[www.facebook.com/repcook](https://www.facebook.com/repcook)

# Michelle L. Cook

PROUDLY SERVING TORRINGTON



## CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES

For the most up to date information please visit: [portal.ct.gov/coronavirus](https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus)

The CDC, and Governor Lamont, are continuing to require individuals wear masks in public when you are unable to “social distance” more than 6 feet away from others.

If you are out of work, you have the right to file for unemployment insurance. Visit [www.FileCTUI.com](https://www.FileCTUI.com) to file your claim or call: 860-263-6975, 203-455-2653, 860-263-6974 or 203-455-2650.

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](https://business.ct.gov/Recovery). They have also opened a small business hotline: 860-500-2333.

If you notice a business not operating in a safe manner, call 2-1-1.

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](https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus/information-for/homeowners-and-renters).

In addition, we have worked with the federal delegation and the Governor’s office to develop and fund a number of smaller assistance programs ranging from funding for artists to farmers, to helping our schools deal with unexpected expenditures. For more on these, please visit my website: [www.housedems.ct.gov/Cook](https://www.housedems.ct.gov/Cook).

I know that working with state agencies and our partners during this time can be complicated. Phone lines are crowded, applications may be confusing. My office is here to help. Call or email me anytime, and I promise I will get you help.

## ADVOCATING FOR YOU DURING THIS TIME

We are working hard everyday to ensure your needs are being met. My office has worked with many of you to fix issues with your unemployment applications, help your business apply for financial aid, and worked with the DMV to get your car registered. I have also been helping with the weekly food drives and delivering produce to our seniors who cannot get it otherwise.

If you are in need of food during this time, Friendly Hands Food Bank has partnered with USDA Farmers to Families to provide our residents with free produce. This food giveaway occurs with different times and locations. For more information please reach out to my office or Friendly Hands Food Bank.

I have also been working with my colleagues to advocate for all of you with the governor and his administration. I am proud to say that because of our advocacy, we have expanded tele-medicine, brought additional COVID-19 testing sites to our community, expanded affordable childcare options for front-line workers, and delayed due dates for state income taxes and municipal property taxes. If there are more ways that we can make state government work better for you, please let me know.

One of the few votes we took this year in the House of Representatives was for the bond act. I am proud to say that this legislation contained authorizations for state aid for our town:

| TOWN BUDGET SUMMARY                                  | FY 20            | FY 21            |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| <b>LoCIP<br/>(LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT)</b> | <b>\$263,459</b> | <b>\$263,459</b> |
| <b>TOWN AID ROAD</b>                                 | <b>\$455,793</b> | <b>\$455,793</b> |
| <b>GRANTS FOR MUNICIPAL PROJECTS</b>                 | <b>\$605,345</b> | <b>\$605,345</b> |

In addition, the bill contained funds for workforce development, launching the Paid Family Medical Leave insurance program, and funding transportation improvements. It is now up to Governor Lamont and the Bond Commission to release these funds, and I will hold them to that.

## ENSURING SAFETY IN OUR NURSING HOMES

There has been an astronomical number of COVID-19 cases in our state’s nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Over 60 percent of Connecticut’s total coronavirus-related deaths occurred in our nursing homes. These deaths could have been prevented if these facilities acted with urgency and intention to protect workers and residents and if we focused on fixing deficiencies, like inadequate staffing levels, that have persisted long before the pandemic. We must do better, which is why I am pleased to join the bipartisan Women’s Caucus in providing recommendations to resolve these deficits. These recommendations are just the beginning of addressing the crisis in our state’s nursing homes and ensuring residents at these facilities are safe, healthy, and connected.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

While public health experts continue to guide us on the steps we need to take to safely “reopen,” we also have an opportunity to build a stronger and more robust state.

Right now, we are working to ensure hospitals and health care providers such as nursing homes have adequate stock of personal protective equipment. And we are working with farmers and food banks to protect and localize our food supply chain.

I am still advocating on your behalf and working hard to make sure that our legislative priorities represent the current needs of our communities and our state given this unprecedented time.

Your stories and experiences are important to helping us improve the quality of life for you. How can we do better? What services were not available that you really needed? I would greatly appreciate your feedback so we that we can do our best to meet everyone’s needs.

More than ever, it continues to be an honor and privilege to represent you.

## SHOUT-OUT BOX

Thank you to all of our healthcare professionals, first responders, grocery store workers, delivery drivers, child care providers, and all the businesses in Torrington that have been on the front lines of the global pandemic, ensuring food, medical care, and other necessary items are within reach for residents and their families. I would also like to express gratitude for the nonprofit agencies that provided assistance to families who needed extra support during these unprecedented times.

COVID-19 has altered the lives of many of our residents, and my heart goes out to those who have lost a loved one. If you have been impacted by the virus and need assistance, please reach out to me and I will work to find you help.

Congratulations to our 2020 high school and college graduates!



Representative Cook joined by Governor Lamont, Representative Horn, Co-owner Kris Kelsey and municipal leaders at The Social House in downtown Torrington