



Dear Neighbor,

I'm proud to report that we approved a state budget adjustment that ensures we live within our means and cuts taxes by hundreds-of-millions-of-dollars.

Before the legislative session began this year, I sent out a community survey asking the residents of Torrington for your thoughts on which issues most drastically affect our city, and what you would like to see balanced in our state budget. Thank you to those who were able to respond. I greatly appreciate your views and suggestions.

This newsletter is packed full of information from the 2022 legislative session. I know that there is lots to digest in these few pages, so please reach out with any questions.

I am honored to serve as your state representative and thank you for your resilience as we move towards the hopeful and optimistic end of the pandemic. Together, we have made it through difficult sacrifices and are all looking forward to what comes next.

All my best,

## 2022 SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Addressing Children's Mental Health Needs
- Cutting Taxes to Combat Historic Inflation
- Keeping CT Safe with Juvenile Justice Reform
- Creating Environmentally Conscious Initiatives
- Maintaining CT's Future Fiscal Integrity



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# MICHELLE L. COOK

PROUDLY SERVING TORRINGTON

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## CAPITOL UPDATE 2022

Representative Michelle L. Cook  
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# CAPITOL UPDATE 2022



FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**MICHELLE L. COOK**  
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## RESPONDED TO JUVENILE CRIME

- Invested in Youth Service Bureaus and Juvenile Review Boards
- Increased work opportunities for young adults
- Expanded alternatives to incarceration
- Expanded hands-on training for police
- Addressed laboratory and case backlogs
- Expanded use of GPS monitoring for juveniles arrested for a second or subsequent offense involving a motor vehicle or property
- Toughened penalties for vehicle thefts
- Created more crisis training for our police
- Funded state and local taskforces to address gun violence and auto thefts



## SUPPORTING OUR SENIORS

- Secured over \$20 million in new grants from federal relief dollars towards funding for senior centers to re-engage members after COVID
- Increased dollars for Meals on Wheels and Alzheimer's respite
- Required Connecticut's five area agencies on aging (AAAs) to collect nutritional risk assessment data among seniors and report that data to the state Department of Aging and Disability Services.
- Required mandated elder abuse reporters to complete elder abuse training within 90 days of becoming an elder abuse reporter and reduced the mandatory reporting deadline from 72 hours to 32 hours
- Expanded access to long-term care - raised the maximum asset limit for Medicaid support eligibility to \$50,000 or half the couple's combined assets, up to \$137,400

## ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY IN NURSING HOMES

- Established a registration system and annual fee for temporary nursing service agencies through CT Department of Public Health to prevent staff shortages and price gouging in nursing homes
- Promoted nontraditional long-term care options by allowing the CT Department of Social Services to approve requests to build small-house style nursing homes rather than large facilities
- Enhanced services by requiring any new proposed nursing facilities to incorporate person-centered care, enhanced quality of care, creates a community space for residents, and develops connections between residents and the surrounding community

# I VOTED TO CUT YOUR TAXES

OUR STATE BUDGET INCLUDES

## \$650 MILLION IN TAX RELIEF

- ✔ Creates a Child Tax Credit
- ✔ Cuts property taxes for retirees
- ✔ Capped car tax at 32.46 mills
- ✔ Extends the gas tax cut
- ✔ Ends pension and annuity tax
- ✔ Invests in essential workers

### STATE BUDGET FUNDING INCLUDES \$31 MILLION FOR TORRINGTON:

Tiered PILOT: <b>\$1,112,103</b>	Adult Education: <b>\$166,992</b>
Pequot: <b>\$196,642</b>	Education Cost Sharing: <b>\$28,938,03</b>
Town Aid Road: <b>\$453,580</b>	Municipal Stabilization: <b>\$72,539</b>
LoCIP: <b>\$264,620</b>	Municipal Projects: <b>\$605,345</b>
	Municipal Transition: <b>\$3,637,348</b>

### WITH ADDITIONAL FUNDS:

**\$179,575,000** for construction of the new Torrington Middle and High School, this represents a reimbursement rate of 85 percent  
**\$81,367** for the Torrington Fire Training School  
**\$100,000** for the Sullivan Senior Center

**\$1,048,59 INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR FOR TORRINGTON**

## INVESTMENTS IN OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURES

- Provided grants to local schools to hire more support staff, including in the areas of mental health: social workers, psychologists, and counselors
- Funded the expansions of school-based health centers and the services they provide
- Created new walk-ins for mental health emergencies
- Initiated new position at the Healthcare Advocate to help families navigate care for children and adolescents
- Expanded 24/7 emergency mental health response
- Established state oversight and coordination of state response to kids' mental health needs
- Helped school-based health centers develop new mental health programming
- Provided mental health training to parents, students, and pediatricians
- Increased funding for infant and toddler programs
- Increased pay to childcare workers to attract and retain more educators
- Expanded successful Birth to Three Program
- Approved state tax credit for childcare
- Ensured teachers get an uninterrupted 30 minutes for lunch
- Expanded scholarships for minority teachers

## SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE US



- Guaranteed CT veterans in-state tuition rates
- Strengthened firefighter cancer relief fund with stronger data collection and implementing higher equipment standards
- Provided funding to local volunteer fire departments who respond to emergencies on certain state highways
- Established a new, local-option property tax exemption equal to 10% of home values for more veterans

## FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE & PROTECTING CT'S ENVIRONMENT

- Created a public health reporting system for homeowners with an abundance of salt in their drinking water
- Set a goal of reaching zero greenhouse gas emissions from electricity supplied to you by 2040
- Expanded eligibility for participation in the state's brownfield remediation program to include companies who lease a property with an intent to own. This will expand our efforts to help cities and towns address their brownfields
- Explored new waste management programming
- Created new incentives for consumer and commercial electric vehicles