

# IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

<b>General Assistance</b>	<b>2-1-1</b>
<b>Department of Social Services</b>	<b>855-626-6632</b>
<b>Tax Department</b>	<b>800-382-9463</b>
<b>Consumer Protection</b>	<b>800-842-2649</b>
<b>Department of Veterans' Affairs</b>	<b>866-928-8387</b>
<b>Office of the Healthcare Advocate</b>	<b>866-466-4446</b>
<b>Medicare</b>	<b>800-633-4227</b>
<b>Center for Medicare Advocacy</b>	<b>800-262-4414</b>
<b>Connecticut Insurance Department</b>	<b>800-203-3447</b>
<b>CT Fair Housing Center</b>	<b>888-247-4401</b>
<b>Statewide Legal Services of CT</b>	<b>800-453-3320</b>

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER & STATE REPRESENTATIVE

## MICHELLE L. COOK

REPRESENTING TORRINGTON | 65TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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## MICHELLE L. COOK

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER & STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Dear Neighbor,

This special newsletter provides an update on recent policy initiatives and changes made during the 2016 Legislative Session to better support our veterans and seniors. It also contains resources and contact information that you may find helpful.

If you have a question or concern, or if I can support you in any way, feel free to call my office at 800-842-8267 or email me at [Michelle.Cook@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Michelle.Cook@cga.ct.gov).

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle L. Cook".

Michelle L. Cook



# ACTS AFFECTING SENIORS

## **LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN'S NOTICE TO NURSING HOME RESIDENTS** [PA 16-8, Effective Date: July 1, 2016]

When nursing homes or long-term care facilities plan on either closing down or greatly reducing the number of available beds, those facilities do not always do a fair job of notifying residents of their options. This legislation tasks the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, along with the Department of Aging, with submitting a letter to each patient notifying them of the rights and services available to them upon closure.

## **EXPANDING UTILIZATION OF PATIENT-DESIGNATED CAREGIVERS** [PA 16-59 Effective Date: October 1, 2016]

Nursing homes will now be required to allow the resident being discharged an opportunity to designate a caregiver who will work with the nursing home on a discharge plan which will include any necessary instruction in post-discharge tasks. This will not only free up space in hospitals and nursing homes, but allow for patients to spend more time in their own homes.

## **PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE PERSONS** [PA 16-149, Effective Date: July 1, 2016]

We recognize that abusing vulnerable seniors is a particularly heinous crime. The Legislature approved a new law that protects seniors in several ways:

- Develops a strategic plan to improve guidelines for seniors needing protective services.
- Creates an educational training program to promote and encourage the accurate and prompt identification and reporting of abuse, neglect, exploitation and abandonment of elderly persons.
- Ensures the state will investigate reports of elder abuse determine the condition of the senior and what action and services are required.

## **SENIOR CENTERS** [Special Act 16-7, Effective Date: July 1, 2016]

Connecticut is committed to protecting senior citizens and ensuring proper delivery of health and human services. That is why Connecticut is creating a task force to study whether our senior centers are running efficiently, from proper training of staff to proper care of senior citizens. The task force's recommendations may be used to craft future legislation.

## **RIGHT TO RESCIND A NURSING HOME CONTRACT** [PA 16-209, Effective Date: July 1, 2016]

Moving a loved one into a nursing home can be a difficult choice. To help make this process easier, Connecticut has passed legislation that will not allow nursing homes to hide small print details in an admission contract. Instead, these details must be in bold lettering and large font so an incoming resident will know what he or she must be responsible for.

# ACTS AFFECTING VETERANS

## **SUPPORTING VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES** [PA 16-184, Effective Date: October 1, 2016]

In order to help our veterans who own micro-businesses, we passed legislation that will give a price preference of up to 15% for veteran-owned micro-businesses for certain Department of Administrative Services open market orders or contracts. A micro-business is a business with gross revenue of up to \$3 million. Veterans who start a micro-business will be offered some business tax relief for the first tax year after they are established. For a business to be considered veteran-owned, 51% of it must be owned by a veteran.

## **VETERANS' PROPERTY TAXES** [PA 16-191, Effective Date: October 1, 2016]

New legislation gives additional property tax relief to Veterans. This legislation increases the amount of property tax exemptions that a municipality can offer from \$10,000 to \$20,000 or \$25,000 if the veteran is also disabled. These exemptions are only available to unmarried veterans whose income is below \$35,200 or married veterans whose income is below \$42,900. This bill also waives delinquent property taxes for out-of-state service members. Current law only allows this waiver for those members serving in Iraq or Afghanistan.

## **CONNECTICUT FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT AND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY SERVICE** [PA 16-195, Effective Date: Upon Passage]

When military men and woman are on active duty, they should not have to worry how their families will take care of themselves. This legislation mandates that the state and larger private employers expand their family and medical leave benefits for those employees with loved ones serving in the military, to include certain additional needs that arise when their loved one is on active duty or has been called for active duty.

**MILITARY SUPPORT COUNSELING PROGRAM** 1-866-251-2913 or online [www.ct.gov/dmhas/msp](http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/msp).

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