

2013 Legislative Session Update

Dear Neighbor,

As the 2013 Legislative Session is well underway, I wanted to update you about what I am working on this session. In my new capacity as a Deputy Majority Leader I am working on improving quality of life issues in Torrington, continuing to strengthen our education system, and protecting services as we begin debates on the two-year state budget. Please keep in touch if I can ever be of assistance regarding any other issues that are important to you. In the last month, I have received hundreds of phone calls and emails. I am working on responding to each call and email. If you haven't yet received a response, please reach out again!

Sincerely, *Michelle L Cook*



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State Representative

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SUPPORTING OUR SENIORS

Helping our seniors in their later years is an important responsibility of government. Seniors face many challenges such as keeping healthy and paying bills on a fixed income. The legislature supports seniors in a number of ways: We can send state funds to towns to help stabilize local property taxes, we can pass tough consumer protection laws and we can increase grandparents' visitation rights. As a member of the Aging Committee, I will be looking at proposals to help seniors keep their independence as their healthcare needs change. A special task force on "aging in place" is recommending ways to help older adults safely, independently and comfortably stay in their homes.

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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PROGRESS IN EDUCATION

We still must strive to make our schools a top priority in 2013 as they face new challenges. In 2012, the legislature passed historic education reforms, and now we must continue the work of implementing those important changes. Educating our children in the 21st century means closely aligning vocational-technical schools with the needs of Connecticut industries. I will continue to work with the Education Committee to make sure that Connecticut's education system remains on track and relevant.

ADDRESSING MUNICIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

I have been recently named to serve on the Board of Education Functions subcommittee of the Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (M.O.R.E.) Commission. We will be looking at how to cut out unnecessary educational spending and ways to regionalize education. The M.O.R.E. Commission is a new approach to state and local government in Connecticut that will make our state more economically competitive by emphasizing cost efficiency.

