

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for giving me the privilege of representing you in the General Assembly. Our role goes beyond putting out the fires of old to creating a Connecticut that is not only a place where people are from, but one where people want to move to expand and grow both personally and professionally.

I have continued my work as co-chair of the country's first legislatively created 2-Generational Workforce & School Readiness/Success program helping to change the cycle of poverty to one of prosperity for low-income families around our state. I have also been working over the last few months as the Speaker of the House's representative to the Special Education Funding Working Group created to study funding for the provision of special education and related services. We must find better ways that remove the financial strain that our districts are feeling while at the same time ensuring that our school districts are providing a high-quality learning experience for every child, every day.

Just as parents and guardians entrust districts with their students, we as a state must help where we can to ensure their safety. I worked with many colleagues on both sides of the aisle to draft and pass effective legislation, that will assist in protecting our students by adding requirements to the hiring processes of all schools for positions that would place applicants in direct contact with students.

We also worked across party lines to pass legislation aimed at providing a short term solution to those impacted by the crumbling concrete epidemic hitting our region of the state. The new legislation requires those supplying and installing concrete to document their involvement with the town's building official; permits homeowners to request a reassessment if the concrete is deemed defective; and provides anonymity to those reporting for seven years, up from the current 18 months. I look forward to continuing our bipartisan work on this matter over the next year.

I would like to have reported that our budget process was a similarly bipartisan effort, but unfortunately an agreement was unable to be reached by all party leaders. While I am frustrated by the reduction of people, places and programs, difficult decisions had to be made that would begin the process of rerouting Connecticut onto a path of sustainability. While we recognize that there are challenges yet to face, there are opportunities to ensure that where we are going is a place we can all be proud of and prosper where we can.

As always, I welcome your input and appreciate all those who have reached out over the last year. Please remember that your voices are valued and you may reach out to me at any time at my home, 860-528-8822. My door at the State Capitol is always open!



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JEFF CURREY

SERVING THE 11TH HOUSE DISTRICT | EAST HARTFORD | MANCHESTER | SOUTH WINDSOR

Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: 860-240-8585
Cell: 860-305-0699
www.house Dems.ct.gov/Currey
Jeff.Currey@cga.ct.gov

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CAPITOL UPDATE 2016

PLEASE SIGN UP FOR MY WEEKLY UPDATES VIA EMAIL AT
WWW.HOUSEDEMS.CT.GOV/CURREY

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INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMY

As we continue to focus on economic growth, we are investing in our entrepreneurs and small businesses by providing them with the support they will need to take them to the next level. We will continue to invest in education so that Connecticut workers are trained in the 21st century skills our companies need. For more on our initiatives, visit our website: www.housedems.ct.gov/ctjobs



Rep. Currey and South Windsor Councilman Saud Anwar

SUPPORTING OUR SENIORS

Especially during difficult times, and as we struggle to balance the state budget, protecting our older citizens remains a high priority. If we don't look out for them, no one else will.

We passed legislation to make sure patients are notified of their rights and of services available when nursing homes or long-term care facilities close or reduce the number of beds.

We also require nursing homes to allow residents being discharged to pick a caregiver to help them with their discharge plan. Other legislation allows for elderly or disabled tenants of state-assisted housing to pay security deposits in installments.

STANDING UP FOR OUR VETERANS

We stand by our veterans. The legislature passed measures that will facilitate veteran employment with a resource network for specialized skills in the Department of Labor and preferences in state contract bidding for veteran-owned small businesses. We also broadened the scope of the law that bars discriminatory practices in our state's armed forces, and approved a resolution to our nation's leaders to recognize Blue Water Navy Veterans' exposure to Agent Orange.



SCHOOL PERSONNEL VERIFICATION

We have an obligation to ensure the safety of children in our schools and provide greater protection to children against potential threats of physical or sexual abuse and/or neglect. This law will require school Boards of Education to share findings of abuse or sexual misconduct by school employees with other school boards to prevent them from unknowingly hiring a sex offender. Connecticut now joins Pennsylvania, Missouri and Oregon as the only states to require boards of education to share information on sexual abusers.



Rep. Jeff Currey with students and staff of South Windsor High School

RECRUITING MINORITY TEACHERS

Despite growing evidence to support the need for a diverse educator workforce, there is still a significant shortage of minority teachers in Connecticut schools. To recruit more minority teachers, we passed legislation that will improve the size and scope of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force and established a pilot program to encourage minority students to pursue a college degree in education. The program will allow minority students to earn college credits in an introductory course in education while in high school.



Rep. Jeff Currey, EH BOE Val Scheer and CT and National Teacher of the Year Jahana Hayes

TACKLING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

In recent years, Connecticut, like other New England states, has seen a heartbreaking increase in fatal opioid overdoses. This year, we passed groundbreaking legislation that will expand the state's effort to combat this epidemic. This life saving law will allow any licensed healthcare professional to administer drugs that reverse opioid overdoses, require municipalities to equip their first responders with the opioid reversal drug, Narcan, and cap first-time opioid prescriptions at 7 days. For prescription opioid or heroin addiction treatment, call: 800-563-4086 or visit www.portal.ct.gov/governor/substance-abuse.



SUPPORTING CONNECTICUT'S GROWING MANUFACTURING SECTOR

We are working to make Connecticut the leader in high-tech manufacturing jobs with an educated workforce that will meet the growing demand for the advanced, computer based, and technical positions of the future. Several innovative measures were passed that will ensure we are prepared for the growing manufacturing demand.



Groundbreaking ceremony for Manchester's Bennet Academy

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Some of our state's most vulnerable families are those who struggle to meet the needs of a family member with an intellectual disability. While many families are currently on waiting lists for services, we worked to improve communication between families and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). This new law requires DDS to provide, upon a client's request, information on an individual's position on the waitlist for residential services, documentation of an individual's need for residential services, copies of an individual's plan or assessment, as well as copies of any requests for funding or services along with any decisions made regarding those requests. We also looked at Probate Courts and their role in determining guardianship for people with intellectual disabilities in order to ensure they get help with making financial and medical decisions among many other needs. This law clarifies who has access to files regarding guardianship cases.



Rep. Jeff Currey at HARC

BAN THE BOX

An Act Concerning Fair Chance Employment was created to prevent employers from requiring people to disclose a criminal record when first applying for a job. On job applications, people are frequently asked to "check the box" for any arrests or convictions. Under this legislation, the box would be banned and employers would be prohibited from inquiring about a criminal record during the initial application process, but would still have the ability to inquire about criminal history during the interview process. Some employers, such as law enforcement and school districts, which are required to verify an applicant's criminal history, would be exempt.

Thank you to the hundreds of people who have contacted me this session. Please continue to reach out to me. Your input is critical.