

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER & STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JEFF CURREY

PROUDLY SERVING THE 11TH HOUSE DISTRICT



Dear Neighbor,

These past few months have been challenging for us all, and on top of a global pandemic that has exposed long-standing inequities buried deep within our nation, we have watched civil unrest unfold across the country in response to the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and too many others. This year we saw attempts to roll back health care protections for some of our most vulnerable populations, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and that certain federal civil rights laws extend to LGBTQ+ workers.

We've seen the power of working loudly and collaboratively. We recognized the urgency to act and have requested to return to Hartford for a special session in July to take immediate action on absentee ballot voting for the November election and police accountability and transparency. But this is a small first step in the direction where we need to go, and we will need to have difficult and uncomfortable conversations around housing, education, economic opportunity, healthcare reform, in addition to police accountability and criminal justice, all in an effort to right the wrongs of a system designed centuries ago that continues to hold back many of our friends, neighbors, and loved ones today.

In the meantime, as our state takes cautious steps to reopen the economy and further contain the coronavirus, please remember to practice social distancing and wear a mask when you go out into public. At the time of this printing, Connecticut has been ranked among the top states best positioned to contain COVID-19 and to move into Phase 3 of its reopening plan and open school doors for full-time classroom instruction.

If we want to continue moving forward, we need to remain vigilant in following public health recommendations even as it appears the quarantine rollercoaster's end is almost in sight. Laxness could contribute to another outbreak much like we've seen in other states.

As we navigate and endure this strange time together, please do not hesitate to call or email me 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. I also want to hear about your thoughts and ideas for necessary policy shifts and how our state can better serve you. I'm here as a resource for you. You may reach me at home at 860-528-8822 or the office at 860-240-8500.

To stay-up-to date about the General Assembly's work at the Capitol and other news, please sign up for my e-newsletters on my website at www.housedems.ct.gov/Currey. Here, you'll also find past updates and an extensive list of resources and information.

Best,

STAY INFORMED

Sign Up For My Email Updates at www.housedems.ct.gov/Currey

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EAST HARTFORD | MANCHESTER | SOUTH WINDSOR



CAPITOL UPDATE 2020



VOTING ACCESS

Joining with fellow legislators, a demand for action was submitted to the Governor and legislative leaders to focus on guaranteeing safe voting for the primary and general elections. Executive Order 7QQ allows any voter to request an absentee ballot for the August primary. To vote in a primary, voters must be registered with one of the major parties. We are also advocating to expand access to absentee ballots for the November general election so every registered voter, regardless of age, may safely participate in this fundamental right. All voters will receive absentee ballot applications in the mail and will be able to decide for themselves if they would prefer to vote via mail or at their local polling location.



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Now more than ever it is critical to have conversations about our social, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing. There are several resources for parents and caregivers, children, and adults to get support.

Amplify, Inc. works with communities in North Central CT. Call 860-667-6388 or visit www.amplifyct.org to learn more about services provided.

The Connecticut Network of Care Transformation is providing support and information to children and families who want to talk about their experiences. Visit www.connectingtocarect.org to find a network near you.

Parents and caregivers who would like to speak to a trained professional about their experiences can call Connecticut's Talk It Out hotline at 1-833-258-5011.

Additional resources are available on the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services website: www.ct.gov/DMHAS.

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



While public health experts guide us on the steps necessary to safely “reopen”, we also have an opportunity to build a stronger and more robust state. We are working to ensure hospitals and health care providers have adequate stock of personal protective equipment (PPE), and we are working with farmers and food banks to strengthen our food supply chain.

Your stories and experiences are important to helping us improve the quality of life for you. How well did the safety net work for you and your family? How can we do better? What services were not available that you really needed?

These are the stories we need to hear from you.

This has been a remarkably challenging time for all of us. Our office has worked with many of you to fix issues with your unemployment applications, help your business apply for financial aid, or work with the DMV to get your car registered. I know that it is during these challenging times when we need government help and services the most.

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. Because of your feedback, we have identified several areas to improve, from the delayed times at the Department of Labor to how state agencies generally communicate with the public, to better aid and address residents’ needs more efficiently. There are still many details to work out in these areas, but without your input, we would be unable to improve these opportunities directly.

NONPROFIT & BUSINESS SUPPORT



If you are a nonprofit or business owner, the Department of Economic and Community Development is developing and updating guidelines on safe ways to operate. The pandemic has been particularly difficult on so many local organizations and businesses. I will continue to advocate for financial assistance programs, tax relief, and rental support. Here are available resources:

- DECD: ct.gov/Coronavirus/Information-For/Business-Resources
- COVID-19 Business Emergency Response Line: 860-500-2333
- Low-Interest Disaster Loans: sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance
- Business Guidance: bit.ly/3efqb0F
- Small Business Development Center COVID-19 Business Resources: ctsbdc.com/covid19-businessresourcecenter
- Women’s Business Development Council virtual classes & counseling for those impacted by COVID-19: ctwbdc.org
- SCORE Small Business Resilience Hub: score.org/recovery/small-businessresilience

CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES



For the most up to date information please visit 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.

Please follow group gathering guidelines and don’t forget the importance of hand washing.

For the latest information on the Governor’s Executive Orders and Connecticut’s coronavirus response, visit ct.gov/coronavirus. If you notice an organization not operating in a safe manner, you can call 2-1-1 or file a complaint at bit.ly/371YsTn.

Businesses must self-certify they are compliant with state guidelines prior to reopening. Visit business.ct.gov/Recovery to complete self-certification.

RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



Before the session ended, I was proud to lead advocacy efforts with the We C.A.R.E. Coalition and a bipartisan coalition of legislators for the passage of The Connecticut Parentage Act (HB 5178). This bill would ensure that the law reflects and protects the diversity of families in our state. With this change, all children would be guaranteed the security of a legal parent-child relationship whatever the marital status, gender or sexual orientation of their parents. In more recent weeks, I have been proud to stand with fellow residents to celebrate Pride Month with our LGBTQ+ community and to support Black Lives Matter and protest police violence against black and brown community members. Throughout history the civil rights and LGBTQ rights movements have built off one another, expanding the fight for equity and justice across the spectrum. Despite the progress achieved, it’s only scratched the surface of the systems and institutions that govern our lives, and these must be dismantled brick by brick.

I am proud of the work our office has done on many of these issues, whether it be equity in education funding, breaking down the silos that foster the cycle of intergenerational poverty, or addressing the intersections between our criminal justice system and homelessness. There is always more to be done and I look forward to continuing that conversation with you.