



Dear Neighbor,

My thanks to all of you in Hamden's 91st District for allowing me to represent you at the Capitol in 2013. Given that this was the year in which we set Connecticut's biennial budget, it was nothing short of a whirlwind session.

Obviously, my first priority is working to ensure that critical operational and bond funding remains constant in Hamden. I am pleased to report that we accomplished this goal. Hamden received \$32,459,098 in direct aid for the 2013 - 2014 fiscal year -- \$1,315, 325 more than last year. But this funding is only part of a larger set of issues we dealt with at the Legislature this year. From stronger gun safety laws to revising our education laws in order to give our school district the flexibility it needs, I approached every issue with a simple goal: to improve the lives of Hamden's residents.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve you. The next legislative session starts February 5, 2014. If you have ideas for legislation, please send them to me at Michael.DAgostino@cga.ct.gov.

Sincerely,

A NOTE ON RECYCLING:

We are in the process of updating our databases, so we can send these legislative reports electronically rather than wasting paper. If you have not already done so, you can email me at Michael.DAgostino@cga.ct.gov to let me know that you prefer an email update, rather than paper.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Michael D'Agostino

PROUDLY SERVING HAMDEN'S 91ST DISTRICT, FROM WHITNEYVILLE TO WESTWOODS

Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: 800-842-8267
Home: 203-230-9292
www.housedems.ct.gov/DAgostino

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MICHAEL D'AGOSTINO

Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: 800-842-8267
Home: 203-230-9292
www.housedems.ct.gov/DAgostino



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

MICHAEL D'AGOSTINO

PROUDLY SERVING HAMDEN'S 91ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
FROM WHITNEYVILLE TO WESTWOODS



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Michael D'Agostino

Capitol Phone: 800-842-8267
Home Phone: 203-230-9292
Email: Michael.DAgostino@cga.ct.gov

EDUCATION REFORM

After 13 years on the Hamden Board of Education, I was fortunate that Speaker Sharkey appointed me to the Legislature's Education Committee. I made sure the education reform law we passed included language that allows a town like Hamden that has a positive relationship with the local teachers' union to design its own collaborative teacher evaluation plan that can be phased in over time. The new language allows Hamden to obtain a waiver from the state evaluation model. This not only saves the schools approximately \$150,000, it enables us to implement an evaluation method that the Board of Education and our teachers carefully negotiated and agreed upon together.

Additionally, I supported the creation of the dedicated Office of Early Childhood Education. It is undisputed that the earlier - and the more - that our children read, the better they do long term in school. Hamden's public schools have been at the forefront of offering pre-school readiness to our residents. We could do much more if we received additional school readiness grants from the state. I will tenaciously pursue funding for this.

MORE COMMISSION

In addition to the Education Committee, I was appointed to the Speaker's Municipal Opportunities & Regional Efficiencies (MORE) Commission. This is a bipartisan, bicameral panel charged with helping communities reduce their costs and increase efficiencies through regional cooperation. I served on the Board of Education sub-committee, which drafted legislation setting the stage for regional approaches to education via a common school calendar.



Rep. D'Agostino talks with residents at the Whitney Center

BONDING FOR PROJECTS LARGE AND SMALL

I worked with our entire Hamden delegation, led by House Speaker Brendan Sharkey, to secure state bond money for projects in Hamden.

NEWHALL COMMUNITY CENTER

Hamden will receive more than \$5 million in bonding to transform the former Newhall Community Center into a new small business "incubator" hub. The project is anticipated to create 40 temporary jobs and more than 100 permanent jobs with a projected completion date of October 2014. The incubator will serve up to 20 new businesses. As these companies grow and expand to new locations, the business incubator will be able to welcome new start-ups. And more good news: the building itself is in the process of being placed on the State Historic Register.

CHURCH STREET HEALTH CLINIC

Due to budget cuts, the school-based health clinic (SBHC) at Church Street Elementary was scheduled to close its doors permanently, but by working in conjunction with the state Department of Public Health, I was able to restore \$30,000 in funding. The SBHC will re-open in a new site and will be operated by the Yale Child Study Center. The clinic at the school provides counseling, mental health screening, and health care for local students and their families. These services decrease hospitalization and Medicaid expenditures, increase student attendance, and help the school achieve early diagnosis and intervention for at-risk special education students.

SCHOOL SECURITY

The Hamden Public Schools received a state school security grant in the amount of \$152,505, which will be matched by \$107,873 from the town. The grant is part of the first round of Competitive Grants for school security. As the former Board Chairperson, I know that a safe and secure learning environment is the priority for every teacher, principal, school employee, and parent. This grant helps the town achieve that goal. Planned upgrades in Hamden schools include improved public address systems, digital two-way radio communications systems, as well as reinforced windows and doors.



Listening to concerns and issues

RELIABLE CARE FOR SENIORS

The Legislature continues our commitment to help our senior citizens be safe and secure. This year, I voted to ensure that Connecticut's model of Aging in Place became law. Keeping our seniors in their homes is paramount to their well-being and saves both the state and their families money.

I continue to work diligently to make sure that dedicated state and town programs for our seniors remained fully funded and viable. Programs like Elderly Rental and Property Tax Relief, and Heating Fuel Subsidies are critical for our seniors who live on a fixed and limited income. Supporting these programs is not just good public policy, it is essential for a successful community to ensure all of its residents are safe.

BRINGING YOUR STATE TAX DOLLARS HOME

I worked hard for Hamden to receive its fair share of state aid. Hamden received a total of \$32,459,098 in direct aid for the 2013 - 2014 fiscal year. This includes money for our schools, payments to Hamden to make up for tax exempt property (like Quinnipiac), local capital improvement and road improvement funds. We received \$1,315, 325 more than last year. Without this money Hamden services would be deeply cut and our taxes would be significantly higher.

