

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOSH ELLIOTT

PROUDLY SERVING HAMDEN - 88TH DISTRICT

Dear Neighbors,

This year's legislative session concluded on May 9th with the passage of adjustments to the second year of our two year State budget. The budget, overall, was much better than what passed last year. However, the final agreement did not retroactively cover the amount due to Hamden from an oversight in last year's budget, so in the end I voted no.

The Fiscal Year 19 budget did make significant restorations to important programs, but we did not do enough to address the overall systemic flaws in our tax structure. Without additional revenue, we are forced to make cuts to programs that hurt some of our most vulnerable - our elderly, disabled and low-income neighbors and friends. We should not be balancing the budget on the backs of the middle class and working poor. My no vote served as a message that we can do better.

The biennial budget passed last October did not fully reimburse Hamden for the \$1 million in additional car tax reimbursement, nor did it properly fund our educational cost sharing grant. Earlier in the session, I worked with the Hamden legislative delegation to successfully secure the release of \$856,025 that our town was due for the car tax cap reimbursement.

In addition to highlighting some positive bills we passed this session in this newsletter, I will also be laying out a blueprint for areas where change is needed; issues such as increasing the minimum wage, establishing an earned family and medical leave system, a fair work week, and the creation of alternative revenue sources. During the session, I helped spearhead the formation of the Progressive Democratic Caucus which will be working on these priorities. The new caucus will help create a more financially stable and economic-friendly environment for Connecticut residents to live and work in.

As residents, you can help inspire and make change. It is vital that I hear from you to learn what issues you are most passionate about and let you know how you can get more involved. I look forward to building a more sustainable future for Connecticut with all of you.

Sincerely,



BUDGET ADJUSTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Restores funding to the Medicare Savings and Renter's Rebate Programs.
- Restores \$12 million to the Husky A healthcare program which assists more than 13,000 people.
- Prevents bus and rail service cuts, any fare increases and keeps transportation projects on track.
- Restores and protects funding for Summer Youth Employment programs.

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CAPITOL UPDATE 2018

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Rep. Elliott stands in support with Homecare workers who came up to the State Capitol in support of fair pay and benefits.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOSH ELLIOTT

GOOD LEGISLATION THAT PASSED

FAIR PAY & BENEFITS FOR HOMECARE WORKERS

This session I was proud to support passage of legislation approving a contract that will raise wages, provide workers' compensation, and increase holiday pay for thousands of private-sector, personal-care assistants. These are workers who are directly employed by their elderly and disabled clients, but paid through state and federal programs. The legislation passed overwhelmingly in the House and unanimously in the Senate because it was the right thing to do. These are hardworking men and women who many times work around the clock to provide lifesaving, critical care for thousands of elderly residents and people who have disabilities.

PAY EQUITY FOR WOMEN

In Connecticut, women, on average, earn 83 cents for every dollar paid to men. This equates to a combined \$5.5 billion loss to our economy. This inequity is perpetuated by the practice of asking for salary history during the hiring process. This session, we strengthened our pay equity laws by preventing employers from asking about wage history which will help close the gender wage gap and promote equal pay for equal work.

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE

I believe in a system of electing the President of the United States by a majority vote to ensure that every vote counts. In order to do so, I supported legislation to enter Connecticut into the Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote. This will ensure that we have a one-person-one-vote system, rather than relying on an outdated Electoral College model, adopted during the time of slavery, which helped wealthy landowners maintain their grasp on political influence.

ACCESS TO FINANCIAL AID FOR DREAMERS

Allowing undocumented students ("Dreamers") access to institutional financial aid was simply a matter of fairness. I met many of these hard working students who told compelling stories and worked diligently on this legislation for several years. All they ask is to be given the same opportunities as their fellow classmates, and be given access to financial aid they already pay into. To be eligible, students must meet the requirements for in-state tuition and be age 30 or younger as of June 15, 2012 or have been 16 or younger upon arrival in the U.S. They must also have continuously lived in the country and file an affidavit with the institution they are attending that they have filed an application to legalize their status or will file one when eligible.



Rep. Elliott testifies at a Labor and Public Employees Public Hearing on paid family medical leave legislation.



At a press conference of a newly formed coalition of labor and working family groups Rep. Elliott speaks in support of An Act Concerning a Fair Work Week.



Rep. Elliott speaks with residents of Davenport Dunbar at a Seniors Forum he hosted back in January.



Rep. Elliott addresses a press conference on the legalization and regulation of recreational cannabis.

WHAT WE NEED TO WORK ON

INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE

This session I testified in support of legislation that was able to pass the Labor and Public Employees Committee to raise the minimum wage to \$15 by 2021. Unfortunately, this proposal did not have sufficient support to be called for a vote in the House. If the minimum wage had kept up with inflation from its high point in the 1970s, it would now be over \$20 an hour. We cannot expect Connecticut residents to support themselves in a high-cost state when a full-time, minimum-wage job pays barely over \$20,000 per year. Once we get the minimum salary to a livable wage, we can index it to inflation and prevent this problem from occurring in the future.

ESTABLISHING A FAIR WORK WEEK

This session, I worked in the Children's Committee on a bill to create a fair work week and eliminate the abusive practice of on-call scheduling for our state's big box retail, food service, hospitality, and home care workers. Hundreds of thousands of low wage workers struggle because of unpredictable work schedules. Employees are forced to work with little notice, maintain open availability for "on-call" shifts without any guarantee of work, and can have shifts cancelled last minute. When schedules for parents and caregivers are unstable, families struggle to meet basic expenses, arrange child care, and make doctor's appointments. Senate Bill 321 would have helped end on-call shifts by guaranteeing workers compensation for their unfairly lost time when hours are cut at the last minute.

EARNED FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

We also continued to work with the business community on earned family and medical leave. Every working person in Connecticut should have paid time off when they are caring for a newborn or a loved one gets sick. A medical leave system would be relatively inexpensive to administer and would be funded by employees by a contribution of up to 0.5% of an employee's earnings. New Jersey and New York already have paid leave laws in place and we should do the same to protect our workers. This is an issue I will continue to work on.

CREATING ALTERNATIVE REVENUE SOURCES

Legalization and Regulation of the Recreational Use of Cannabis - This session the Appropriations Committee passed a bill that would have regulated the legal use of cannabis. Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Massachusetts also now permit the sale of cannabis for adult use. Cannabis is also less addictive and less harmful than other legal substances (like alcohol, tobacco, and opioids), and some estimates show 71 percent of residents are in support of legalization. In the 3 years since legalization, Colorado has raised over \$500 million in revenue; money our state could use to fund other anti-drug programs, DUI enforcement and keeping other illegal, more harmful drugs off the streets.

"McWalmart" Bill - Big box stores often underpay workers in Connecticut as they send profits out of the state and local businesses must close due to the competition. It has been reported that some of these big box stores have protocols to encourage its workers to apply for state aid, so the average Connecticut taxpayer is essentially subsidizing businesses that underpay their employees. A "large employer fee" would offset this cost to the taxpayer.

Closing the Carried Interest Loophole - Hedge and equity fund managers pay the federal capital gains rate, not the federal income tax. Since these fund managers are providing a service, the money they make should be treated like income, not capital. Rectifying this misclassification on the state level would bring in over \$500 million in revenue every year.