

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOSH ELLIOTT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2019 Legislative Session has come to a close, and we have accomplished many of the goals set out for this year's agenda. I am proud to have worked on policies that support small businesses, workforce development and making our state a place where we can proudly raise our families.

We passed major legislation that will help the working families of Connecticut. Starting in October, the minimum wage will go up to \$11 an hour. Each subsequent year, it will go up an additional dollar until reaching \$15 an hour in 2023. This wage increase will result in dollars being spent in local communities around the state and help over 330,000 people improve their quality of life. Another huge victory for our working families is the passage of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance program which will be the most comprehensive and generous in the country. More details about this life-changing insurance program are included inside this newsletter, so keep reading.

Hamden, specifically, had some big victories this session. The state is transferring the 50-acre High Meadows Property located on Hartford Turnpike back to our town. This prime piece of real estate will be ideal for economic development, housing, or other purposes that will benefit the town. A huge benefit for Hamden is the increase in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding. The town will see an additional \$1.2 million in FY 2020 and an additional \$2.5 million for FY 2021. Overall, the town will receive \$34,393,207 in total state aid for FY 2020 and \$36,496,944 for FY 2021. Not included in the state budget are two projects we continue to advocate for through state bond funding. They are the much needed renovations to the Keefe Community Center to expand educational, recreational, and social services and a new Fire Station No. 2 which is 100 years old and is the busiest fire station in town.

The Progressive Democratic Caucus got off to a strong start this year. Two main taxation initiatives—equitable taxation so that the top earners pay their fair share and closing the carried interest tax loophole—are things we will continue to educate people about and fight for. The Mansion Tax was passed. We will continue to fight for a public health option and a fair work week as well.

As residents, you can help inspire and make change. The best way to connect with me is via email. Please reach out to let me know what issues you are most passionate about.

I look forward to building a more sustainable future for Connecticut with all of you.



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOSH ELLIOTT

THE STATE BUDGET

KEEPING CONNECTICUT RUNNING

Our biennial budget was delivered on time and under the constitutional spending cap. It is balanced and protects taxpayers into the future. We also included a plan for debt-free community college and eliminated the income tax on Social Security income. We are protecting our most vulnerable citizens, investing in the middle class, and encouraging economic growth for all of Connecticut. (HB 7424)

This legislation:

- Maintains the tax exemptions for Social Security income and the phase-in of a tax exemption on pension income to make CT more affordable to seniors
- Avoids a costly and disruptive nursing home strike
- Keeps the “Passport to the Parks” fund
- Increases education funding
- Protects the Care4Kids program
- Re-opens highway rest stops
- Repeals the Business Entity Tax starting next year
- Increases access to health care
- Provides a tax credit to craft beer breweries
- Incentivizes purchasing a zero-emission car to reduce greenhouse gases
- Protects the Medicare Savings Program, and increases funding for Meals on Wheels
- Establishes a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Health and Human Service Network

LEGISLATION WE SUCCESSFULLY PASSED:

PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE

GIVING WORKING FAMILIES THE SUPPORT THEY DESERVE

In the event of a medical emergency, Paid Family and Medical Leave allows workers to care for themselves or a loved one without having to face the threat of financial ruin. The program, funded by employee contributions, provides limited replacement wages so that patients and caregivers can take time off (up to 12 weeks during a 12-month period) and make ends meet. The program also expands the types of family members for whom an employee can take FMLA leave to ensure you can take care of the people you love.

(SB 1 and HB 7424, §§ 232-235, as amended by House “A” and “B”)

GUN SAFETY

COMMONSENSE PROTECTIONS

We passed three important gun safety laws this session. One, which will reduce gun thefts, requires that drivers keep their guns securely locked up in their cars. Another law regulates making “ghost guns” in your home including on a 3-D printer. Finally, Ethan’s Law requires the safe storage of firearms in a home with children under 18. (HB 7218, 7219, and 7223)

PROTECTING OUR PLANET

SECURING OUR FUTURE

Green energy is good for both the planet and our economy. We passed legislation that will help continue the deployment of solar energy, increasing green jobs and economic activity. Offshore wind generation is moving forward and will create good-paying jobs, boost economic development in the surrounding cities and towns, and help CT achieve our renewable energy goals. We also passed the State Water Plan, which defines our water supply as a “public trust” to ensure our water resources are protected, and that clean drinking water is accessible for all. (HB 5002, HB 7156, HJ 171)

PROTECTING OUR DEMOCRACY

EARLY VOTING INCREASES TURNOUT AND MAKES THE SYSTEM BETTER

Passing with a majority in both chambers of the General Assembly, we took the first step in amending the state constitution to allow early voting. The proposed change would allow for in-person voting for three days leading up to Election Day for any state or municipal election or referendum and also provides for no-excuse absentee voting. If approved again in the 2021 legislative session, it will appear as a question on the 2022 general election ballot. (HJ 161)

LOOKING TO 2020

Here are a few issues that I am passionate and that I will continue working on:

- **INCREASING VACCINATION RATES-** Protecting the public health is a responsibility of the government. The vocal minority opposed to vaccination on the basis of false information continues to overshadow the science and safety of immunization.
- **LEGALIZATION OF CANNABIS-** Three chairs of major committees made progress on crafting the language of a legalization and regulation bill. Next year, we will need to ensure that constituents and advocates continue making their voices heard so that we can turn that language into law.
- **EXPANDING VOTING-** Parolees do not have the ability to vote. This legislation has been in the works for a number of years, and we finally got this passed in the House, but not the Senate. We will continue working on this to ensure everyone has a right to vote, and for folks who were previously incarcerated, ensuring that this right is granted automatically.
- **FREE TELEPHONE CALLS FOR INCARCERATED PEOPLE-** Keeping the bonds strong between incarcerated individuals and their families and friends at home by allowing them to communicate regularly leads to reduced recidivism and increased success in re-integrating after serving their sentence. Better outcomes are derived when we treat humans like humans.

