

State Representative

# ANDY FLEISCHMANN

## Reforming our Health Care System

Over 750,000 Connecticut residents went without health insurance at some point during 2007 or 2008. Healthcare costs everyone more each year and taxpayers pay more to supplement the people who do not have it. This year, the General Assembly took major steps towards reforming our broken healthcare system with the passage of two historic healthcare bills:

### Creating the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership

VETOED BY GOVERNOR  
PA 09-147 | HB 6582

- » Would have opened the state health plan to small businesses, non-profits, and cities/towns
- » Would have provided at least \$70 million savings to the state, when we need it most
- » Would have reduced taxes with improved bargaining power and lower administrative costs
- » Would have helped small businesses access quality, affordable health care for employees
- » Would have been an important step toward streamlining health care state-wide

### Establishing the Sustinet Plan

GUBERNATORIAL VETO OVERRIDDEN — STATUTE EFFECTIVE 07/01/09  
PA 09-148 | HB 6600

- » Provides a framework for expanding high quality coverage to Connecticut residents
- » Establishes an eleven-member board of health care providers and experts
- » Creates new public health insurance options that will be affordable
- » Allows Connecticut to take full advantage of Obama's federal reforms

Taken together, these bills would have made Connecticut maximally ready for federal reforms that provide affordable, quality care for all.

While I am extremely disappointed that Governor Rell vetoed these important measures – rejecting an opportunity to provide relief for families and businesses fighting high health care costs – I'm glad to report that the General Assembly was able to override the governor's veto of the Sustinet plan. As a result, Connecticut will continue to be a leader in the fight to reform our health care system.



Representative Fleischmann with West Hartford Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Karen List

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## CAPITOL NEWS 2009





On the floor of the House, Representative Andy Fleischmann speaks with Representative Ed Jutila

State Representative  
**Andy Fleischmann**

**Providing for our Armed Forces Members & their Families**

The service and sacrifices of our Armed Forces members must always be valued and honored. This session we passed several new laws to aid them and their families.

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

- PA 09-10 | HB 6406 – EFFECTIVE: Upon passage
- » Ensures that members of the armed forces can receive transitional behavioral health services
  - » Applies to families and dependents of armed forces members as well

**RELIEF FOR MILITARY FAMILIES**

- PA 09-163 | HB 6394 – EFFECTIVE: Upon passage
- » Expands the Military Family Relief Fund
  - » Allows immediate relatives of members not on active duty to receive benefits
  - » Provides grants to pay for essential personal or household items when in hardship

**Assisting our Seniors**

Improving the lives of seniors so they may be healthy, safe, and economically secure is a key role of state government. To improve seniors' overall quality of life, we passed several new legislative initiatives;

**AFFORDABLE ELDERLY HOMECARE**

- PA 09-64 | SB 814 – EFFECTIVE: 04.01.10
- » Expands access to affordable homecare support services
  - » Helps seniors remain independent in their own homes rather than nursing homes
  - » Expands personal care assistance services to more of our seniors

**LOCATING MISSING SENIORS**

- PA 09-109 | SB 451 – EFFECTIVE: 07.01.09
- » Creates an emergency notification system similar to the Amber Alert
  - » Allows law enforcement agencies to issue public alerts for missing seniors

**SENIOR DISCOUNT PROGRAMS**

- PA 09-53 | HB 5674 – EFFECTIVE: 10.01.09
- » Provides seniors with greater access to senior citizen discount programs
  - » Requires businesses to disclose details of programs and eligibility requirements

**PATIENTS' RIGHTS AT NURSING HOMES**

- PA 09-168 | SB 455 – EFFECTIVE: 10.01.09
- » Expands the Nursing Home Bill of Rights to prohibit the solicitation of donations or gifts as a condition of admission
  - » Extends protections to third parties, such as families and friends



West Hartford residents Win Heimer, Kevin Lynch; Representatives Beth Bye, David McCluskey, Andy Fleischmann; and Mayor Slifka at Bishops' Corner defending public library funding

**GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS**

- PA 09-81 | HB 6496 – EFFECTIVE: 10.01.09
- » Phases out hazardous cleaning chemicals currently used in most schools
  - » Promotes use of safe green cleaning products
  - » Develops a state list of approved non-toxic cleaning products – most of which cost less than harsh, synthetic cleaners



**BANNING TOXIC BISPHENOL-A**

- PA 09-103 | HB 6572 – EFFECTIVE: 10.01.09
- » Bans bisphenol-A (BPA), a highly toxic and bio-active industrial chemical
  - » Makes baby bottles, food containers and beverage containers safer for children
  - » Establishes Connecticut as a national leader in consumer protection, and as a model for federal regulation

**Protecting Schools & Libraries**

- One of my top priorities of 2009 was protecting critical state support for public schools, libraries and family resource centers. I'm glad to report that the budget enacted on August 30<sup>th</sup> included:
- » Level funding for West Hartford's education cost sharing grant
  - » Continued funding for the library programs that the governor sought to cut
  - » Level funding for West Hartford – and all state – family resource centers

**HEALTH INSURANCE FOR AUTISM TREATMENTS**

- PA 09-115 | SB 301 – EFFECTIVE: 01.01.10
- Requires insurance coverage of critical treatments and benefits that will greatly help the lives of people with autism.
- Treatments covered include:*
- » The diagnosis to determine if an individual has an autism spectrum disorder
  - » Behavioral therapies for children 14 years old or younger including applied behavior analysis and cognitive behavioral therapy
  - » Prescription drugs

- » Psychiatric and psychological services
  - » Physical and occupational therapy
  - » Speech and language pathology services
- The results:*
- » Higher quality of life for individuals on the autism spectrum
  - » Decrease in lifetime costs of treatment
  - » Comprehensive coverage – in line with that of eleven other progressive states

**Protecting Your Home, Savings, & Credit**

We took action to aid consumers hurt by recent events and protect you from the recent sub-prime mortgage crisis and corrupt money managers (like Bernie Madoff)

**SAFEGUARDS AGAINST MORTGAGE FORECLOSURES**

- PA 09-209 | SB 948 – EFFECTIVE: 07.01.09/10.01.09
- » Implements federal reforms
  - » Creates many new safeguards against future mortgage foreclosures to better protect homeowners
  - » Regulates the mortgage lending process
  - » Expands eligibility for state foreclosure prevention programs

**PROTECTING COLLEGE STUDENTS' CREDIT**

- PA 09-167 | HB 6483 – EFFECTIVE: 07.01.09
- » Requires the Board of Governors of Higher Education to adopt policies that regulate credit card marketing practices on public college campuses
  - » Protects young consumers from being unfairly targeted

**EMERGENCY MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE**

- PA 09-219 | HB 6481 – EFFECTIVE: 07.01.09/10.01.09
- » Expands eligibility for the Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program
  - » Assists more families so that their loss of income due to illness or job-loss won't result in a family losing their home

**PREVENTING BLIGHT**

- PA 09-144 | SB 951 – EFFECTIVE: 10.01.09
- » Remedies blighted properties created by the foreclosure crisis
  - » Provides funding for maintenance to improve vacant foreclosed properties
  - » Allows municipalities to enforce the requirement to repair or maintain vacant real estate using current laws



Believe it or not, this is (the hand of) President Obama shaking Representative Fleischmann's hand in October of this year

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