



Same Day Voter Registration

For the past 11 years, I have advocated for Election Day voter registration. This year I am glad to say these efforts finally paid off. Connecticut voters now have the right to register to vote and cast a ballot on Election Day. At a single location in each town, voters who haven't registered will be able to register, have their names checked against the statewide voter database, and – if they're not registered elsewhere – vote.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I helped this bill win committee approval despite strong opposition. Ensuring that all eligible voters have the right to participate in our democracy is critical to the health of our society, and we can be proud that Connecticut has now joined a growing list of states that allow Election Day registration – and experience higher levels of voter turnout than other states.

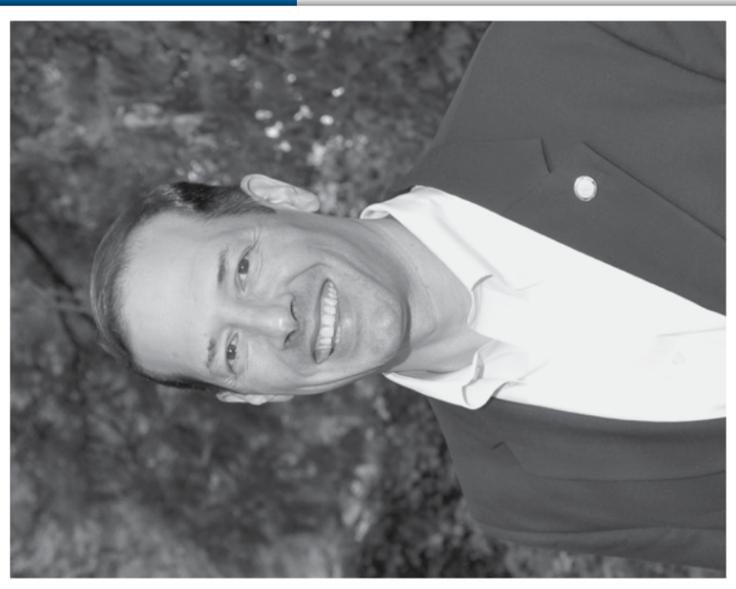
Addressing the Concerns of Children with Special Needs

This year, as Chairman of the Education Committee, I worked to strengthen the state's special education laws by establishing a Deaf Child's Bill of Rights. This new section of statute will require that, for students who are deaf or hearing impaired, individualized education plans (IEP's) include language and communication plans that reflect that child's specific needs.

In addition, we worked to improve communication between schools and parents of children with special needs. After a student has been assessed for possible placement in special education, parents can now meet with educators to discuss the planning and placement process – before their children are placed in special education programs. This added step will ensure that parents and students fully understand the assessment and IEP processes, and their rights and roles within those processes.

State Representative
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CAPITOL UPDATE 2012

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Dear Neighbor,

From jobs to education to improving our response to natural disasters, the General Assembly helped people in many ways this year.

We passed comprehensive jobs legislation that will particularly help small businesses. We expanded voting rights, further protected victims of domestic violence, and improved our storm response system.

And, as House Chairman of the Education Committee, I'm most happy to say that we enacted landmark education reform, changes that led U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan to call Connecticut a leader in this area.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about these issues or any others. Best wishes to you and your family for a happy, healthy summer season.

Sincerely,

Improving Storm Response in Connecticut

In the aftermath of the October Nor'easter and Hurricane Irene, I co-sponsored legislation to better prepare our state for future storms and avoid the lengthy loss of utility services we experienced last fall. Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response, with penalties of up to 2.5% of an electric or gas company's annual distribution revenue – approximately \$25 million in the case of Connecticut Light & Power.

Reducing Domestic Violence

We have made great progress helping families affected by domestic violence in recent years, but the problem persists. Building on earlier successes, this spring we strengthened the state's domestic violence laws to better protect victims and hold abusers accountable by giving police officers the tools they need to better identify and respond to domestic violence calls. We also improved access to – and enforcement of – protective and restraining orders. Taken together, these steps will improve the safety of those targeted by abusive individuals.

Landmark Education Reform

As House Chairman of the Education Committee I worked with parents, teachers, school principals, boards of education members and superintendents to make sure that this year's historic improvements to our education system meet the needs of Connecticut's children. The reforms we enacted will provide teachers with additional professional support and tools to help students succeed in the classroom.

In addition, we focused on expanding access to early education, turning around low-performing schools, creating better systems for evaluating administrators and teachers, and increasing financial support to school districts with the greatest needs – like ours in West Hartford. The reforms enacted this year will help improve the education all students receive, better preparing them for college and jobs in the 21st century workplace.

Key reforms we put in place include:

- Expanding pre-school – 1,000 new seats for children in need and a statewide survey of early childhood space needs
- Strengthening early reading assessments and programs to support early reading challenges
- Improving evaluation and professional support for teachers and administrators
- Creating a "Commissioner's Network" to turn around 25 of Connecticut's lowest performing schools
- Increasing state support for districts in need – including \$919,940 in additional support for West Hartford Public Schools



Rep. Fleischmann reads with West Hartford kindergartners.

Creating Jobs

This year, I kept my commitment to job growth and economic recovery with new legislation during special session that expands the Small Business Express Program, allowing an estimated 3,600 additional businesses to gain access to state support. The program allows small businesses to access much needed funding for capital investments and hiring. In addition, the bill:

- Launches a new program to support a business's cost of hiring unemployed veterans for the first 180 days of their new job
- Creates a new "Connecticut Made" program to promote products manufactured here in our state
- Allows the state Department of Economic and Community Development to give preference for loans and tax incentives to companies that relocate jobs from overseas to Connecticut

We also created new opportunities for young people by funding the Youth Employment Summer Jobs program, and expanded adult evening education programs.

Additional high level jobs will result from funding for the Jackson Labs project at the UConn Health Center. This step, which I strongly supported, will allow Connecticut to build on investments in bioscience and biotechnology we have already made.

In the long run, taken together, these efforts will help make our state a world leader in the development of new treatments for cancer and other diseases – and will help spur job growth in our region.



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