

CAPITOL UPDATE 2012

Medicare Eligibility Preserved

This legislation ensures thousands of seniors and people with disabilities can continue to use the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) to help pay for their Medicare co-pays and deductibles. The legislation raises the income limit for the MSP in order to accommodate a 3.6 percent Social Security cost of living increase (COLA) which took effect January 1. It would have been a tragic irony if a welcome increase in Social Security benefits caused Connecticut residents to become ineligible for these Medicare benefits.

Grandparent's Rights

Family relationships are complicated and grandparents can sometimes be separated from their grandchildren's lives, particularly when divorce or disagreements occur. This new law helps grandparents seeking visitation rights by providing guidance showing that a denial of these visitation rights could cause harm to the child. Decisions should be made in a child's best interest and this legislation helps do that.

Price Gouging and Pain at the Pump

Faced with the reality of a global fuel dilemma, the legislature acted in a bipartisan manner and capped the state petroleum gross receipts tax (GRT) on motor fuels. We also passed new anti-price gouging laws to protect consumers from oil companies and gasoline dealers that try to exploit abnormal market conditions for profit.



Rep. Fox gives his testimony at a public hearing in favor of reforming Hospice regulations. As a co-sponsor of a of this new legislation, he helped pave the way for a future facility to open and care for the terminally ill in the Stamford area.



State Representative **DAN FOX**

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Dear Neighbors:

It is a great privilege to serve as your voice at the State Capitol. From jobs to education to improved response to natural disasters, the legislature helped citizens across our state in numerous ways in 2012.

In my opinion, one of the most important bills passed by the legislature during our recently concluded session was House Bill 5499, An Act Concerning Regulations Relating to Hospice Care.

In December 2011, after over ten years of service to our community, Stamford's Rosenthal Hospice closed its doors. After having assisted over 1,100 local families through quite possibly the most difficult time of their lives our city was suddenly and unfortunately without a hospice facility.

Working with other members of the legislature, I led efforts to pass reforms to the outdated regulations governing hospice care in Connecticut. Now, more small community based facilities, whose primary purpose is hospice care, can operate and provide this unique service in Stamford in the future.

I've worked to be an effective and responsive legislator looking to improve the lives of all those who call the Cove, Glenbrook, and Stamford's East Side home.

I hope this report is informative. I'm happy to answer any questions about these issues or any others facing our state or your family. Together we can create a better future for our families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Fox".

JOB GROWTH

EDUCATION



Sewage Spill Alerts

In March 2011, the Wallack's Point neighborhood suffered a terrible sewage spill. I co-sponsored new and very important legislation that recognizes how sewage spills can impact the health and property of residents as well as take an environmental toll on our waterways and beaches. Spill alerts will now occur for breaches at sewage treatment plants, whether caused by storm overflow or operational problems. The new law establishes a process to inform the public whenever a sewage spill occurs by requiring the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to post information on sewage spills on the agency's website beginning in July 2014.

Coastal Management

With Stamford being part of the state's shoreline, special attention to coastal management at the state level becomes remarkably important. Coastal management balances and protects the interests of municipalities, individual property owners and the state from damage caused by rising sea levels in Long Island Sound, increased coastal flooding and severe erosion. New legislation creates a framework to address those concerns and encourages long-term coastal management planning efforts in areas repeatedly damaged by storms.

Hospice Care

With just two licensed hospices in the state, this new law will permit more hospices to follow federal standards, giving smaller hospice facilities the opportunity to provide high quality services that allow patients to stay closer to family and friends. This bill will help our state to ensure that residents have access to health care services across the full continuum of care.

Life Support Care at Home

Beginning in October, a new two-year pilot program will start in Fairfield County examining the benefits and impact of allowing individuals requiring continuous skilled care to choose and hire their own nurses and respiratory therapists in an effort to better control their home environments. Currently, Medicaid rules generally require these professionals to be hired by home health care agencies. The program will still be physician supervised and approved by the Department of Social Services.

Job are Priority #1

This session, we created new job opportunities with the Small Business Express program, streamlining the application process and funding the program with \$1 million. We also supported opportunities for young people by funding the Youth Employment Summer Jobs Program and opportunities for adults through evening education programs. A Connecticut Made initiative was also encouraged to promote products from local businesses.

Additionally high level job opportunities will result from economic development funding for the Jackson Labs project which builds on our decision to become a world leader in bioscience and biotechnology.



Touring the Chelsea Piers complex in Stamford with Senator Leone and Representative Gerald Fox.

Storm Response

New legislation helps ensure Connecticut residents will not have to endure the hardships similar to last October's Nor'easter and Tropical Storm Irene with sweeping reforms to better prepare for future events and avoid widespread and lengthy loss of utility service. Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response with corresponding penalties of up to 2.5 percent of an electric or gas company's annual distribution revenue, which could amount to millions of dollars in fines.

**Si necesita información adicional o tiene preguntas,
por favor contácteme:
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www.housedems.ct.gov/FoxD
Email me at dan.fox@cga.ct.gov**

Education Reform

Our education initiative provides new support to help turn around underperforming schools. The education reform package has long-term implications for our children and for the state's economic well-being. The better we prepare children for the 21st Century workforce, the stronger we'll make Connecticut's economy. The bill:

- Includes more funding for school-based health centers and family resource centers.
- Recognizes the critical importance of early childhood education by underwriting 1,000 school readiness slots for preschoolers and funding initiatives to improve early reading success.
- Creates the Commissioner's Network, to provide the intensive supports and interventions needed to turn around 25 of the most chronically low-performing schools.
- Gives the state commissioner of education the needed authority to develop or modify plans with teachers and parents at "turnaround" schools.



Leading the House in the "Pledge of Allegiance"

Permanent Absentee Ballots for the Disabled

Any Stamford resident who is permanently physically disabled will now be able to participate in every election thanks to absentee ballots that will be provided to them by the Stamford Registrar of Voters. Instead of having to request an absentee ballot for each election, an application will be sent to their residence, making the process more convenient.