



# Capitol Briefs

## Eminent Domain—Good but not Great

Finally, the third year after the Supreme court decision on the Kelo case, the Connecticut General Assembly addressed eminent domain.

Parts of the legislation do good things, for instance a town cannot take a property by eminent domain to improve local revenues. The legislative body has to approve any taking by a two-thirds vote; owners must be compensated at 125% of the appraised value; and

owners can ask the Superior Court to enjoin the taking if proper procedures are not followed.

On the other side of the coin, municipalities can still take properties by eminent domain for economic development purposes, which for me was the whole purpose of changing our eminent domain statutes!

There is next year—I'll try again!

## Home Care for Seniors

At last! At last! We finally realized that with a little help many of our seniors could remain at home.

The program—Connecticut Home Care Trust Fund is administered by the Comptroller. People can set up individual savings accounts for costs for seniors not covered by insurance.



This way seniors can stay home or in a non-institutional setting.

Interest on the account is exempt from the state income tax, and withdrawals can be made to cover care expenses, such as chores, companion services, meals and transportation to name a few.

In the state funded program, seniors can hire their own personal care assistants without using an agency!

Major, major step towards a healthy and independent life!

## Gun Give Away—No! No!

If you give a person who cannot legally possess a firearm access to your firearms, you have committed either a Class B or a Class C felony, depending on the number of firearms involved. Clearly, the intention of this law is to stop the gun trafficking which is rampant in Connecticut. The hope also is that enforcement of this law will save lives.

An additional part of this bill is the requirement that if a person's gun is lost or stolen it must be reported within 72 hours. Not to do so is a Class C felony!

Again, this is to get a handle on the black market trade in stolen guns!

Let's hope it helps!



State Representative  
**Mary G. Fritz**



News for the 90<sup>th</sup>

Cheshire • Wallingford

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### CLIP AND SAVE!

Important Telephone Numbers	
ConnPACE	1-800-423-5026
Medicare Hotline	1-800-633-4227
CT Partnership for Long-Term Care	1-800-547-3443
Commission on Aging	1-860-240-5200
Medicare Advocacy	1-800-262-4414
Connecticut Legal Assistance	1-800-413-7796
New Car "Lemons"	1-860-713-6120
Consumer Protection	1-800-842-2649
Tax Department	1-800-382-9463
Unclaimed Property Hotline	1-800-833-7318

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**MARY FRITZ**  
Legislative Update 2007  
CHESHIRE • WALLINGFORD



Dear Neighbor:

*After a special session, the General Assembly of 2007 finally finished its business on June 28<sup>th</sup>.*

*Although the session was hectic, we did address many issues from eminent domain to healthcare for children, from energy to teachers' retirement.*

*Beyond the issues, the budget which passed meant a significant increase in dollars for the towns of Cheshire and Wallingford—our taxes coming home. There were no increases in taxes, except the cigarette tax, and yet, we kept the property tax deduction of \$500.*

*Your letters, e-mails and phone calls do help me to know your concerns and how to address them. We make a great team! Together, we make life better for the people of the 90<sup>th</sup> District and the State of Connecticut.*

*Thank you for the privilege of serving you!*

Sincerely,  
*Mary G. Fritz*  
Mary G. Fritz, 90<sup>th</sup> District  
Deputy Speaker

## Plants and Poles

The power line project has become an unwelcome presence in our neighborhoods. You can imagine my shock as I drove around the area on Route 68 heading east when I saw how all the areas under the poles were clear cut to the ground! Barren! Bare! I thought Wallingford had become a ski resort and these were the new trails!

I went through neighborhoods and saw the same situation over and over again. I decided this was unacceptable! We might have lost the fight on the undergrounding of the lines, but we were not going to lose the fight on the clear cutting.

So I introduced legislation, and with the help of my fellow legislators, a bill passed which requires Connecticut Light and Power to replant all the rights-of-ways that were clear cut. The Siting Council is the agency of oversight to make it happen.

My plan is to make sure the bases of the towers are covered and that our neighborhoods return to their natural beauty!



# AROUND AND ABOUT



**\$'s for Vo-Ag:** Finally, the state has increased the per student grant to Vo-Ag Centers from \$700 to \$1,350. Additionally, a Vo-Ag Center District can charge the sending district tuition, per student, up to \$7,992. This is a big windfall for Wallingford.



**Invasive Plants:** Money was included in the budget to control invasive plants in the state. The dollars will be used to develop a rapid response policy and to hire a coordinator to educate the public and run the program. Grants will be available to help communities to control invasive species on public lands and in public waters! Saving our state beauty!



**Farmland Preservation:** This creates a loan program to help towns purchase agricultural land. The loan cannot exceed five years, and there is no interest. Not only is this a means of preserving agriculture, it protects it too!



**Recycling Reaches New Level:** After three years, finally we passed a bill which sets up a system to collect and recycle covered electronic devices: TV's, computers, etc. Starting January 1, 2009, manufacturers of such devices must participate in the program to finance the collection, transportation and recycling of those products. After January 1, 2011, these devices may not be discarded in a solid waste facility, except a transfer station. This sets us on the path for a cleaner future!



**D.N.A. and Rape:** Finally, the statute of limitations on rape has been eliminated! The advent of D.N.A. science and its conclusiveness resulted, this year, in this change!



**Pension Protection:** The Teachers' Retirement system is finally in great shape—thirty-year general obligation bonds of \$2 billion to fund the unfunded liability of the system. While the bonds are outstanding, money will automatically be appropriated, which is actuarially required annually. About Time!!!



**Veteran Funerals:** Any protest at the funeral of a veteran will be a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in prison, a fine of up to \$2,000, or both. Protesters must stay at least 150 ft. away from any part of the ceremony. Honor is the only demonstration that should be present at our veterans' funerals.



**Brownfield's Bonanza:** Sets up a system to reclaim and clean up our aging industrial infrastructure. The Connecticut Development Agency can guarantee bank loans and issue bonds on behalf of towns to accomplish these goals. Owners can voluntarily clean up their properties, and the conditions under which the state can sue such owners have been greatly broadened. This could change the look of our city landscapes.



# BUDGET BONANZA



## Cheshire

Grants 07-08	FY 07-08
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$2,458,275
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$189,010
Town Aid Roads	\$205,131
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$182,415
Pequot/Mohegan Aid	\$2,096,131
Adult Education	\$27,915
School Transportation	\$322,385
Educational Cost Sharing	\$8,907,078
<b>Total State Aid</b>	<b>\$14,388,340</b>
<b>An Increase of \$663,610 over the 06-07 Budget</b>	

## Wallingford

Grants 07-08	FY 07-08
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$57,384
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$426,543
Town Aid Roads	\$276,624
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$299,146
Pequot/Mohegan Aid	\$300,973
Adult Education	\$232,057
School Transportation	\$527,248
Educational Cost Sharing	\$20,536,835
<b>Total State Aid</b>	<b>\$22,656,810</b>
<b>An Increase of \$1,814,934 over the 06-07 Budget</b>	

## Prison \$'s Coming Home

Because of the effluence problem at the prisons in Cheshire, which is way over the agreed limit to enter the treatment plant, I was successful in securing \$500,000 for Cheshire. The long-range hope is that O.P.M., Corrections and the town will draw up a new contract! Until then, I'll keep collecting money for Cheshire.

**Mark Your  Now!**

This year's *sales tax-free week for back to school shopping* will run from Sunday, **August 19<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup>**. It applies to clothing and footwear under \$300.

## Energy—Efficiency—Generation—Assistance

Finally, the state is required to fix its own buildings and make them “green” and efficient. The sales tax exemption is extended for the purchase of energy efficient appliances. Money is available for small scale generation projects, for co-generation, for distributed generation (micro-turbines and fuel cells) to name a few projects. The Department of Public Utility control can now order electric companies to submit proposals, starting in 2009, to build power plants if the market does not provide enough capacity.



So, in the Energy bill there are “carrots”—incentives to address energy efficiency, and there are “sticks”—forcing companies to develop generation. For Wallingford, a member of C.M.E.E.C. (Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative), “on or before January 1, 2010, municipal utilities located in southwest Connecticut shall be eligible for awards of not less than \$200 per kilowatt of such resources.”

## Keep In Touch With Mary Fritz

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2007 Senior Laws  
2007 Education Laws  
2007 Laws Affecting Veterans  
2007 Business Laws



*Working for you*