



Capitol Briefs

YOU DECIDE

November 4, 2008 - Election Day

“Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to permit any person who will have attained the age of eighteen years on or before the day of a regular election to vote in the primary for such regular election?”

Voters have the final say. If a majority of those voting in the general election approves this amendment, it will become part of the State Constitution.



Toxic Toys: Protecting our children is one of our most important jobs. This year, we established limits and standards regarding hazardous substances which might be in our children’s toys and/or other articles used by children. The Department of Consumer Protection must post on its website toys and products that



are banned. There also will be warning labels, if products contain lead paint! Your input on this was terrific! Thank you!

Mark Your  Now!

This year’s *sales tax-free week for back to school shopping* will run from *Sunday, August 17th through Saturday, August 23rd*. It applies to clothing and footwear under \$300.

Keep In Touch With Mary Fritz

At the Capitol:
1-800-842-1902
In the District:
(203) 269-1169

2008 Senior Laws
2008 Education Laws
2008 Major Public Acts
2008 Business Laws



Working for you

State Representative
Mary G. Fritz



News for the 90th

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
News for the 90th - 2008
CHESHIRE • WALLINGFORD



Dear Neighbor:



As you know, there were two special sessions in 2008: one dealing with the home invasions in Cheshire, and another one re-establishing the conveyance tax.

The first session was very productive, because it established the crime of home invasion and made it a capital crime. This is what I had recommended at the rally at Bartlem Park in August. Additionally, I had sponsored legislation to do the same thing. Without the hard work of the people of Cheshire and surrounding towns, I do not think the state would have responded as rapidly.

With difficult economic times, we followed the budget that was put in place in 2007. It increased the Education Cost Sharing Grant by 4.4% and kept intact the \$500 property tax credit on the state income tax.

Your letters, calls and e-mails help me a great deal to serve you. We make a great team serving the people of Cheshire and Wallingford.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you.

Time to Sow

As you may recall, last year, I passed legislation which forced Northeast Utilities to re-plant rights-of-way where the new 345-kV lines were to go.

The time has now come to “sow.” In other words, it is time to re-plant those rights-of-way.

This is how the program will work. A neighborhood would get together and decide about the planting and form a committee. The committee would then choose a landscaper and direct this person to complete the project—all paid for by Northeast Utilities.

Now, I am looking for people in the neighborhoods who are ready and willing to get the neighbors together.

Since fall is the best time to plant, I need to hear from you—(269-1169). We need to have the process set up for the fall.

Remember, it’s time to sow!



AROUND AND ABOUT



School Funding: Big change! Starting in 2010, there is a change in the minimum budget requirement for education by the towns. All towns will have to allocate at least one-half of any annual Education Cost Sharing Grant increase to increased education spending!



Face of Connecticut: A new account was created in the General Fund which caps the state's contribution to the Farmland Preservation Grant Program at \$20,000 an acre. There is also a new Community Farms Grant Program for farmland not eligible for other preservation programs.



Nursing Home Changes: There were two. One increased the slots for the Money Follows the Person Program from 700 to 5,000. This means the money which would have been paid to keep you in a nursing home now can be used to keep a person home with care. The second really deinstitutionalized nursing homes by setting up a system of small homes in the community. This pilot program allows for the establishment of ten small houses. The program will be set up by the Department of Social Services and will have to comply with all the state requirements for regular nursing homes.



Gold Star License Plate: As a result of a call from my Wallingford constituent, Jesse, I asked the Veterans' Committee to remove the \$10 charge for the Gold Star License Plate. My belief clearly is that a loved one had already given their life for us, how much more can we ask from their relatives! Thanks for the input.



Help for Wineries: As you know, wineries are an important part of agriculture in Connecticut. Before this session, wineries were limited regarding the purchase of the grapes to make wine. The bill, which made it possible for a vintner to lease land to grow grapes, does not require the land to be adjacent to the property! However, the requirement remains that the permittee has to own at least five acres of land outright for the winery!



Autism Help: Finally, health insurance policies will have to cover all therapy services needed to treat autism spectrum disorders, if the policies cover these services for other conditions or diseases. About Time!



Hospice Help: Starting in January 2009, the full spectrum of hospice-type services must be provided to Medicaid patients. The Department of Social Services must amend the state Medicaid plan.



YOUR MONEY COMING HOME



Cheshire

Grants 08-09	FY 08-09
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$2,482,259
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$185,798
Town Aid Roads	\$204,015
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$185,740
Pequot/Mohegan Aid	\$2,927,366
Adult Education	\$29,593
School Transportation	\$298,503
Educational Cost Sharing	\$9,298,837
Total State Aid	\$15,612,111
An Increase of \$1,223,771 over the 07-08 Budget	

Wallingford

Grants 08-09	FY 08-09
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$59,170
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$431,156
Town Aid Roads	\$276,833
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$302,909
Pequot/Mohegan Aid	\$343,962
Adult Education	\$249,031
School Transportation	\$532,217
Educational Cost Sharing	\$21,440,233
Total State Aid	\$23,635,511
An Increase of \$978,701 over the 07-08 Budget	

Money for a Complex

Several years ago at the Cheshire Town Council legislative meeting, a request was made by dozens of parents to please try and get money for synthetic turf for the football/band complex at Cheshire High School. As you know, this field is used not only for football, but also field hockey and the band, and annually for "Music in Motion." Its overuse has reduced it to pretty bad shape. This year, I went to Speaker Amann and explained the situation and the necessity of getting bond funds for this project. Recognizing the need, the Speaker got me \$525,000 for the project. I believe very strongly in keeping kids on fields! It keeps them out of trouble! This is your money coming home!



Connecticut Addresses Global Warming

This law mandates reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and 2050. Changes are also put in place to accomplish these reductions. Connecticut joins California, Hawaii, New Jersey, and Washington in setting state caps. The Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, working with non-profit regional air quality organizations, will publish a baseline inventory of the emissions so they can enact regulations to address the problem. It's called minding Connecticut for the health of generations to come.



Teenage Drivers

Due to the rash of untimely deaths of Connecticut teenage drivers, many rules for 16- and 17-year-old drivers were changed. I am only covering the highlights. If you would like a complete rundown of all the changes, please call my office.



Some of the highlights are:

- It applies to all 16- and 17-year-old drivers after August 1, 2008.
- Teens have to have 40 hours behind-the-wheel, on-the-road training.
- Parents must complete a two-hour class on teen driving laws.
- Seat belts must be worn by all passengers of 16- and 17-year-old drivers.
- Once licensed, there is an 11:00 P.M. curfew.
- For the first six months, there can be no passengers, except parents, instructors, or persons 20 years of age or more.
- For the second six months, there can be no passengers under age 20, with the exception of immediate family members.

Hopefully, these changes will help protect our young people from themselves.