



Rep. Genga meets with Governor Dannel Malloy
and East Hartford Mayor Marcia Leclerc.

Dear Neighbor:

From jobs to education to improved response to natural disasters, the legislature helped citizens across our state in many ways in 2012.

It started last October when we passed comprehensive, bipartisan jobs legislation that invested hundreds of millions of dollars in small businesses, gave firms hiring incentives, aligned education programs with jobs-in-demand, encouraged entrepreneurship and innovation and eliminated red-tape for growing companies.

This spring, we balanced a budget by keeping our funding promise to cities and towns without raising taxes. Historic changes were made to our educational system so our children can succeed. We made it easier for people to exercise voting rights and demanded that utility companies respond better when storms and crises hit. We repealed a death penalty law that wasn't working and further protected victims of domestic violence.

Along the way, we helped children with special needs by improving Individualized Education Plans and creating a study on workforce development, training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

In addition, I worked on several bills important to East Hartford, including \$4 million to expand and renovate Raymond Library.

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,

Henry Genga

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State Representative

Henry Genga

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CAPITOL UPDATE 2012

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State Representative **HENRY GENGA**

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2012 Budget is Historic

The 2012 session of the General Assembly was “a truly historic session” and brought exciting changes to education, elections, utility storm response and the state’s Blue Laws.

We faced historic challenges and passed historic legislation. Education reform, storm response by utilities, ending the last vestiges of the state’s Puritan Blue Laws, allowing medical marijuana use – all of these policy initiatives are in a word: historic.

One of the hallmarks of the 2012 session was the passage of a fiscal year 2013 budget adjustment bill that kept our funding promise to cities and towns without raising taxes.

A year ago, we dealt with a shortfall in excess of \$3 billion – 15 percent of our total budget. This year, the House passed a budget adjustment that keeps appropriations under the state’s spending cap and continues our investments in education and job growth.

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Jobs are Priority #1

We created new job opportunities for the young, to combat an unemployment rate of 25%, by funding the Youth Employment Summer Jobs program. We also supported adult evening education programs, as well as the Small Business Express program and a Connecticut Made initiative to promote products from local businesses.

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

We recognize the challenges facing cities and towns, and secured funding for municipalities, relieving pressure on local property taxes. Loosening budgets can support local projects and job growth.

Job Creation through Brownfield Cleanup allows swifter conversion of contaminated and long-abandoned properties to productive sites for economic development, open space and other public uses. This session, we directed the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to perform an in-depth analysis of the state’s brownfield remediation and development programs and recommend changes to those programs.

Price Gouging and Pain at the Pump

Skyrocketing gasoline prices are a result of global factors such as growing demand from expanding economies such as China, turmoil in the Middle East and oil market speculators. Faced with the reality of a global dilemma, the legislature acted in a bipartisan manner to be a part of the solution, by capping the state petroleum gross receipts tax (GRT) on motor fuels and enacting new price gouging laws to protect consumers from oil companies and gasoline dealers that try to exploit abnormal market conditions for profit.

Storm Response

Our new storm response helps insure Connecticut residents will not have to endure the hardships of 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.

Sunday Sales

We eliminated one of the last vestiges of the state’s Blue Laws by allowing package and grocery stores to sell alcohol on Sundays from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. It also allows them to sell on Memorial, Independence and Labor Days, and on Mondays following any Independence, Christmas or New Year’s Days that fall on a Sunday.

Education

Education reform ensures all of our children have a brighter future by supporting teachers’ development and providing students with effective educators, increasing Pre-K slots and building a framework for meaningful intervention in our lowest-achieving schools. This legislation also allows the commissioner of education to assist struggling schools.

We also worked on several bills which offer children with special needs protections and support. One bill eliminates the unnecessary use of so-called seclusion or scream rooms. Another improves the special education student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and another creates a study on workforce development, training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

Preserving Medicare Eligibility

This new legislation ensured thousands of seniors and people with disabilities could continue to use the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) to help pay for their Medicare co-pays and deductibles by raising the income limit for MSP 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 made some Connecticut residents ineligible for these Medicare benefits.

I am proud to support these and other initiatives for our seniors. After working throughout their lives and contributing to society, seniors deserve our respect and assistance to help them enjoy their later years.

Veterans

Honoring the present and past sacrifices of our veterans is one of my highest priorities. It is shocking to see an increase in thefts and vandalism of veteran memorials. We increased penalties for desecrating veteran’s memorials beyond the monetary value of what was vandalized.

Grandparents’ Rights

As we all know, family relationships are complicated and emotional, and grandparents can sometimes be separated from their grandchildren’s lives particularly when divorce, death or disagreements occur. This legislation helps grandparents seeking visitation rights by providing a guide of required evidence so a court can better assess each unique situation. This includes showing that a parent-like relationship exists and that a denial of visitation rights could cause harm to the child. A court must grant the request if clear and convincing evidence has proven these conditions exist. In the end, it is important that decisions are made in a child’s best interests and this legislation helps do that.