

Places to Go in Connecticut

The Old State House

Thanks to the hard work of many, Connecticut's national landmark, the Old State House, will be able to keep its doors open to the public. The State of Connecticut has taken back responsibility for the maintenance of this significant building. The Connecticut Historical Society will continue to operate the museum, library, and educational center for the foreseeable future.



The Old State House was built in 1796, and remained the seat of state government until 1878 when the present Capitol was built. The famous Amistad Trial opened there in 1839, and P.T. Barnum, the famous circus promoter, served in the legislature there. Many American presidents, including Andrew Jackson, James Monroe, and Gerald Ford have visited. For more information about the Old State House, including tour information and great historical pictures, visit www.ctosh.org or call 860-522-6766.

Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twain Museums



Connecticut's history is rich with strong authors and great works of literature. The homes of authors Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twain are decorated in the fashion of the Victorian era and open to the public for tours. For more information, please visit the websites:

HarrietBeecherStowe.org and MarkTwainHouse.org, or call 860-522-9258 for the Beecher-Stowe house and 860-247-0998 for the Twain house.

Connecticut's Historic Gardens

There are eleven gardens throughout the state which have been designated as Connecticut's historic gardens. They offer a wide variety of periods and styles of formal gardens to admire. I encourage everyone to enjoy these historic properties, as they will delight and educate visitors. These Connecticut gardens are located at the following historic sites:



Towns	Locations
Bethlehem:	Bellamy-Ferriday House and Garden
Hartford:	Butler-McCook House and Garden; Harriet Beecher Stowe Center
Old Lyme:	Florence Griswold Museum
Woodbury:	Glebe House Museum; Gertrude Jekyll Garden
Waterford:	Harkness Memorial State Park
Farmington:	Hill-Stead Museum
Derby:	Osborne Homestead Museum; Kellogg Environmental Center
Bridgewater:	Promisek/Beatrix Farrand Garden at Three Rivers Farm
Woodstock:	Roseland Cottage, Bowen House
Wethersfield:	Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum

For details on fees and locations please visit:

www.flogris.org/cthistoricgardens



State Representative
Linda M. Gentile

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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
Unclaimed Property Hotline	1-800-833-7318



State Representative
Linda M. Gentile
2008 Legislative Report

Dear Friends:

This past legislative session, my colleagues and I were successful in protecting our priorities and preserving our investments from the previously approved state budget.

I am happy to say that just as you are tightening your belt on your finances during this economic downturn, I worked to make sure that the state takes a similar approach by sticking to the 2008-2009 budget that was passed last year. The budget we approved last year provides a modest 4% increase for the coming year without any new tax increases.

This report summarizes some of the highlights of this past session. I hope you will take a moment to review them, and I hope you will find this information useful.

Also, since gas prices are so outrageous, I thought it would be helpful to provide you and your families with some of the wonderful, fun places to visit right here in our own backyard.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and for the honor and privilege of serving you in Hartford. Your letters, e-mail, and phone calls continue to provide insight and allow me to understand your concerns. With your input, I will continue to fight for a better quality-of-life for the people in the 104th District.

Sincerely,

Linda

104th Assembly District

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Children

Children's Products

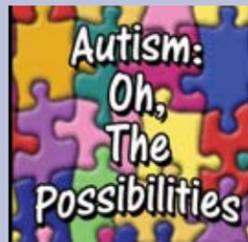
In an effort to make our children's toys safer, Public Acts 08-106 and 08-122 were passed by both the House and Senate and recently signed into law by the Governor. These acts increase child product safety by:



- Establishing limits for lead in children's products.
- Prohibiting the sale of toys or other articles marketed for children that contain asbestos.
- Mandating retailers and other businesses selling a banned hazardous substance complete a certificate of disposition accounting for its disposal.
- Requiring the commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to post a list of toys and other children's articles that contain banned hazardous substances on the department's website.
- Giving the DCP commissioner the authority to create standards that require warning labels on certain consumer products that contain lead.

Teaching Children with Autism

To better address developmentally disabled students' needs, PA 08-5 establishes a deadline for a statewide plan to incorporate methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities into programs for teachers and paraprofessionals. These recommendations are due February 1, 2009.



Teenage Drivers

In recent months, teen driving accidents have dominated the headlines. In an effort to prevent further accidents and encourage responsible driving, my colleagues and I passed Public Act 08-32, which changes the current teenage driving laws, beginning August 1, 2008, by:

- Changing the teen driver graduated license by extending the passenger restrictions for new drivers from six months to one year.
- Establishing a curfew of 11 PM for teen drivers, and requiring seat belts to be worn by all passengers in a car operated by a teen driver.
- Mandating teen drivers have 40 hours of behind-the-wheel training, instead of 20 hours.

- Fostering greater parental involvement and understanding of the graduated license limitations and penalties by requiring the driver's parent to attend a two-hour class with their child.
- Increasing the penalties and suspensions for violations of the graduated license restrictions, excessive speeding, DUI, street-racing and reckless driving offenses.
- Enabling police officers to confiscate a teen's driver's license for 48 hours for violating any of the graduated license restrictions, as well as for excessive speeding, reckless driving, and street racing.



Consumer Protection and Public Safety

Protecting Social Security Numbers



Persons that violate the provisions of this bill are subject to civil penalties.

To address the drastic rise in identity theft, the legislature passed a law requiring entities which use social security numbers to destroy personal information prior to its disposal. In addition, firms which collect social security numbers in the normal course of business must create a privacy protection policy to ensure the confidentiality of social security numbers.

Mortgage Relief

To assist homeowners caught up in the subprime mortgage crisis, we authorized the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to continue the CT FAMILIES refinancing program, and to implement emergency mortgage assistance programs. As of July 1, 2008, the Chief Court Administrator will be:



- Establishing a foreclosure mediation program in each judicial district.
- Continuing the mediation program through 2010.

Volunteer Service by Paid Firefighters or Emergency Personnel

All around the state paid full-time firefighters volunteer their services in the towns in which they live. Without this spirit of volunteerism our communities would suffer. Public Act 08-131 prohibits municipalities from:

- Banning paid firefighters or paid emergency personnel from serving as active members of a volunteer fire department in the municipality in which they live.



Veterans

Educational Opportunity for Military Children



Military children often experience six to nine different school systems between kindergarten and grade 12. Due to inconsistencies between states, students frequently face difficulties regarding the transfer of school records, proper placement in courses, exclusion from extracurricular activities, and on-time graduation. House bill 5545 commits Connecticut to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children by:

- Establishing an interstate commission to administer uniform standards for schools and local school districts.
- Removing the educational barriers caused by parental moves and deployment.

Seniors

Grandparents as Caregivers

I am happy to announce, that the legislature has taken a stand on grandparents rights. Effective July 1, 2008, PA 08-97 will protect grandparents by:

- Providing the same rights to grandparents and other relative caregivers appointed through Superior Court, who are not receiving subsidized guardianship or foster care payments from the Department of Children and Families (DCF).
- Allowing grandparents and caregivers to apply for grants under the Probate Court

administered Kinship Fund and Grandparents and Relatives Respite Fund. Previously, only guardians appointed through the Probate Court were able to receive financial support.



Money Follows the Person

Able bodied seniors should be allowed to live at home rather than in a nursing home, if they so choose. This past session my colleagues and I voted to pass Public Act 08-180. This act expands and improves the state's home care program for the elderly, more commonly known as "Money Follows the Person" by:

- Increasing the number of individuals who can be served from 700 people



to 5,000 people.

- Leveraging additional Medicaid dollars from the Federal Government and allowing families the choice to provide in-home care for loved ones, versus the traditional nursing home or institutional care.
- Saving millions of tax dollars and greatly benefiting our seniors and people with disabilities.

Certification for Senior Homemaker Companion Agencies



Effective October 1, 2008, agencies and individuals providing care for seniors must have certificates of registration from the Department of Consumer Protection. Failure to register could result in fines or jail time.

Gold Star License Plate

Last year, we authorized a Gold Star License Plate for immediate relatives of state residents killed in action. This year, I am happy to report that we improved upon this by:

- Eliminating the additional \$10 plate fee that was added to the normal registration fee.

