



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 further protected victims of domestic violence and helped children with special needs by improving Individualized Education Plans. We also created a study on workforce development and the training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

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.

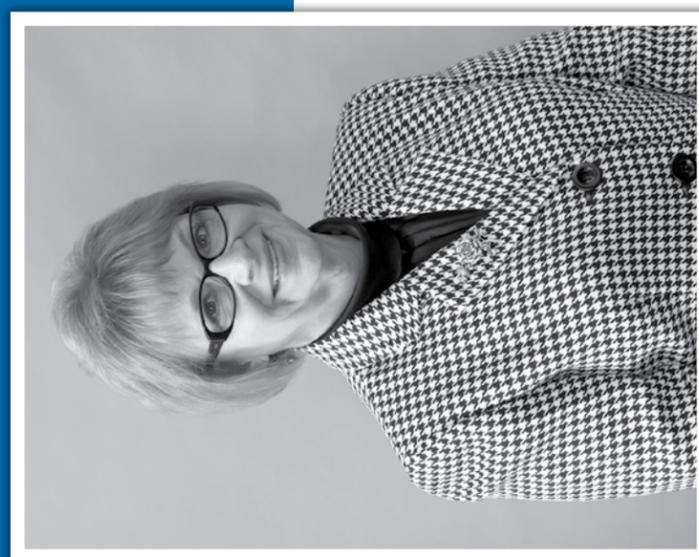
Sincerely,

Linda M. Gentile
State Representative, 104th District

State Representative

Linda M. Gentile

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2012 CAPITOL UPDATE

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Energy

Storm Response and Power Outages

In the aftermath of the October Nor'easter and Tropical Storm Irene which left much of the state without power, the legislature passed sweeping reforms to better prepare for future severe storms and avoid wide-spread and lengthy loss of utility service, where:

- Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response
- Noncompliance could result in penalties of up to 2.5 percent of an electric or gas company's annual distribution revenue.

Price Gouging & Pain at the Pump

Skyrocketing gasoline prices are a result of global factors such as growing demand from expanding economies like China, turmoil in the Middle East and oil market speculators. Faced with the reality of this 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.
- Enacting new price gouging laws to protect consumers from oil companies and gasoline dealers that use market conditions for personal profit.



Job Growth

Encouraging Job Gains

We continued the state's commitment to job growth and economic recovery with new legislation that expands the Small Business Express Program, allowing an estimated 3,600 additional businesses to have access to state funding. The program allows small businesses to access much-needed funding for capital investments and hiring.

In addition, the bill:

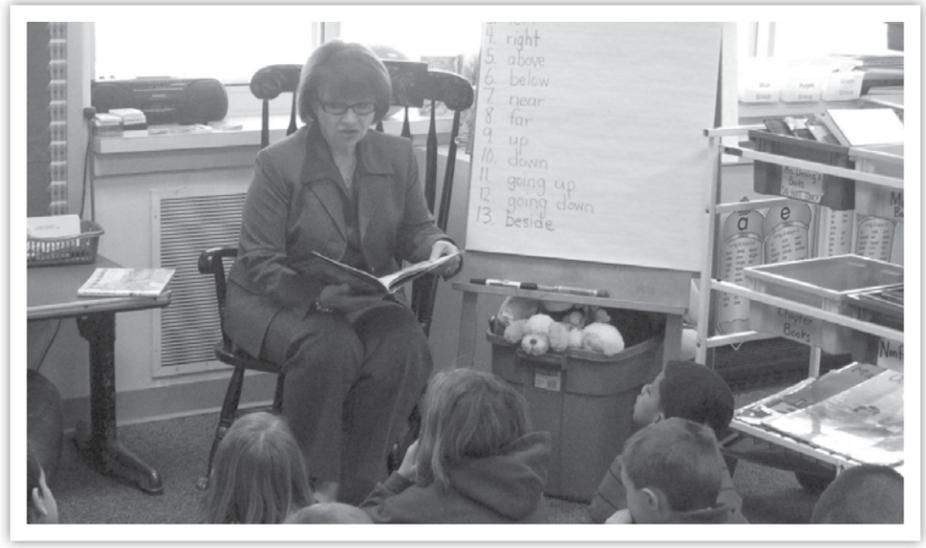
- Establishes the Unemployed Armed Forces Member STEP-UP (Subsidized Training and Employment Program) with grants to subsidize a business's cost of hiring unemployed veterans during their first 180 days (about six months) on the job.
- Creates the "Connecticut Made" and "Connecticut Treasures" programs to promote products made in state and promote our cultural, educational and historic attractions.
- Develops a plan to allow the state to give preferential incentives and economic development assistance to companies that will relocate jobs from overseas to Connecticut.

Veterans

Stopping the Desecration of Veterans Memorials

Honoring the present and past sacrifices of our veterans is one of my highest priorities. Both Ansonia and Derby, experienced first-hand, the increase in thefts and vandalism of our veteran memorials. In order to stop these crimes from occurring, we:

- Increased penalties for desecrating veteran's memorials beyond the monetary value of what was vandalized.



Education

Education Reform

Our education initiative will provide 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.

