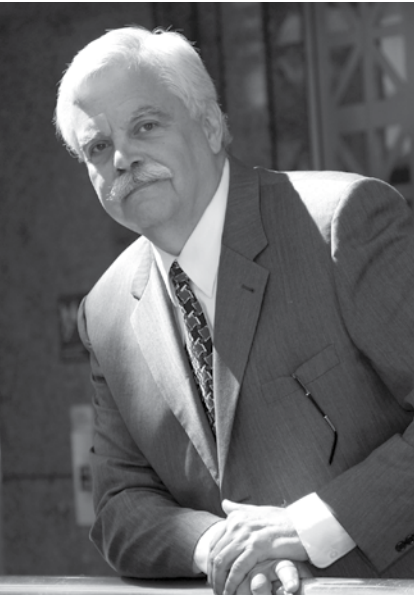


Dear Neighbor,

The 2013 session of your General Assembly was a very unusual one. Gun violence and school security consumed us for the better part of the 5-month session (about which I reported in an earlier newsletter). Yet we still, of course, had to deal with the multitude of other issues you and neighbors like you asked me to address.



The biggie was the budget, which was good news for taxpayers on both the state and local level (no new state taxes and an increase in state funds to Danbury to restrain property taxes), and which did NOT include an Energy Auction (as so many of you asked me to oppose). We finished this year with a \$279 million surplus, which we will use next year to keep taxes from increasing, and put some away “for a rainy day.” This newsletter reports on that budget issue, and on others which were the subject of many communications from you.

I’m also happy to note that a recent report by state Comptroller Kevin Lembo that the state economy and revenue are improving and shows:

- Employment has grown by 17,800+ new jobs (Aug. to Aug.)
- Housing permits showed a strong gain early in this calendar year
- Retail sales are up
- The stock market, a leading economic indicator with particular influence to Connecticut, is rising

And like Mr. Lembo, I realize we need to be careful, sensitive and prudent as we make policies that help our state and its people prosper.

Keep in touch!



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HEALING HEARTS

Grief is an emotion we all feel. Grief knows no age limit, doesn’t discriminate. Grief invites sympathy and compassion, and the restoration of hope.

For many years, beginning in 1984, the non-profit **Regional Hospice and Home Care of Western Connecticut** has provided compassionate care and family support services in our community. The organization has grown and expanded to now include a unique offering, **The Healing Hearts Center for Grieving Children and Families**. Anyone who needs grief support can participate in the groups or workshops at Healing Hearts.

The hospice and Healing Hearts recently broke ground for its new, state-of-the-art, 36,000 square feet inpatient center on six wooded acres on Danbury’s west side. The facility will cost \$12 million and about half of that has already been privately raised. I’m proud to have joined my colleagues in the House of Representatives; David Arconti, Jan Giegler, and David Scribner (who is also a member of Hospice’s board of directors), in voting for and securing \$1.2 million in state bonding for the Healing Hearts Center.

None of us are immune from grief: It can be intensely personal as in the loss of a loved one, and it can be communal as the shared grief with families touched by the events of 9/11/2001 and 12/14/2012. Healing Hearts has helped these bereaved, at a cost of over \$350,000 annually, completely covered through private donations and at no charge to the families. We should all be comforted that when we face our own grief, there is this special place to turn to.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE | DEPUTY SPEAKER

BOB GODFREY

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IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE OR
HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT ME.

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BRINGING YOUR STATE TAX DOLLARS HOME

Despite the difficulties surrounding our biennial budget debate, I am proud to have not only maintained, but increased funding for Danbury. The overall budget was both good and bad. However, I was committed to preserving the safety net our community depends on while keeping property taxes down. I was able to accomplish both these goals. Below are the budget appropriations for Danbury.

STATE DOLLARS TO DANBURY FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015	
<i>Increase Funding From 2013-2014/15</i>	<i>\$2,496,891</i>
<i>Total State Funds to Danbury</i>	<i>\$38,049,987</i>
Education Cost Sharing	\$27,294,245
Priority School Districts	\$2,258,896
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$2,125,799
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$1,307,233
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$946,417
School Transportation	\$753,277
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$545,090
Town Aid Roads	\$843,331
Adult Education	\$232,003
Municipal Rev. Sharing & Dept. of Econ. Dev.	\$1,743,696



Bob presenting to the
Council of State Governments



Bob with Rep. Arconti and Rep. Giegler
at the Healing Hearts ground breaking



Saint Joseph's School visits Bob at the Capitol

A BALANCED BUDGET

As our economy continues to recover, we worked cooperatively with Governor Dannel Malloy, and crafted a historic budget. It was critical that we balance our state budget with *no new taxes* while maximizing Connecticut taxpayer dollars that come back from Washington. Throughout this process I have avoided cuts in state aid to our city and any cuts to education, and maintained the safety net for our most vulnerable residents.

This 2013-2014 budget passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Malloy:

- Includes major investment in science and technology at the University of Connecticut
- Provides funding for the landmark public education reforms passed in 2012
- Continues Economic Development Programs
- Maintains state aid to cities and towns

Cities and towns across Connecticut are increasingly hard-pressed to generate resources necessary to support essential public services and educational systems. **This year's budget secures an additional \$2.5 million for Danbury over the next two years.** Without this state aid, Danbury's mill rate would be over 5 mills higher.

REMOVING THE ENERGY AUCTION

After hearing from so many of you regarding the proposed energy auction, which would have sold off thousands of customers, I became a leader in the fight to remove it from the budget. Connecticut energy costs are already too high, and this one-time revenue gain would have pushed those costs even higher.



MINIMUM WAGE

I cosponsored and voted in favor of increasing the minimum wage over the next two years to \$9 per hour. Small business owners know that paying their workers more leads to dedicated, happier employees who can afford to be consumers and support our local economy and businesses. *(SB 387)*

KNOW YOUR FOOD SOURCE - GMO LABELING

Responding to health and food safety concerns, Connecticut is the first state to pass a genetically modified organisms (GMO) labeling law that allows consumers to know whether or not their food products contain GMO's. The labeling requirement takes effect once similar laws are enacted in four states, including at least one that borders Connecticut with an aggregate population of 20 million or more. *(HB 6527)*

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This legislative session we reaffirmed our commitment to affordable housing with the most significant gains in decades. With greater investment in Connecticut's Housing and Finance Authority, a newly established Department of Housing, and across the state development projects, we are investing in the people and communities that drive our economy. *(SB 845)*

DISTRACTED DRIVING - NO CELL PHONES!

This session we passed a number of bills that will make our roads safer, two of which I am particularly happy to see become law:

- The first increases the penalty for failure to remove ice or snow from a motor vehicle. Fines will start at \$75 and increase if property damage results. No one likes commuting during our New England winters and especially when you're driving into snow drifts created by other cars on the road. *(HB 6253)*
- The other new law will allow us to crack down on distracted driving with increased fines for using a hand-held cell phone or other electronic device. We will also benefit from the creation of a task force to study distracted driving. *(HB 6033)*