

STATE REPRESENTATIVE | DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO-TEMPORE

# BOB GODFREY

PROUDLY SERVING DANBURY

Dear Neighbor,

It is a privilege to fight for your interests in the General Assembly. Recently the House and Senate passed, and the Governor signed, an agreement ending Connecticut’s budget stalemate. After weighing its impact on you, I ultimately voted “no.” I could not support a budget that cuts programs that help many Danbury residents and raises taxes on working families and the poor.

This budget slashes the Earned Income Tax Credit, which helps over 4,500 Danbury families. It lowers income eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program, which helps seniors and people with disabilities afford their health care costs. It cuts funding for higher education drastically, which will lead to increased tuition at Western Connecticut State University. To top it off, the Governor’s office recently reported that this budget is expected to run \$203 million in deficit this fiscal year.

Simply put, voting for this budget would have been a betrayal of you and our neighbors. This report explains some of the major issues within the budget and why I voted against it.

I will continue to fight to reverse these damaging policies in the 2018 legislative session, and I encourage you to reach out to me with your questions and concerns.



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2017



# BUDGET INCREASES YOUR TAXES

Tax increases in the budget take aim at the middle and working class. The agreement cuts the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) from 27.5 percent of what people earn under the federal EITC to 23 percent. This credit helps over 4,500 Danbury working families make ends meet, and slashing it takes money from their pockets. The \$200 property tax credit is also scaled back, and will now only be available to the elderly and households with dependents.

# CUTS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Affordable state colleges are essential to helping our students prepare for a career without drowning in debt, and Danbury has always been proud to be home to Western Connecticut State University. In 2018 the budget cuts \$13 million in funding for state universities (not including UConn) and \$10 million from the community college system, which includes Naugatuck Valley Community College. It also cuts \$143 million over the next two years from UConn and the UConn Health Center. These cuts will likely lead to increased tuition rates at state schools, making them a less accessible option for young people.

# REDUCED HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

The budget will kick an estimated 68,000 Connecticut seniors and disabled individuals off the Medicare Savings Program (MSP), which provides subsidies for Medicare’s Part B premiums. The budget lowers the income eligibility threshold from 246 percent of the federal poverty level (about \$29,225) to 135 percent of the federal poverty level (about \$16,000).

Approximately 9,500 residents will lose their health care coverage under Husky A, the state’s Medicaid program providing health care for low-income families, which was cut by \$11 million. It is unacceptable to balance the budget on the backs of seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families.



Earlier this year I testified in favor of legislation to regulate sober homes

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Meeting with folks from the nonprofit Ability Beyond at the Capitol



Speaking at a press conference in support of raising the minimum wage

# EDUCATION FUNDING

I have consistently fought for increased education funding for Danbury, and I’m outraged by the Governor’s recent decision to hold back \$220,000 of Danbury’s Education Cost Sharing (ECS) and Adult Education funding. In 2017 we received \$31,290,480 in ECS funds. In Fiscal Year 2018, after these holdbacks, we’ll receive \$31,073,094. While difficult fiscal decisions need to be made, this was the wrong place to look for savings. I will continue to fight for the education aid that Danbury schools deserve.

# HOSPITAL TAX

Danbury Hospital is not only the immediate healthcare provider for Greater Danbury patients, but also an important employer in our city. I voted in favor of a proposal passed this session that will bring new revenue to the state, while also increasing state payments to hospitals over 2017 levels, due to enhanced federal reimbursements. Enacting this agreement will:

- Support community hospitals and those that serve a disproportionate share of Medicaid clients
- Put additional federal dollars into the system which will have a ripple effect on our economy

# CARE 4 KIDS FUNDING RESTORED

Funding to the Care 4 Kids child care subsidy program has been restored. This funding will allow the program to reopen for enrollment and begin to address the 5,769 families who have been on the waiting list. The program currently helps over 200 Danbury families afford safe, quality child care so that the parents can remain in the workforce.

# RAIDING GREEN ENERGY FUNDS

The budget raids \$87.5 million per year from energy conservation programs that have successfully helped families lower their energy bills and utilize “green” energy. These raids negatively impact the CT Green Bank, which brings in \$8 of private investment in our clean energy industry for every \$1 in public funds spent. Even worse, the Green Bank is funded by a fee on your electric bill – meaning this raid is actually a tax increase.

The cuts, per year, to these funds are:

- \$63.5 million from the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund
- \$14 million from the Green Bank
- \$10 million from Connecticut’s part of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative