

# 2018 CAPITOL UPDATE FROM

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# BOB GODFREY

Dear Neighbor,

It is a privilege to represent you in the General Assembly. The 2018 legislative session has concluded and I supported a bipartisan budget adjustment that greatly improves upon last year's budget agreement.

I voted against the budget passed last year because of its damaging cuts that hurt Danbury residents. After fighting to reverse many of those disastrous decisions, I was able to support a budget agreement that works for you and our neighbors.

The budget restores funding to the Medicare Savings and Renters Rebate Programs that elderly and disabled individuals rely on, increases Danbury's state education aid, and prevents scheduled fare increases to Metro-North rail and HART bus lines – all without raising taxes.

I also supported legislation to create jobs in the manufacturing and fuel cell industries, keep prescription drug costs down, and help veterans access the services they need.

I hope you find the enclosed information helpful. Please don't hesitate to reach out to my office if I can be of service to you or your family.

Sincerely,



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# DEPUTY SPEAKER PRO-TEMPORE & STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# BOB GODFREY



(Left) Rep. Godfrey accepting the "Capitol Caregiver Award" from the AARP.

(Right) Rep. Godfrey welcomes members of Danbury's APEX Community Care to the Capitol.

## 2018 LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ Named a Capitol Caregiver by the AARP
- ✓ Supported a bipartisan budget adjustment package that provided more education funding to Danbury and fixed mistakes made in the 2017 budget
- ✓ Restored funding for the Medicare Savings Program
- ✓ Added \$2 million in funding for healthcare for veterans
- ✓ Secured \$991,000 in funding for the Danbury Women's Center

## SUPPORTING FUELCELL IN DANBURY

I supported legislation to create a more level playing field for Connecticut's fuel cell industry, which includes companies such as Danbury's FuelCell Energy. The legislation enables the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to procure more clean energy, creating more room for fuel cell projects. In the past several years, DEEP has repeatedly supported wind and solar projects over fuel cells, even though fuel cells also produce clean energy and create jobs.

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Continuing our efforts to encourage students to consider careers in manufacturing, we are working to develop mobile manufacturing training labs that will visit middle and high schools to educate students about advanced manufacturing. This continues our work to invest in Henry Abbott Technical High School and Naugatuck Valley Community College, and our belief that technical education and career training can lead students to family-supporting jobs.



With Tom Saadi of Danbury, and his family, following Saadi's swearing in as Connecticut's new Commissioner of Veterans Affairs. I introduced legislation this year to provide an additional \$2 million for veterans' health care.

## PROTECTING HEALTHCARE

The Affordable Care Act contains ten essential health benefits that we codified into Connecticut state statutes this session. Despite what happens at the federal level, the following benefits are safe guarded and Connecticut insurance policies must cover these basic services:

✓ Ambulatory patient services	✓ Prescription drugs
✓ Emergency services	✓ Laboratory services
✓ Hospitalization	✓ Pediatric services
✓ Maternity and newborn care	✓ Preventative and wellness services
✓ Mental health and substance use disorder services	✓ Rehabilitative services

## HOW I FIXED THE BUDGET AND INCREASED FUNDING FOR DANBURY

In 2017, the Legislature passed a budget that I did not support. It contained steep cuts to programs that help many Danbury residents. The budget slashed the Earned Income Tax Credit, which helps over 4,500 Danbury families; lowered income eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program; and made cuts to our state's higher education system. It also raised taxes on working families and the poor.

This session, we passed a budget adjustment bill with overwhelming bipartisan support. I worked with colleagues to correct mistakes made in the 2017 session and get Connecticut back on track. Danbury's total town aid will increase from \$40,643,168 to \$40,703,959. The Danbury Public School System will also see an increase in aid from to \$31,073,094 to \$32,304,941.

Some of the most important pieces of this package include:

- Fully restores the Medicare Savings Program, so no one will see a reduction in benefits
- Protects municipal aid from being cut
- Restores HUSKY A eligibility
- Restores funding for the teacher mentoring program (TEAM)
- Gives the Veterans Hospital and Home in Rocky Hill the resources they need to maintain their current status (\$2 million) which I introduced as legislation this year
- Restores \$10 million in clean energy funds, helping to protect our environment
- Restores and protects funding for summer youth employment



At the Bond Commission meeting to approve the Women's Center funding (left to right): Lt. Governor Wyman; Women's Center Development Director Samantha Conetta-Flynn; Pat Zachman, President & CEO of the Women's Center; Governor Malloy; Rep. Arconti; Women's Center Board Chair Glori Norwitt; and Rep. Godfrey

## FUNDING FOR DANBURY WOMEN'S CENTER

I helped secure \$991,000 in state bonding for improvements to the Danbury Women's Center. The funds will go towards repairs that include a new roof and windows, masonry repairs, heating and cooling upgrades and more. The Women's Center helps thousands of victims of domestic and sexual violence each year, and I have always been proud to support their work.

## MAKING CONNECTICUT SAFE

Last year's tragic mass shooting in Las Vegas demonstrated the ability of bump stocks to dramatically increase a gun's destructive power. These devices effectively turn semi-automatic firearms into weapons that can shoot as fast as machine guns. We responded by making it a crime to own or sell a bump stock, or similar device, unless you are a licensed military contractor.

Additionally, we took further steps to ensure that Connecticut schools are safe places to learn by increasing funding for school security measures by \$15 million. Districts can use this funding for entrance upgrades, bullet-proof glass and security cameras. I also supported legislation that would have looked at how to incorporate more social-emotional learning into the school curriculum. Studies have shown that this helps students reach their full academic and social potential, as well as improve the school climate and reduce the likelihood of classroom violence. Unfortunately, this bill only passed in the House and not the Senate.



Rep. Godfrey presenting a citation to Danbury's Immaculate High School boys basketball team congratulating them on their state championship.

## REGULATING SOBER HOMES

Across Connecticut, over 60,000 residents sought treatment for substance abuse in 2016 alone. One of our challenges is providing adequate treatment and recovery services. To address this, the bill sets up a system where sober homes, including those in Danbury, can register with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services so families will be able to check if a sober home is registered with the state. It also establishes certain marketing and advertising requirements, keeping the consumer's best interests in mind. Under this legislation, sober homes must have Narcan on site and residents must be trained in its use.

## REDUCING PRESCRIPTION COSTS

Recognizing that prescription drug prices are the number one driver of rising healthcare costs, we passed legislation to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable by increasing transparency and requiring them to explain large price increases for drugs that have a substantial cost to the state. Additionally, insurance companies must now submit information about which drugs are most frequently prescribed and which are provided at the greatest cost. By collecting more data and holding drug companies accountable, we can get closer to lowering drug costs for Connecticut residents.