

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JOSEPH P. GRESKO

PROUDLY SERVING THE 121ST HOUSE DISTRICT | STRATFORD

Dear Neighbor,

This year's legislative session was dominated by the state budget. There were no easy solutions and sometimes hard decisions had to be made. In the end, we approved a budget that is balanced, without state tax or fee increases, without borrowing, and without dipping into the Rainy Day Fund.

That being said, I am pleased to say that Stratford will be receiving \$3,548,813 from the combination of the Revolving Loan Fund, Job Creation Loan, and the matching grant from the state, and an additional \$25,000 for our Police Activities League (PAL)!

Improving public health, increasing public safety, and encouraging financial security for everyone were featured elements of some of the major bills approved by the legislature this year.

Keeping Connecticut a great place to live, work, and raise a family is our ongoing responsibility, and though the 2016 legislative session presented one of the toughest budget challenges in decades, we strive to move our state forward.

Sincerely,



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2016



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BUDGET CUTS

After making a lot of tough cuts we approved a budget that is balanced, without borrowing, and without dipping into the Rainy Day Fund. Cutting \$830 million is painful, but these long-term structural changes will help put Connecticut's budget on a sustainable path – not just this year, but into the future.

We made structural changes that reduce long-term obligations and create a more sustainable budget over time:

- Wage freeze & insurance co-pay increase for non-union state employees, including legislators.
- Salary cap on pensions for retiring non-union state employees.
- Reduction of the size of state government.

We are also delaying some of the Governor's transportation initiative in order to protect legislative priorities like:

- Funding for St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport.
- Motor vehicle tax relief.
- Funding for state colleges and universities.

RETIREMENT SECURITY

With over 600,000 private sector Connecticut workers lacking an employer-based retirement plan, we created a voluntary program to help encourage and assist people to save for retirement. There is no cost to taxpayers for the program, and the bill was a top priority of AARP.

SUPPORTING OUR SENIORS

Taking care of our older citizens is a priority. We passed legislation to make sure patients are notified of their rights and available services when nursing homes or long-term care facilities close or reduce the number of beds. We also required nursing homes to allow residents being discharged to pick a caregiver to help them with their discharge plan. Other legislation allows for elderly or disabled tenants of state-assisted housing to pay security deposits in installments.

STANDING UP FOR VETERANS

We stand by our veterans. The legislature passed measures that will facilitate veteran employment with a resource network for specialized skills in the Department of Labor and preferences in state contract bidding for veteran-owned small businesses. We also broadened the scope of the law that bars discriminatory practices in our state's armed forces, and approved a resolution to our nation's leaders to recognize Blue Water Navy Veterans' exposure to Agent Orange.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

We addressed important consumer protection concerns this year by providing increased privacy for cellphone and internet subscribers, controlling the disclosure of customers' information in criminal investigations, and requiring service stations to post a notice informing customers if a 24-hour hold will be placed on their credit or debit card account.

TACKLING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

In recent years, Connecticut, like other New England states, has seen a heartbreaking increase in fatal opioid overdoses. Earlier this year I co-sponsored groundbreaking legislation to combat this crisis. This lifesaving law will allow any licensed healthcare professional to administer drugs that reverse opioid overdoses, require municipalities to equip their first responders with the opioid reversal drug Narcan, and cap first-time opioid prescriptions at 7 days.



Rep. Gresko spending time with Stratford's Parents' Place Advocates.

Rep. Gresko sworn into office by Secretary of State Merrill and Speaker Sharkey.