



Dear Friend,

I want to thank you for placing your trust in me as your representative. I love the job you have given me and I am proud to represent you in the Connecticut State House.

We made progress in the areas of health care funding, energy conservation, and additional funding for our city for education. Although we voted on a major energy bill, I did not support it because I believe it failed to lower energy prices for consumers.

I am also disappointed that the legislature failed to override the Governor's veto of your tax cuts. However, I am happy to announce I was able to get a hefty increase in state aid of \$11,334,383 for Bridgeport. I hope it will be used to keep our local property taxes from increasing. I also worked to retain the \$500 property tax deduction on your income tax.

I am happy to report that we have addressed the serious underfunding of the Teachers' Retirement Fund. The legislature authorized \$2 billion in Pension Obligation Bonds to help close a \$6.9 billion shortfall in the teachers' pension fund.

Constituent concerns do result in action. I am committed to working with you on issues that face our city and state. Together we can meet these challenges head on and keep working to make Bridgeport and all of Connecticut a better place to live. If you have a question or a concern, please do not hesitate to call me at home, 374-5919, or at my Capitol office, 1-800-842-8267.



Sincerely,

Jack Hennessy

### Useful Numbers

- Consumer Protection..... 1-800-842-2649
- Veterans' Benefits and Information ..... 1-800-827-1000
- ConnPACE..... 1-800-423-5026
- Infoline ..... 211
- Healthcare Advocate..... 1-866-HMO-4446
- Area Agency on Aging..... (203) 332-2600
- Bridgeport Senior Services..... (860)-675-2390
- Mortgage Foreclosure Assistance Hotline ..... 1-877-472-8318



# 2007 Legislative Report

**In the District:**  
 556 Savoy Street  
 Bridgeport, CT 06606  
 203-374-5919  
 E-mail: [Jack.Hennessy@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Jack.Hennessy@cga.ct.gov)

**At the Capitol:**  
 Legislative Office Building  
 Room 2303  
 Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
 1-800-842-8267 or (860) 240-8500

## Representative Jack Hennessy

Legislative Office Building, Room 2303  
 Hartford, CT 06106

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  - 2007 Education Laws
  - 2007 Major Public Acts
  - 2007 Laws Affecting Children
  - 2007 Laws Affecting Businesses



# State Representative Jack Hennessy



## Reports on the 2007 Legislative Session

Autumn 2007

### State Money Secured for Bridgeport

The current state budget includes significant increases in statutory grants to Bridgeport. These grants total \$188,505,754, an increase of \$11,334,383 over the amounts received in the past fiscal year. These funds will help Bridgeport meet its obligations in education, road maintenance, and a variety of services for seniors, children, and those with special needs – services that are vital to the health, safety, and well-being of all our citizens. The following is a breakdown of money that has come home to the district:

Pilot: State Owned Property.....	\$2,733,216
Pilot: Colleges & Hospitals.....	\$11,754,148
Mashantucket Pequot & Mohegan Fund.....	\$9,845,297
Town Aid Road .....	\$680,114
Local Capital Improvement Program.....	\$2,229,742
Public School Transportation .....	\$2,424,219
Non-Public School Transportation.....	\$347,081
Adult Education .....	\$1,215,573
Education Cost Sharing.....	\$157,276,364

**Total Money for Bridgeport: \$188,505,754**

***This is revenue that our city will not have to raise through property taxes.***

# A Healthier Connecticut

Access to affordable, quality health care is important to us all. This session we made great strides toward increasing coverage for Connecticut's insured. Public Act 07-185:

- ▶ Promotes the use of health care technology and preventative services.
- ▶ Extends, from age 23 to 26, the age to which health insurance policies that cover children must do so, regardless of whether the children are full-time students or dependents.
- ▶ Mandates that a reinsurance association sell health care plans to small employers with low-income workers.
- ▶ Permits and funds a number of school and community-based health centers.

## Improvements to the HUSKY Health Care Plan:

- Increases reimbursement rates for hospitals and private Medicaid/HUSKY providers - to allow more doctors to see more patients.
- Raises the income limit for HUSKY A (Medicaid) coverage for parents of children receiving HUSKY A from 150% to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- Raises the income limit for HUSKY A coverage for pregnant women to 250% of the FPL (up from 185%).
- Requires automatic enrollment of uninsured newborns in HUSKY A.
- Increases the income limit for HUSKY B (co-pay required) coverage for kids, from 350% to 400% of the FPL, and adds premium assistance for families with employer-sponsored coverage.
- Enhances outreach programs to better publicize the HUSKY plan to all those eligible, with a focus on Latino and minority populations.

To see if you or your child qualify for HUSKY, call  
1-877-CT-HUSKY

## Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning



I was pleased that we passed childhood lead poisoning legislation which creates a program that will make lead screening mandatory for all Connecticut children up to age 3. Lead exposure is considered the most common environmental hazard for children, and less than half of Connecticut children under age 2 are currently screened for traces of lead. Beginning January 1, 2009, all primary care physicians will be required to test 1- and 2-year-old children for lead poisoning. A simple finger prick will detect lead traces. (PA 07-2)

# Seniors

**Senior Driver Discount** - There is an insurance discount for drivers over 60 who complete an approved accident-prevention course (PA 07-5)

**Grandparents Raising Grandchildren** - More grandparent guardians will be eligible for cash and medical assistance through the Department of Children and Families. (PA 07-174)

**Hospice Care** - This law ensures a higher quality of care by requiring that hospice programs provide 24 hour services and be licensed through the Department of Public Health and certified by Medicare. (PA 07-23)

**Home Care Option Program** - The Home Care Option Program will enable more seniors to stay at home by making tax-exempt accounts available for homecare savings, and allows seniors to hire their own personal care assistant rather than having to go through an agency. (PA 07-130)

**Nursing Homes - Protecting our Seniors** - This legislation prevents nursing homes from closing or reducing the number of beds available until a public hearing has been held and the request approved by the Department of Social Services. (PA 07-209)



Speaker Jim Amann, along with Representatives Hennessy and Labriola, present Specialist Alishan Nomani of Bravo Company 520, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division with a citation while he was on leave in February from Baghdad, Iraq. Alishan was accompanied by his father, Nisar Nomani.

# Veterans

- Legislation was enacted to protect military funerals from disruption by protestors.
- The burial benefit for veterans was increased from \$150 to \$1800.
- National Guard veterans with twenty years of service may now be buried in state veterans' cemeteries.
- The legislature created a service bonus for National Guard members called to active duty and more than doubled the service bonus for National Guardsmen serving in a combat zone.
- Servicemen and women called to active duty will receive a grace period for the renewal of professional licenses.
- The Department of Motor Vehicles will offer a "Gold Star Family" license plate for families of fallen soldiers.

# Protecting Our Children

✓ A ban on the application of lawn care pesticides on school playing fields and playgrounds will now include middle schools. Previously the ban had only protected elementary schools. (PA 07-168)

✓ In an effort to fight the trend of underage smoking, the legislature doubled the penalty for minors who purchase tobacco products. Dealers and distributors will also see higher fines for selling to minors. (PA 07-175)

✓ In response to the concern for safety and security in Connecticut's public schools, the legislature created the Security Assistance For Education (S.A.F.E.) Program to help schools assess their security, provide security infrastructure improvements, and ensure that school personnel receive appropriate training. (PA 07-208)



Representative Hennessy with his wife Lindy and daughter Meisha are pictured here with Governor Rell at a bill signing.

# Energy

**Summer Saver Rewards** - This program creates the opportunity for real and immediate relief from rising energy bills for all of Connecticut's residents. The more an individual conserves in July, August, and September compared to 12 months earlier, the more they can save on their bill. So if you use 10% less electricity, you will save an extra 10% in addition to what you have already

saved through conservation. For more information, and to sign up for the program, please call 1-877-WISE USE.

**Sales Tax Exemptions** - There is now an exemption for the energy saving compact fluorescent light bulbs and for vehicles with a city or highway fuel efficiency of at least 40 miles per gallon. (PA 07-242)

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# Getting Guns Off Our Streets

More than 10,000 firearms were stolen in Connecticut during a 10-year period from 1993 through 2002. Many of these guns end up on the streets of our cities. This landmark legislation requires that any person who lawfully possesses an assault weapon or firearm that is lost or stolen must report the incident to the proper law enforcement agencies. The person must make that report within seventy-two hours of when they discovered or should have discovered the loss or theft. The bill also establishes the crime of firearm trafficking. A person is guilty of trafficking if the person knowingly and intentionally allows firearms they own or possess to be in the possession of someone who is prohibited from owning or possessing any firearm under state or federal law. Trafficking less than five firearms is a class C felony, and trafficking five or more firearms is a class B felony. (PA 07-163)