



Dear Friend,

Thank you for the privilege of representing you in the Connecticut State House.

As a homeowner in Bridgeport, I know how difficult it is to pay property taxes. Therefore I am pleased to bring home \$194,911,161 of state grants to Bridgeport, which is an increase of \$6,236,057 over last year.

As a professional truck driver with a family, I know the price of crude oil has impacted gas and food costs. I am happy to report we have postponed the increase in the gas tax which was scheduled for July 1, and now gas stations are able to offer a discount for purchasing fuel with cash. We also implemented an energy program for replacing furnaces for low-income people.

However, this session was not without its disappointments. I would like to have seen money provided for the Early Reading Success program and a COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) for non-profits and nursing homes.

This year I continued the battle in Hartford for full state reimbursement of PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) fund which the state pays the city for hospitals, colleges, and state-owned property instead of property taxes. I will continue to fight for that, along with equalizing car insurance rates for urban dwellers next year.

Through advocacy and hard work, I have made progress with the Ox Brook Flood Control Project. Leadership in the State Department of Environmental Protection now has made the Ox Brook a priority. Funding this year is limited, so this battle will continue next year.

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,

### 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
- Department on Aging .....(203) 576-7989
- Mortgage Foreclosure Assistance Hotline.....1-877-472-8318



# 2008 Legislative Report

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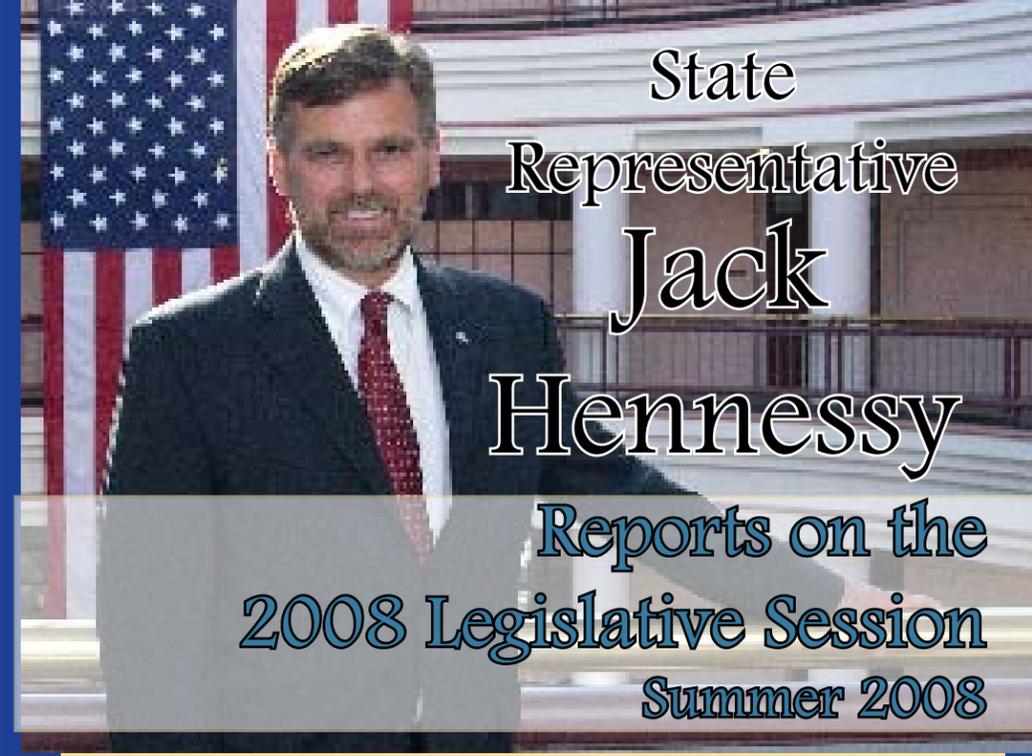
**At the Capitol:**  
 Legislative Office Building  
 Room 2303  
 Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
 1-800-842-8267 or (860) 240-8500

## Representative Jack Hennessy

Legislative Office Building, Room 2303  
 Hartford, CT 06106

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State  
 Representative  
**Jack  
 Hennessy**

**Reports on the  
 2008 Legislative Session  
 Summer 2008**

### State Money Secured for Bridgeport

Even in these difficult fiscal times, the current state budget includes significant increases in statutory grants to Bridgeport. These grants total **\$194,911,161**—an increase of **\$6,236,057** over the past 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 Bridgeport:

- Pilot: State-Owned Property ..... \$2,665,321
- Pilot: Colleges & Hospitals ..... \$11,214,677
- Mashantucket Pequot & Mohegan Fund ..... \$9,693,124
- Town Aid Road..... \$674,174
- Local Capital Improvement Program..... \$2,123,842
- Public School Transportation..... \$2,561,941
- Non-Public School Transportation ..... \$424,200
- Adult Education..... \$1,358,538
- Education Cost Sharing ..... \$164,195,344

**Total Money for Bridgeport: \$194,911,161**  
**75% of the Bridgeport's Board of Education budget comes from the State of Connecticut.**  
**This is the highest percentage in the state.**

## SENIOR NEWS

**Money Follows the Person** - In our effort to move people out of nursing homes or other institutional settings into less restrictive, community-based settings, we expanded the Money Follows the Person program from 700 to 5,000 people. This program assists Connecticut in our efforts to reduce reliance on institutional settings and supports those who want their loved ones in their community. This program not only saves money for the state but is a quality of life issue for many people. PA -180

**Support for Grandparents** - This year we increased supports to grandparents and other relative caregivers appointed through Superior Court, and who are not receiving subsidized guardianship or foster care payments from the Department of Children and Families (DCF). They are now able to apply for grants under the Probate Court administered Kinship Fund and Grandparents and Relatives Respite Fund. PA 08-97

**Small Nursing Home Pilot Program** - The Department of Social Services (DSS) will develop a pilot program of 10 small house nursing homes in the state. Our hope is to improve the quality of life for nursing home residents and provide nursing home care in a home-like setting rather than an institutional environment. PA 08-91

**Hospice Benefit** - Beginning January 1, 2009 DSS will provide Medicaid clients with a full range of hospice services. PA 08-158

## GLOBAL WARMING

Connecticut became the fifth state in the nation this year to adopt mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. The legislation establishes two steps for mandatory greenhouse gas emission caps:

a) 10% below 1990 levels to be attained by 2020

b) 80% below 2001 levels by 2050

This law will require low-carbon fuel standards for all motor vehicle and home heating fuels sold in the state. It will also require the State Building Code to reflect more stringent energy standards. PA 08-98



Jack is pictured this spring looking for spotted salamanders in Veterans Memorial Park. He has been working to protect the vernal pool and associated wetlands from development. Vernal pools provide critical habitat for rare species and plants. This is one of the last remaining vernal pools in the region.

## RESPONSIBLE LENDING

The mortgage crisis has hit many Bridgeport families hard this year. Legislation enacted this session offers assistance to these families through the creation of new state programs (HERO and Mortgage Crisis Job Training), and the enhancement of existing state programs (CT Families and EMAP) for mortgage and foreclosure help. This law includes the new foreclosure mediation program that the courts will use to determine if and how families can keep making mortgage payments and avoid foreclosure. The bill creates stricter regulations and greater penalties on lenders and brokers when writing loans for people who have limited income and who carry higher debt. The agencies to contact regarding these programs are The Department of Banking's Foreclosure Assistance Hotline at 877-472-8313 or the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority at 860-571-3500. PA 08-176



## CAPITOL BRIEFS

**15-Year-Old Workers:** We reinstated the law that allows 15-year-olds to work as baggers, cashiers, or stock clerks in retail businesses under strict work-hour restrictions. PA 08-108

**Coverage for Autism Therapies:** After January 1, 2009, certain health insurance policies will cover physical, speech and occupational therapy for autism spectrum disorders if the policies cover these services for other diseases and conditions. PA 08-132

**Teen Drivers:** Stricter restrictions on 16- and 17-year-old drivers were imposed in response to the rising number of tragic accidents involving young drivers. Violations can lead to mandatory license suspensions. PA 08-32

**Sales Tax Free Week:** This year's sales tax-free week for back to school shopping will run from Sunday, August 17 to Saturday, August 23.

**Toxic Toys:** Connecticut adopted stricter limits for lead in children's products. We also banned the sale of toys and other articles marketed for children under 16 that contain asbestos. As of October 1, 2008, the Department of Consumer Protection will be posting a list of toxic products on their website.

PA 08-106  
PA 08-122



*This chart represents the continued increase in state aid that has come back to Bridgeport since 2001.*



## NEW LAWS FOR VETERANS

**Support Our Troops License Plate** - The Department of Motor Vehicles will offer a "Support Our Troops" license plate to generate much needed funds for veterans' programs. PA 08-150

**Recognition of Veterans** - Legislation enacted this session makes certain that the Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs has access to the list of eligible veterans and is able to award ribbons and medals posthumously to resident wartime veterans. PA 08-87

**"Gold Star Family Plates" Fee Waiver** - We eliminated the \$10 fee for Gold Star family plates. The Gold Star is the symbol the Department of Defense authorized to signify that a family lost a family member in military wartime service to honor our fallen heroes in Afghanistan, Iraq as well as those in past wars. PA 08-104



Jack and Speaker Jim Amann present Infantryman Ryan Henowitz with a citation for his service to our country in Iraq. Ryan's mom, Susan, accompanied him. Ryan worked with Jack this session as his intern.



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Jack pictured here with Dr. Mark Mitchell and Elizabeth Ratliff from Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice after the Environmental Justice bill passed in the House.

I was responsible for passing landmark legislation that will allow urban communities, such as Bridgeport, to have their voices heard on the siting of noxious polluting facilities. Too often low income, urban areas are the dumping grounds for polluting facilities, and residents disproportionately share the risks and consequences of environmental pollution. Bridgeport residents have three times greater than average asthma rates, and the passage of this legislation will

help them to breathe easier. The new law requires applicants seeking approval for new or expanded polluting facilities to provide notification, submit a public participation plan, including an informal public meeting, and allow the neighbors to negotiate an environmental benefit (e.g., building an urban forest or a bike path, or retrofitting the municipal buses to lower pollution). This legislation is a model for other states to use to address environmental injustice. PA 08-94