

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

ERNEST HEWETT

SERVING THE 39TH DISTRICT

Dear Neighbor,

I am pleased to share with you this update on the recently concluded legislative session. Each year brings a new set of challenges, and the 2014 session was no different. The need to encourage economic growth, help working families, and make critical investments in the future of our children, as well as our state, was clear.

Meeting these priorities while also adopting a balanced budget with no new taxes took a lot of hard work, but I am happy to report to you that my colleagues and I were able to achieve our goals.

Working in a bipartisan manner, we were able to increase funding for education and enable more children to attend pre-school. We also made additional investments in job creation programs such as STEP-UP, which encourages employers to hire veterans and the unemployed, and will help our economy grow.

Recognizing the struggle of many working families, we raised the minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2017. By helping thousands of minimum wage earners, hundreds of millions of dollars will pour into our state economy and help businesses grow and flourish.

Spurring more economic development was also a priority that we met by helping United Technologies Corp. upgrade and expand its aerospace research and manufacturing facilities across the state. This in turn will have a domino effect and help its suppliers and related businesses.

I hope you find the enclosed information helpful and will feel free to call or email me for any reason — legislative or otherwise. It is my pleasure and honor to serve as your state representative.

Thank you,



Ernest Hewett



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ERNEST HEWETT
SERVING THE 39TH DISTRICT | NEW LONDON

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SERVING THE 39TH DISTRICT, NEW LONDON



STRENGTHENING THE DO NOT CALL REGISTRY

Although technology makes many aspects of our lives easier, it also can lead to new frustrations. Even though we created a Do Not Call List to address unwanted sales pitches at home and on our cell phones, some companies continue to make unwanted calls. We increased the penalty for violating the do not call list to \$20,000 from \$11,000. In addition, we added text messages to the Do Not Call List. You will see the effects of this law beginning on October 1, 2014.

ENHANCING SCHOOL SAFETY

In 2013 we passed landmark school safety legislation. This year we added several new safety measures, including a study that will consider establishing a student safety hotline, a safe travel to school grant program, and clarifications to the safe school climate statutes, which include requiring that the student surveys be anonymous.

PROTECTING DISABLED ADULTS FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

We need to protect disabled residents from working with those that have a history of abusive behavior towards the disabled.

We strengthened the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) protections against abuse and neglect by creating a process for investigating claims of abuse for those with autism spectrum disorder. We also expanded DDS's abuse and neglect registry definition of abuse to include financial exploitation and psychological, verbal, and sexual abuse. The registry provides a safeguard that prevents employees terminated for abuse or neglect from getting re-employed working with persons with intellectual disability or other persons who may be at increased risk of abuse.

AROUND NEW LONDON

The New London Whalers High School Girls Basketball Team was welcomed to the House Chamber as they celebrated their 2014 basketball CIAC Class M state championship for the first time in history. At the same time, New London



High celebrated their bronze medal as part of the U.S. News & World Report's "2014 Best High Schools" rankings.

SCHOOL FUNDING

I am proud to have worked with my colleagues to secure a commitment of up to \$31 million from the state for the creation of the New London Magnet School for the Visual

and Performing Arts at the Garde Arts Center. The renovations will include enhancements to the historic Garde Theatre and Oasis Room, a 244-seat theater.

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION FUNDING

An \$81,000 grant to support youth violence prevention in our communities with a focus on reducing the number of young people entering the juvenile justice system was awarded to the Writers Block, Inc., an organization that promotes writing and entertainment art to address personal and social challenges. The funds were allocated in the state budget and approved during the 2014 legislative session. Investing in productive programs for your youth is definitely a great start.

ELECTRIC CUSTOMER CONSUMER PROTECTION

This year we added much-needed transparency to an issue that we heard about from many state residents regarding predatory energy providers and confusing energy bills.

A state market analysis released in March by the Office of Consumer Counsel estimated Connecticut consumers were overpaying for electricity by an estimated \$13.7 million a month. Many consumers, who counted on paying less for energy after signing up for low introductory rates from suppliers, soon discovered that their rates jumped and they were paying more.

Energy suppliers will now be prohibited from offering consumers short-term "teaser" energy contracts with low rates, then switching to much higher variable rate contracts within weeks. Termination fees would be capped at \$50 under the law, and a consumer could switch back to the standard rate charged by UI or CL&P within 72 hours.

More transparent billing practices and faster switching, so a customer can fire a company quickly and easily, and prohibitions of coercive and deceptive sales practices, will empower consumers.

INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE

We recently increased the minimum wage to \$10.10, effective by 2017. This boost in income will appear gradually in three stages with the minimum wage rising to \$9.15 on January 1, 2015, \$9.60 on January 1, 2016, and finally to \$10.10 on January 1, 2017. The increase will raise the standard of living for thousands of hard-working families in Connecticut struggling to make ends meet and put those dollars back into our local economy, helping small businesses in our neighborhoods. Studies show that workers earning the minimum wage spend nearly their entire paycheck with local businesses on basic living expenses, including groceries. Connecticut was the first state in the nation to pass a law to raise the minimum wage above \$10 an hour.

HELP FOR JOBLESS VETERANS

This session we worked to streamline the state licensing process for our job-seeking veterans. Connecticut veterans can now apply their military training toward occupational licenses, including public safety positions and a variety of trades. In addition, college credits can be awarded for specialty training and apprenticeship credits applied to specific trades.

SECURITY DEPOSIT GUARANTEES FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS

The Veterans' Housing Program allows the Commissioner of Housing to prioritize our state's veterans in consideration of persons applying to receive a security deposit guarantee on behalf of the state. An enrollee in the program may receive a security deposit equal to two months' rent.

STOLEN VALOR

It's a crime to lie about receiving a military medal or other Congressional decoration with the intent to fraudulently obtain money, property or other tangible benefits. It is also a crime to wear a military uniform with the intent to commit fraud. Violators can receive a fine between \$500 and \$1,000, up to six months imprisonment, or both.



Mr. Frank Malloy, a WWII Veteran was introduced by Rep. Hewett and recognized by the General Assembly



Rep. Hewett and other officials meeting with the Ambassador of Taiwan (The Republic of China), Paul Wen-Liang Chang at the State Capitol