

UPDATE FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE ANNE HUGHES



UPDATE ON PROPOSED CT LAWS

Our legislative session is well underway. I want to provide you with a brief update on some items I've been working on. Most importantly, I'm passionate about federal relief dollars and state resources being marshalled directly to those most harmed and impacted by the COVID pandemic, economic recession, and catastrophic losses our state has suffered on the front lines of this prolonged convergence of crises. I aim to support strong policy making through an equity lens, bringing impacted voices to the table in matters of environmental justice, criminal justice reform and economic justice. I'd love to hear your feedback and any ideas you have for new or different laws in CT.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Hughes".

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UPDATE ON REP. HUGHES'S PRIORITIES

Ending Long-term Solitary Confinement

A growing body of evidence has demonstrated the intense psychological harm caused by long-term solitary confinement in our prisons. In fact, last year a UN expert declared that our state's use of the practice may amount to torture. It is well past time for us to end this inhumane policy. That is why I'm proud to support legislation that will end long-term solitary confinement in Connecticut.

Equitable, Modernized Cannabis, Green Workforce

While other legislative committees have worked on the criminal and taxing implications of legalizing recreational cannabis, HB 6377 reflects our focused work around equity. HB 6377 ensures new tax revenues, which could be as much as \$50 million per year*, would be returned to communities who have been historically and negatively impacted by the War on Drugs. The revenues would go towards creating entrepreneurial opportunities, increasing resources in struggling communities, and creating new employment protections for minority workers. The bill also addresses rules and issues related to housing and past cannabis related convictions. HB 6377 would create the infrastructure needed to continually address equity and bias in the regulation and legalization of cannabis. The bill provides for the legalization of home-grown cannabis, allowing individuals over the age of 21 to possess and cultivate certain amounts of cannabis at home without arrest, prosecution, or any denial of a right or privilege.

*According to fiscal note generated by the nonpartisan Office of Fiscal Analysis.

The Public Option

In an effort to increase access to affordable, quality health care, SB 842 offers a public option similar to the coverage afforded to state employees. The public option would be in addition to the plans available through the Access Health CT insurance exchange. The public option does not force any existing private plans out of the marketplace—if you like your current insurance plan, you will be able to keep it. SB 842 would simply expand the health insurance options to allow those who don't qualify for Medicaid, but can't afford private health insurance to purchase coverage at an affordable rate. The public option plan would leverage the negotiating pool of state employee health plans to ensure health care coverage people can actually use and afford, without a high deductible. The public option would be extended to municipalities, nonprofits and small businesses. SB 842 would also expand financial assistance to low and middle-income individuals to make health care more affordable.

