



Rep. Johnson, Gov. Malloy and Education Commissioner Pryor celebrate the new Office of Early Childhood.

THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Office of Early Childhood transforms how we address early childhood experiences. This new office builds on early childhood education opportunities which creates a solid foundation for our young children to develop into strong citizens. (Executive Order No. 35)

ACCESS HEALTH CT

Applications are now being accepted at Access Health CT. You will be able to obtain health insurance or have access to the Medicaid low income adult program. Coverage will be provided from 100% to 400% of the poverty level. You must apply through Access Health CT in order to receive subsidies and tax breaks to supplement the cost of the premiums.

To get the whole story call 1.855.805.4325 or go online to Access Health's FAQ page: <http://learn.accesshealthct.com/faqs/>

GMO LABELING LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW

We created the first-in-the-nation law on genetically modified foods which will inform consumers of what they are eating and feeding their families. The law requires food intended for human consumption that is entirely or partially genetically-engineered to bear the words "Produced with Genetic Engineering" on their packaging. The labeling requirement takes effect once similar laws are enacted in four states, including at least one that borders Connecticut, with an aggregate population of 20 million or more. **(HB 6527/PA 13-183)**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE SUSAN JOHNSON PROUDLY SERVING WINDHAM | 49TH DISTRICT

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

SUSAN JOHNSON

SERVING WINDHAM
49TH DISTRICT



CAPITOL UPDATE 2013

Dear Neighbor,

This past legislative session presented many challenges, a lot of hard work over many long days and late nights, and I'm pleased that we were able to accomplish a great deal. We achieved a balanced budget that does not raise taxes and helps municipalities hold the line on property taxes while increasing investments in education, job growth and consumer protection.

As the House Chair of the Public Health Committee, which plays a significant role in shaping the policies affecting the health and well-being of Connecticut residents, I worked to ensure the passage of some important initiatives:

- The creation of a School Nurse Advisory Council and an Advisory Council on Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorder (PANDAS) within the Connecticut Department of Public Health.
- We established early childhood behavioral health services which focuses on reducing mental, emotional and behavioral health issues in children through early identification and intervention.
- The addition of behavioral health to the list of topics for mandatory continuing education courses for Physicians.
- Restricting the use of indoor tanning devices by anyone under 17 years old.

Veterans will benefit from the expanded subsidies and training grants to encourage employers to hire them. This will help unemployed veterans who have been honorably discharged and served for at least 90 days or have a service-related disability.

It continues to be a great honor to serve your interests at the Capitol.

Sincerely,

Susan Johnson
State Representative



North Windham Elementary School's 5th Graders, national winners of the 2013 Kiddnation.com "Classroom Musical" contest, visiting with Rep. Johnson at the Capitol.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Legislation was passed to provide comprehensive educational opportunities to students who have a home language other than English. We learned that some students were improperly placed in special education programs instead of receiving a language accommodation. If a school district has misidentified a disproportionate number of students, that district's Board of Education will have to submit a report to the state containing a plan that reduces such misidentifications by improving reading assessments and interventions for students. The law also requires an analysis of these plans to identify improvements and teacher training. *(HB 6384/PA 13-193)*

PRO-CONSUMER LEGISLATION LIMITING COPAYS FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY

Over the last several years the copays for physical therapy have been rapidly increasing to the point where people with mobility issues were no longer able to afford these restorative treatments. As of January 1, 2015, copayments cannot exceed \$30 per visit. *(HB 6546/PA 13-307)*

AWARDS

This year, Rep. Johnson and Governor Malloy received the 2013 "Children's Champion" award from the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance. She also was honored as "Legislator of the Year" by the Physical Therapy Association and the Podiatry Association.



Sen. Williams and Rep. Johnson discussing the passage of GMO legislation at the Willimantic Co-op.



Rep. Susan Johnson, Norma Boujouen author of "The Puerto Rican Experience in Willimantic" and ECSU Professor Ricardo Perez.

AN ADVISORY COUNCIL ON PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care focuses on alleviating the symptoms and improving quality of life for people with both serious and chronic illnesses, employing a multidisciplinary approach to address the physical, emotional, and spiritual concerns of the patient. This law establishes a 12-member advisory council to analyze the current state of palliative care in Connecticut and make recommendations to the Department of Public Health to improve palliative care. *(SB 991/PA 13-55)*

HELP FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND DEMENTIA

There are currently 70,000 Connecticut residents living with Alzheimer's or related dementias. Anticipating the growth, I worked closely with Dept. of Aging Commissioner Edith Prague and Joe Serra, House Chair of the Aging Committee, to create the Alzheimer's Task Force to develop a strategic plan for strengthening services and support for patients and their loved ones. The work group brings together representatives from state agencies, health care professionals, service providers, and caregivers. *(HB 5979/SA 13-11)*

WINDHAM STATE AID 2014 FISCAL YEAR	
Education Cost Sharing	\$25,897,490
Priority School Districts	\$1,146,180
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$2,785,779
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$638,506
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$882,544
School Transportation	\$343,178
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$259,909
Town Aid Roads	\$371,068
Adult Education	\$275,659
DECD Tax Abatement and MRSA Payments	\$492,904
Total State Aid to Windham	\$33,093,217

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

Standardized tests have long been a part of the school experience, but how well do they work to measure what our students are learning? This law requires the State Department of Education to conduct a study to examine the fiscal, administrative and educational impact of these tests on our public schools. The law also allows the state's students to take their final Mastery Test in grade 11 rather than grade 10. *(HB 6623/PA 13-207)*

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

This law responds to racial and ethnic disparities in our health care system by requiring certain counselors, social workers and therapists to complete one hour of continuing education coursework in cultural competency prior to renewing their license. The training will help reduce cultural barriers to treatment and better equip mental health providers to deliver quality services regardless of the race, ethnicity or cultural background of the patient. *(SB 366/PA 13-76)*



NEW STATE DEPARTMENT ON AGING

Former State Senator Edith Prague was named Commissioner of the newly-formed State Department on Aging (SDA). SDA will ensure that Connecticut's elderly population has access to the supportive services necessary to live with dignity, security, and independence.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES FOR SENIORS

The new law requires the legislative Commission on Aging to establish and facilitate partnerships with municipal leaders, planning and zoning boards, social service organizations, and other key stakeholders to encourage multifaceted and coordinated planning efforts in response to the rapidly growing aging population. A new website will soon feature best practices and innovations taking place across Connecticut (and the country) as well as helpful resources and tools for municipalities to utilize in creating livable communities for all ages. *(HB 6396/PA 13-109)*

Rep Johnson at the Willimantic Housing Authority, "Sharing Lives of Women in Windham."