



Dear Neighbor,

It is a privilege and honor to serve as your state representative. The 2023 legislative session ended in June and I want to take a moment to check in and share some highlights from the past several months.

I'm proud to have worked on a budget that delivers historic tax cuts and increased funding for students, families, and our most vulnerable residents, while paying down our long-term debt, including an additional \$2 billion in unfunded future pension liability.

Most important, we did it by working together – without gimmicks or partisan politics. We prioritized education and seniors, supported non-profits, and invested in public safety.

I would love to hear from you if you have any questions on any of our initiatives addressed in this legislative update.

All my best,

2023 SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Historic increased funding for schools
- Cut more taxes on retirement income
- Massive deposit into largest Rainy Day Fund in history
- Modern voting system with early voting
- Medicare Savings Program increases. Contact DSS for more info: 1-800-842-4524
- CT a beacon for reproductive healthcare



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
SUSAN JOHNSON

PROUDLY SERVING WINDHAM

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**CAPITOL
UPDATE 2023**

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**CAPITOL
UPDATE 2023**



FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE
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A HELPING HAND TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

- Created student loan subsidies for paraeducators and school counselors in our lowest-performing school districts, for police officers in distressed municipalities and emergency medical service personnel (PA 23-70)
- Expanded debt-free community college - including subsidies for returning students (PA 23-204)
- Established lower state-backed loan refinancing rates for licensed nurses with student loan debt (PA 23-60)
- Prohibited colleges and universities from withholding transcripts due to outstanding debt (PA 23-14)
- Supported our state colleges and universities, like ECSU, UCONN and QVCC by providing an increase of more than \$500 million in operational funding (PA-204)

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

In order to address climate change and to reduce our carbon footprint, increase our reliance on clean energy sources, and protect the health of residents, we enacted policies to help achieve a cleaner environment for all residents, which:

- Expanded eligibility for Microgrid and Resilience Loans - allowing the state to build more green buildings (PA 23-157)
- Allows DEEP or the Siting Council to deny a permit for a new facility if it finds that approving the permit would result in adverse environmental or public health stress in an environmental justice community such as Windham (SB 1147)
- Provided additional funding to towns to deal with harmful chemicals like Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS) (PA 23-74)
- Protected migratory birds by requiring state-owned and leased buildings to turn off unnecessary outdoor lighting (PA 23-143)
- Banned hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs (PA 23-6)

REDUCING HEALTHCARE COSTS

- Created a Drug Discount Card Program, regulated pharmaceutical sales representatives, and banned anticompetitive loopholes in healthcare contracts (PA 23-171)
- Assisted people who qualify for Medicaid by providing two months of premium assistance to enroll in the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange (Phone: 1-855-805-4325) (PA 23-204)
- Protected workers whose health benefits are terminated by an employer following a strike or labor dispute (SB 228)
- Added more specificity to hospital discharge plans and improved coordination with the patient's pharmacy (PA 23-39)
- Increased Medicare Savings Program Funding - Contact DSS for more info 1-800.842.4524
- Created early detection screening for lung cancer (PA 23-204)

STATE MONEY FOR WINDHAM

Our increase in state funding for town aid and education funding will be critical in enhancing educational opportunities, public safety, recreational, and enrichment opportunities for all Windham residents. These projects will add to Windham's vibrancy and safety:

- More funding for local boards of education with an honest ECS formula (\$4.7 m)
- \$5.6 million in Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)
- 95% reimbursement for the Windham High School renovation, including administrative offices
- \$242,175 for the Eastern Connecticut Fire School
- \$50,000 to support the Partnership to Reduce the Influence of Drugs for Everyone (PRIDE) Willimantic



IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Given the children's champion award for increasing support for families on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - improving mental health stability for low-income children to prevent them from losing housing, food, and other essentials
- Rep. Johnson was also recognized as a Mental Health Legislative Champion by the American Mental Health Association
- Established the Office of Behavioral Health Advocate to help patients navigate our insurance system (PA 23-101)



STANDING UP FOR CT CONSUMERS

- Required companies that charge you through an auto-renewal subscription to get your permission before charging you for the next billing cycle (PA 23-191)
- Restricted more types of telemarketing calls, texts, and social media solicitations and limited the hours that telemarketing can take place (PA 23-98)
- Demanded TV and cable companies give you a prorated refund if you cancel at the end of your billing cycle (PA 23-98)
- Increased municipal fines to \$2,000 for rental property violations (unsanitary or unsafe living conditions) (PA 23-207)

EXPANDING VOTER ACCESS

- Enacted early voting - providing voting opportunities 14 days before Election Day for general elections, seven days before most primaries, and four days before special elections and any Presidential primary (PA 23-5)