



Dear Neighbor,

It is a privilege and honor to serve as your state representative. The 2024 legislative session ended in May 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 to Windham families and our most vulnerable residents, while paying down our long-term debt, including an additional \$2 billion in unfunded future pension liability.

Most importantly, 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,

2024 SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Historic funding increases for Windham Public Schools
- Cut more taxes on retirement income
- Massive deposit into largest Rainy Day Fund in history
- Modern voting system with early voting
- CT a beacon for reproductive healthcare
- Passed Public Act 24-84 which required banks to disclose financial records within 20 days when low income people apply for state assistance



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
SUSAN JOHNSON

PROUDLY SERVING WINDHAM

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**CAPITOL
UPDATE 2024**

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**CAPITOL
UPDATE 2024**



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A HELPING HAND TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

- Expanded affordable student loan program to students under 18 (PA 24-64)
- Invested in nonprofits that assist first generation, low-income students with college and financial aid applications (PA 24-117)
- Required colleges and universities to disclose policies that would reduce a financial aid offer when a student independently earns a scholarship (PA 24-87)
- Improved the automatic admissions program so students will be offered admissions to CT State Universities and some private universities based on their GPA (PA 24-47)

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:

- Banned numerous products containing dangerous PFAS chemicals (PA 24-59)
- Expanded eligibility for Microgrid and Resilience Loans as well as incentives for installing green facilities - 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 (PA 23-202)
- Expedited permitting for solar canopies and lifted caps on new solar production (PA 24-31)
- Increased hydropower going to our power grid and extended offshore wind procurement (PA 24-38)

IMPROVING HEALTHCARE POLICY

- Banned paperwork and payment requirements for receiving critical ambulance rides (PA 24-19)
- Streamlined the process for residents to access nutrition programs and encouraged farmers' markets to participate in these programs (PA 24-82)
- Allowed pharmacists to give opioid disposal systems when dispensing opioids (PA 24-19)
- Strengthened hospitals' defenses against cyberattacks (PA 24-19)
- Ensured doctors' offices that are group practices have more accessible equipment to assist those with physical disabilities (PA 24-113)
- CT Medicare Savings Program has expanded contact DSS or scan the QR Code for more info: 1-800-842-4524:
- Allowed telehealth to continue for in-state and out-of-state residents without letting the practice sunset (PA 24-110)



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 (\$4.3 m)
- New \$1.2 million in ARPA funds for 2025
- 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

- Established the Office of Behavioral Health Advocate to help patients navigate our insurance system (PA 23-101)
- Improving Childcare: Increased coordination to raise private funds, piloted new childcare programming, and expanded the childcare incubator program (PAs 24-78 & -91)
- If you or someone you know is having trouble getting affordable healthcare services please reach out the Office of the Healthcare Advocate online at <https://portal.ct.gov/oha> or by phone at 1-866-466-4446



STANDING UP FOR MOST VULNERABLE

- Made it easier to qualify for and receive payouts from, the state's emergency mortgage assistance program (PA 24-66)
- Cut red tape when it comes to getting wheelchairs under Medicaid and required their timely repair (PA 24-58)
- Protected domestic violence victims from being forced into debt by their abuser (PA 24-77)
- 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

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)