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*Joined by fellow Environment Committee members, Rep. Jutila speaks in support of a bill to form a Committee between New York and Connecticut for the protection of Long Island Sound.*



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**Please Keep in Touch**

## Legislative Newsbriefs

- \$1 million in state assistance to small and medium-sized defense subcontractors.
- Preservation of state funding to tourism districts, particularly important to southeastern Connecticut.
- Creation of 18 member Bi-State Long Island Sound Committee (CT/NY) charged with avoiding, minimizing and mitigating impact on natural resources and water quality.
- Greater fiscal accountability and increased interaction between executive branch budget office and legislative budget and finance committees.
- \$30 million for farmland preservation, open space acquisition, historic preservation and affordable housing.
- Access to more affordable health insurance for small businesses by pooling rates.
- Extending HUSKY health insurance benefits.
- Requiring carbon monoxide detectors in all newly constructed one and two-family homes.
- Initiatives to curtail the rising cost of medical malpractice insurance premiums.
- Requirement of verifiable paper trail on electronic voting machines.

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**ED** State Representative  
37th District **JUTILA**  
East Lyme ~ Salem

State Representative  
**Ed Jutila**



# Capitol News

## 2005



**37th District ~ East Lyme & Salem**

**Dear Friends:**

The 2005 session of the Connecticut General Assembly has come to a close and along with it my first session serving as your State Representative. It is with great honor and privilege that I serve the citizens of East Lyme and Salem, and I continue to be grateful for the trust that you have placed in me.

When I was out campaigning last summer and fall, I listened to many of you tell me that the most important issues facing us were property tax relief and education funding. Accordingly, I made it a top priority to fight for increased aid to towns, including a greater share of the casino slot revenues to go directly to municipalities. I am pleased to report to you that the budget adopted by the General Assembly will increase aid to towns this year by an additional \$142 million, and next year for the first time in several years, the percentage of the casino revenues earmarked for towns will increase.

Finally, by working together as a delegation, southeastern Connecticut's legislators were able to convince our leadership and colleagues from around the state to approve \$1.6 million in casino impact aid for our region, including both Salem and East Lyme. I am confident these initiatives that provide increased funding will help reduce some of the property tax burden on local taxpayers.

Details of these and other highlights from this legislative session are included in this [Capitol News](#) report.

I would also like to thank many of you who have contacted me throughout the year, and I encourage you to stay in touch. Your views, ideas and concerns are important to me, and I will continue to listen and work hard to maintain your trust and confidence.

Sincerely,  


## Increases in State Aid



### East Lyme

**(ECS) Education Grant**  
2005-2006 Increase  
\$6,497,043 +\$189,234

**Town Road Aid**  
2005-2006 Increase  
\$147,041 +\$42,132

**Total Formula Grants**  
2005-2006 Increase  
\$8,647,037 +\$359,124

### Salem

**(ECS) Education Grant**  
2005-2006 Increase  
\$2,761,938 +\$80,445

**Town Road Aid**  
2005-2006 Increase  
\$83,931 +\$24,049

**Total Formula Grants**  
2005-2006 Increase  
\$3,083,684 +\$115,531

## Transportation

### TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE

This year the legislature approved the Governor's \$1.3 billion transportation initiative. Under the legislation Connecticut will;



- ✓ Acquire 340 new rail cars for Metro-North,
- ✓ Construct a long overdue maintenance facility,
- ✓ Make \$187 million in improvements to I-95 and \$150 million in improvements to other state highways.

As a member of the Transportation Committee I sought and obtained assurances from the administration that the new rail cars would be compatible with the tracks all the way to Stonington, in order to permit future extension of Metro-North into southeastern Connecticut.

### CELL PHONE BAN



If you don't have hands-free cell phone equipment, it's time to get it. As of October 1<sup>st</sup>, drivers will be prohibited from using hand-held cell phones unless there is an emergency. Drivers 16 and 17 years old cannot use even hands-free cell phones. Drivers risk a \$100 fine for violations of the new law.

## Ethics Reform

### OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

In order to address ethics concerns and promote ethical behavior, the General Assembly voted to start fresh and create the Office of State Ethics and a nine-member Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board as the successor to the State Ethics Commission. In addition, judge trial referees will hold probable cause hearings with respect to ethics violations by public officials or lobbyists.

## Seniors

- ✓ The Department on Aging will become a separate agency and no longer part of the Department of Social Services as of January 2007.
- ✓ The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders raised the asset limits from \$19,020 for singles to \$28,530 and from \$28,530 to \$38,040 for married couples.
- ✓ The maximum prize for bingo games designed for senior citizens increases from \$5 to \$20.



## Environment and Open Space

### EIGHTMILE RIVER



*A scenic view of Oswegatchie Hills along the Niantic River.*

This session I also co-sponsored a bill declaring it state policy for a portion of the Eightmile River to be preserved as open space under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Under the bill the DEP commissioner is required to work with federal, state and local agencies to attain such designation. The goal of the Act is to protect rivers with scenic, recreational and historical value from development projects that might endanger the environment.



*Rep. Jutila with Gov. Rell, Congressman Simmons, Sen. Stillman and Rep. Orange at a bill signing for the protection of the Eightmile River.*

### OSWEGATCHIE HILLS

As part of the Bond Package the town of East Lyme is authorized to receive \$2 million in funding for the purchase of land in the Oswegatchie Hills for the preservation of open space. This matches the \$2 million commitment made by the town of East Lyme at a town meeting earlier this year. We are working to obtain final approval by the state Bond Commission so that the money can be released.

## More Work To Do . . .

### Going forward I plan to focus on:

**Transportation:** Although the Governor's initiative is a good start, we need to continue to address transportation gridlock throughout our state, particularly completion of Route 11, widening of I-95 through southeastern Connecticut, and extending Metro-North rail service to southeastern Connecticut.

**Casino Revenue:** Casino impact aid obtained should be increased and made a permanent part of the Mohegan-Pequot Fund distribution formula.

**Eminent Domain:** It is essential that we conduct a comprehensive review of Connecticut eminent domain statutes and pass legislation protecting homeowners from the broad power granted to the government under the Supreme Court's decision in *Kelo v. City of New London*.

**Campaign Finance Reform:** We should carefully consider recommendations from the working group on campaign finance reform charged with reducing the influence of money in politics.

**Performance Based Budgeting:** A system of performance based budgeting should be implemented that requires the legislature to re-evaluate all state programs for effectiveness and value during each two-year budget cycle.

**Education Cost Sharing Formula:** A thorough analysis of the current ECS formula should be conducted and appropriate changes made.

## Veterans

It is critically important that we recognize the sacrifices the men and women in our armed forces and their families have made. For them we developed the following initiatives:



- ✓ 50% State Income Tax Exemption for military pensions beginning in 2008.
- ✓ New Military Relief Fund for families to help with routine items such as transportation and day care.
- ✓ A new toll-free phone number starting this fall to help with services. Those needing immediate help can call the National Guard Family Program at 860-524-4866.
- ✓ Tuition breaks for military personnel stationed in Connecticut.



*Rep. Jutila meets in the House Chamber with Mrs. Valliere's fourth grade class from Niantic Center School.*

## Education

### EDUCATION INITIATIVES

- ✓ Created an Early Childhood Education Cabinet to promote quality in childhood development and education.
- ✓ Established a state education resource center to encourage innovative education practices.
- ✓ Increased the per-pupil grants to charter schools.
- ✓ Increased the Capitol Scholarship Grant from \$2000 to \$3000 for those who attend college in-state.



### TEACHER'S RETIREMENT

This year we began to address the under-funding of the Teachers' Retirement System by using general fund and surplus appropriations of \$276.1 million in fiscal year '06 and \$286 million in fiscal year '07. A good start but we must continue to move toward full actuarial funding.