

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES



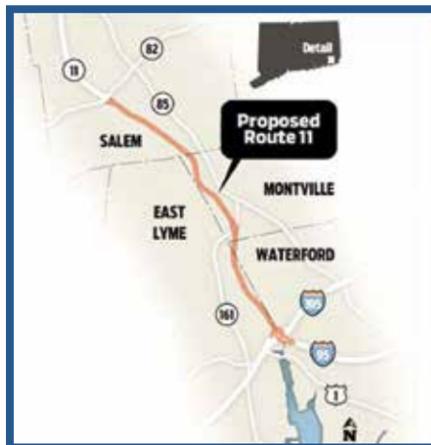
This legislative session we created the framework for an historic investment in our transportation infrastructure as a part of the Let's Go CT 30-year plan. This plan will spur more growth in our economy and create thousands of jobs, while addressing traffic congestion through highway upgrades, bridge repair and rail expansion. Local plans include the Niantic train station, widening of I-95 and the completion of Route 11.

NIANTIC TRAIN STATION

The legislature passed a state bonding bill which made the proposed Niantic commuter rail station eligible to receive \$750,000 in transportation bond funding. The State Bond Commission approved the funding at its September meeting. Funds can now be used for environmental permitting, a capacity analysis and initial design work. These steps were identified in a 2012 Department of Transportation feasibility study. A commuter rail station in Niantic will serve to reduce traffic on I-95, promote further economic development and draw more visitors to the many attractions and businesses downtown Niantic has to offer.

RELIEVING CONGESTION ON I-95

The Let's Go CT plan includes the widening of I-95 to three lanes in each direction. The area between the Baldwin Bridge and Gold Star Bridge has been designated as a top priority.



ROUTE 11

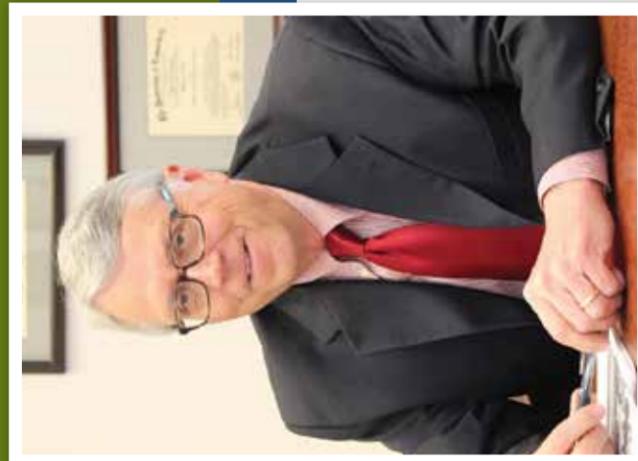
The Route 11 completion project is also included as a longer range project in the Let's Go CT 30-year plan.



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2015

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Each year brings with it new challenges as the General Assembly enters another legislative session. In spite of those challenges, during the 2015 session we were able to pass important legislation that will move our state in a positive direction.

In my view, the Governor's Let's Go CT 30-year transportation infrastructure plan is the most significant of these legislative initiatives. In addition, we provided well deserved tax relief to our veterans, helped students struggling to finance their educations, created a bill of rights for seniors living in continuing care retirement communities, and formed a commission to develop policies that promote economic growth and job creation.

This year I continued to have the privilege of serving as Co-Chair of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, with jurisdiction over the Department of Administrative Services, the eight watchdog agencies, conveyance of state property, as well as all of our election laws. In this capacity, I successfully championed a number of major bills on the House floor that will, among other things, enhance government efficiency and increase transparency, establish cyber security standards for companies handling our personal data, and improve our electoral process.

The Let's Go CT transportation projects, as well as other highlights from the 2015 legislative session are included in this newsletter. I hope that you will find this information interesting and informative.

I would like to thank all those who have contacted me with their opinions and ideas this year. I hope that you will continue to do so as we prepare for the start of the 2016 session.

Sincerely,



Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: 800-842-8267
E-mail: Ed.Jutila@cga.ct.gov
Web: www.housedems.ct.gov/Jutila

IMPROVING HOW GOVERNMENT WORKS

As Co-Chairman of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, I am particularly proud to have spearheaded the following legislation to improve how government works and make it more transparent and accountable to the people.

EXPANDING PUBLIC ACCESS TO RECORDS

In 2014, the Connecticut Supreme Court rendered a decision severely limiting public access to arrest records previously considered to be public records by the Freedom of Information Commission. Recognizing the importance of the public's right to know, we passed legislation supported by both transparency advocates and law enforcement officials that will once again make the most significant of these records available to the public and press, while preserving the integrity of the prosecution of suspected criminals.

STRENGTHENING THE STATE'S ELECTIONS

This year, we supported professional development for registrars of voters by establishing and setting criteria for an official certification program. Once certified, registrars will now participate in eight hours of training each year. The role of the Secretary of the State in issuing instructions to local election officials has also been clarified, and a process has been created for removing registrars under the most serious of circumstances. As a result, the voter registration process will be improved, we'll get quicker results on election night, and there will be a better process to handle many of the issues that can pop up on Election Day. In the end it will be the voters who will benefit from these reforms.

STRENGTHENING OUR CYBERSECURITY LAWS

A new law we passed provides protections for confidential consumer information that a business or contractor obtains from a state agency to provide goods or services. The legislation requires the contractor to take certain steps to prevent data breaches. Under the new law, the contractor must maintain a data security program, limit access to confidential information to authorized employees and authorized purposes only and report any suspected data breach to the attorney general and state agency.



Rep. Jutila bringing out GAE Committee legislation on the floor of the House of Representatives.



Rep. Jutila confers with the Vice-Chair of GAE Committee Rep. Jonathan Steinberg of Westport regarding legislation.

JOB CREATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A new Commission on Economic Competitiveness was formed to develop policies that promote economic growth and job creation in the state. The commission will analyze the impact of state tax policy on state business and industry, and will also examine their needs in terms of their ability to maintain economic competitiveness.



Boy Scout Troop 7 from East Lyme visits Rep. Jutila on its tour of the State Capitol.

PUBLIC SAFETY

In an effort to encourage more cars off the roads, Connecticut continues to make bicycle safety a top priority, while also making some common sense changes for motorists. This year, we passed a measure to clarify that bicyclists must keep to the right of the road, except in certain circumstances such as passing and turning left. The law also specifies that motorists may cross the center line in a no-passing zone to pass certain obstructions. The Department of Transportation will now be required to update design standards in accordance with the National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Bikeway and Urban Street design guides.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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STANDING UP FOR SENIORS AND VETERANS

Continuing Care Bill of Rights

We created a bill of rights for seniors living in continuing care retirement communities. This bill of rights gives residents a voice in decisions that affect them within these communities. It also gives residents more independence in making decisions about their medical care and assisted living services.

Military Retirement Income

This session we passed legislation to exempt 100% of military veterans' pensions from the state income tax. Currently, 50% of veteran's retirement pay is exempt. After having co-sponsored similar legislation in previous years, I was very pleased to see this finally become law to reward those who devoted their careers to serving our country.

ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Protecting Electric Consumers

This year, Connecticut became the first state to protect residents from electricity providers who offer a low introductory rate that increases rapidly. The protections require competitive electric suppliers to give their customers a 60-day notice before the end of their contract. In addition, suppliers are prohibited from charging customers a termination or early cancellation fee, and must allow customers to switch providers within 72 hours.

Preserving Long Island Sound

Long Island Sound remains one of our most precious state resources. To protect the Sound, the "Blue Plan" provides for the inventory of the resources, uses and conservation areas of our portion of Long Island Sound. With this plan in place, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, along with the newly established 16-member Long Island Sound Resource and Use Inventory and Blue Plan Advisory Committee, will be able to manage more clearly and effectively our offshore waters through a data-driven process. It will also help streamline, allocate and coordinate our resources, including state agencies, academic institutions, and other stakeholders. Plans similar to this have been instituted by a number of our neighboring coastal states with great success.

EDUCATION

Giving Towns More Control Over School Budgets

Since the state first implemented a Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR), school enrollment numbers have steadily declined. The rigid requirement that towns spend the same amount (or more) on education than they did the year before had created a disincentive for towns to deliver education efficiently. The new law offers greater flexibility to towns that are experiencing declining enrollment to adjust their budgets accordingly.

Student Loan Bill of Rights

Connecticut became the first state in the nation to create a Student Loan Bill of Rights, which establishes an Office of the Student Loan Ombudsman. This office will regulate student loan servicers, compile data on borrower complaints, develop a financial literacy education course for students, and help student borrowers and their parents navigate the loan process. The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) has announced that it will also offer its lowest fixed interest rate yet at 4.95%, down from the current rate of 6.75%. This rate is also significantly lower than the Federal PLUS loan rate of 6.84%.



Jim Smith, the President of the Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information, presents Rep. Jutila with the Champion of Open Government Award for his work to restore public access to arrest records.