

# SENIORS

Protecting the quality of life for our senior citizens is a top priority. This year the legislature focused on healthcare and grandparents' rights.

## Grandparents' Rights

Family relationships are complicated and grandparents can sometimes be separated from their grandchildren's lives, particularly when divorce or disagreements occur. I supported legislation that helps grandparents seeking visitation rights by providing guidance on evidence showing a parent-like relationship exists and that a denial of visitation rights could cause harm to the child. Decisions should be made in a child's best interest and this legislation helps do that.

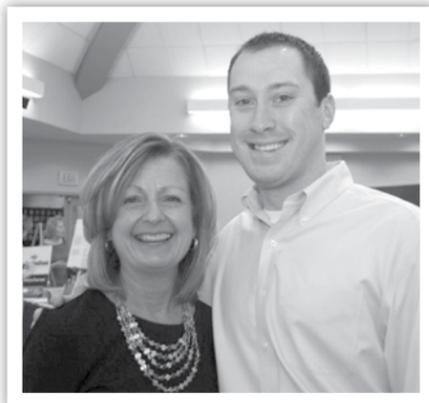
## Hospice Care

With just two licensed hospices in the state, this new law will permit more hospices to follow federal standards, giving smaller hospice facilities the opportunity to provide high quality services that allow patients to stay closer to family and friends. This bill will help our state to ensure that residents have access to health care services across the full continuum of care.

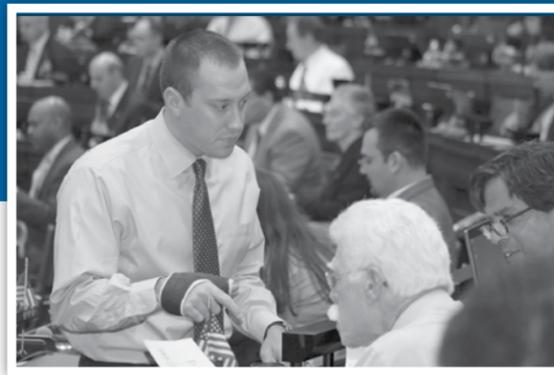
## Preserving Medicare Eligibility

This legislation ensured thousands of seniors and people with disabilities could continue to use the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) to help pay for their Medicare co-pays and deductibles by raising the income limit for MSP to accommodate a 3.6 percent Social Security cost of living increase (COLA) which took effect January 1. It would have been a tragic irony if a welcome increase in Social Security made some Connecticut residents ineligible for these Medicare benefits.

I am proud to support these and other initiatives for our seniors. After working throughout their lives and contributing to society, seniors deserve our respect and assistance to help them enjoy their later years.



Rep. Kiner and Enfield Senior Center Director Susan Lather.



Dear Neighbor:

From jobs to education to improved response to natural disasters, the legislature helped citizens across our state in many ways in 2012.

It started last October when we passed comprehensive, bipartisan jobs legislation that invested hundreds of millions of dollars in small businesses, gave firms hiring incentives, aligned education programs with jobs-in-demand, encouraged entrepreneurship and innovation, and eliminated red-tape for growing companies.

This spring, we balanced our budget by keeping our funding promise to cities and towns, which included an increase of over \$490 thousand dollars for Enfield schools. Historic changes were made to our educational system so our children can succeed. We made it easier for people to exercise voting rights and demanded that utility companies respond better when storms and crises hit. We also took action to further protect victims of domestic violence.

Along the way, we gave new hope to those suffering from debilitating illnesses by legalizing medical marijuana. We also helped children with special needs by improving Individualized Education Plans and creating a study on workforce development, training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

In addition, I worked on several bills important to Enfield. I am also proud to have supported a budget that provides over \$64 million dollars in state funding for Enfield, including funding for education and vital services to help stabilize our property taxes.

I hope this report is informative. I'm happy to answer any questions about these issues or any others facing our state or your family. Together we can create a better future for our families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David W. Kiner".

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## CAPITOL UPDATE 2012

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# PROTECTING CITIZENS



Rep. Kiner with Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman at a press conference in Enfield discussing important legislation for the town.

## Reducing Domestic Violence

As a member of the Speaker's Task Force on Domestic Violence, this year we continued to make great progress in helping families affected by domestic violence in recent years, but the problem persists in our communities. Building on earlier successes, this year we strengthened the state's laws to better protect victims, hold abusers accountable and give new tools to law enforcement by:

- Improving access to and enforcement of protective and restraining orders
- Giving police officers new tools, including a model policy for responding to domestic violence incidents
- Allowing victims to report email and texting violations of restraining and protective orders in the town where they reside, where they receive the communication or where the communication was initiated
- Extending the maximum length of restraining orders from six months to one year
- Ordering a feasibility study for a 911 texting system
- Requiring the courts to share protective orders with schools that victims attend, upon request of a victim
- Strengthening the definition of stalking to ensure that stalking incidents—including digital stalking—are appropriately punished

## Price Gouging & Pain at the Pump

Skyrocketing gasoline prices are a result of global factors such as growing demand from expanding economies like China, turmoil in the Middle East and oil market speculators. Faced with the reality of a global dilemma, the legislature acted in a bipartisan manner to be a part of the solution. We capped the state petroleum gross receipts tax (GRT) on motor fuels and enacting new price gouging laws to protect consumers from oil companies and gasoline dealers that try to exploit abnormal market conditions for profit.

# JOB GROWTH

## Jobs are Priority #1

We created new job opportunities for young people by funding the Youth Employment Summer Jobs program. We also supported adult evening education programs, as well as the Small Business Express program and a Connecticut Made initiative to promote products from local businesses. Additionally, high level job opportunities will result from economic development funding for the Jackson Labs project that builds on our decision to become a world leader in bioscience and biotechnology.

We recognize the challenges facing cities and towns and secured funding for municipalities, relieving pressure on local property taxes. Loosening budgets can support local projects and job growth.



Rep. Kiner with Secretary of the State, Denise Merrill at the 2012 North Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Breakfast in Enfield.

## Learn Here, Live Here

This new law will help graduating students save money toward a down payment on their first home in Connecticut. In recent years, the exodus of educated and trained workers has hurt our state. If we are to continue on the road to economic recovery, we must do everything we can to keep young, smart and well-prepared workers in Connecticut.

# VETERANS

## Desecrating Veteran Memorials

Honoring the present and past sacrifices of our veterans is one of my highest priorities. It is shocking to see an increase in thefts and vandalism of veteran memorials. That's why I co-sponsored a bill which increased penalties for desecrating veteran's memorials beyond the monetary value of what was vandalized.

## Diversions Programs for Vets with PTSD & Legal Issues

So many of our service men and women return home and face a variety of challenges, not the least of which are legal issues and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. A federally funded pilot program for veterans dealing with these issues is helpful but limited, so I co-sponsored a bill which expanded the program to more locations throughout the state.

## Custody Orders While on Deployment

I am proud to have co-sponsored a bill which will reduce the psychological trauma a parent feels when they leave a small child for an extended period of time, while protecting parents' permanent custody orders in the event of deployment. We provided an opportunity for the military parent to create temporary custody orders that remain in effect only as long as they are away on deployment and allow for as much contact as possible between children and the parent who is absent while on military duty.

## Veterans Charity Network

Fraudulent charity groups often misrepresent veterans, trying to take advantage of our good will toward those who serve our country. We helped protect consumers from these fraudulent groups by creating a legitimate charities list on the Department of Veteran's Affairs website: [www.ct.gov/ctva](http://www.ct.gov/ctva)

