

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**JENNIFER LEEPER**  
PROUDLY SERVING  
FAIRFIELD & SOUTHPORT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I hope you and your family are well and enjoying your summer. It continues to be an honor to serve as your Representative. I thank you for all the sacrifices you have made this past year and a half to follow social distancing and mask protocols helping us flatten the curve so that our hospitals were not overrun, our businesses could reopen, and our children could return to school.

Although my first legislative session was quite atypical, my colleagues and I worked hard to pass meaningful legislation to improve our community, state, and your quality of life. I'm proud to have passed a bipartisan budget that did not raise taxes. We are paying down a record additional \$1.3 billion of pension debt, which is projected to free up \$110 million of government spending per year. This budget invests in education, seniors, small businesses, middle class families, and our critical non-profits.

I also introduced and co-sponsored legislation related to expanding voting access, protecting our environment, promoting pedestrian safety, and preventing gun violence. In this newsletter, you will find more details on the work we did this session.

Thank you in advance for reading and, as always, if something is on your mind or if I can do anything to help you, your family or your business please don't hesitate to contact me. I wish you and your family a happy, healthy, and peaceful remainder of 2021.

All my best,



Jennifer

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# STATE REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER LEEPER

SERVING FAIRFIELD & SOUTHPORT

## FOSTERING GROWTH IN OUR MAIN STREETS

This legislative session I had the honor to serve as a co-chair of the Connecticut Main Street Working Group. Both Fairfield and Southport are each the home to a beautiful main street, that enriches our community with small businesses, shops, dining, and community events. The Connecticut Main Street Working Group advocates for smart economic development and historical restoration of our main streets so as to grow local economies. This session we secured \$350,000 for the CT Main Street Center, which works directly with partnering towns like Fairfield to support the planning, beautification, and economic development of our downtowns.

We also spearheaded legislation to support our beloved restaurants by codifying many protocols that had been relaxed during the pandemic. We have cut red tape for outdoor dining, allowed alcoholic beverages to-go, and created a 3-week period where restaurants can keep 1% of the taxes they collect at their establishment.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

One of my top priorities as your legislator is growing CT's economy. While the pandemic made that challenging in many ways, we instituted several important policies to support our businesses and incentivize growth.

- Cut unemployment insurance taxes on local businesses by excluding pandemic-related layoffs and paying directly into the fund (PA 21-5 & 21-2)
- Historic reform to unemployment trust fund resulting in 73% of businesses experiencing a tax decrease (PA 21-5 & 21-2)
- Restored the Research and Development tax credit (PA 21-2)
- Provided \$50 million to small businesses and start-ups over the next two years
- Created more partnerships with banks to provide low-interest loans for underserved communities, women and minority-owned businesses (PA 21-2)

## A BIPARTISAN, NO TAX INCREASE BUDGET

This session we passed a bipartisan \$46 billion budget which:

- Does not raise any taxes
- Provides tax cuts to the middle class through the Earned Income Tax Credit
- Ensures an historic \$3.5 billion Rainy Day Fund
- Historic additional \$2.85 billion payment toward our legacy pension debt
- Continued tax breaks for seniors on their retirement income (expanded to include IRAs as of 2023 tax year)

This budget rejected hikes on gasoline, insurance policies, and large homes. Lastly, I fought for additional state funding to help Fairfield support our two universities by expanding the Payment-in-lieu-of- Taxes (PILOT) formula.



## BUDGET SUMMARY

- ✓ BIPARTISAN
- ✓ NO TAX INCREASES
- ✓ TAX CUTS FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS
- ✓ \$3.5 BILLION RAINY DAY FUND
- ✓ RESTORES THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET
- ✓ PAID \$2.85 BILLION TOWARDS UNFUNDED PENSION LIABILITIES

### STATE FUNDS TO FAIRFIELD

	FY 21	FY 22
Education Cost Sharing	\$1,111,544	\$1,111,544
PILOT	\$2,984,617	\$2,984,617
<b>Additional State Funds To Fairfield</b>	<b>\$3,266,761</b>	<b>\$4,410,104</b>

## SUPPORTING FAIRFIELD FAMILIES

- Provided more families with state income tax relief through the Earned Income Tax Credit (PA 21-2)
- Expanded coverage and access to telehealth (PA 21-133)
- Expanded childcare services for parents who are working on their education (PA 21-171)
- Strengthened protections for domestic violence victims and survivors. (PA 21-78)

### CHILDREN

- Expanded youth suicide prevention training (PA 21-46)
- Created more outpatient services for children (PA 21-46)
- Required social-emotional learning as part of professional development for teachers (PA 21-46)
- Cracked down on online harassment with tougher penalties (PA 21-56)
- Created a new workforce pipeline program for individuals with disabilities (PA 21-10)

### SENIORS

- Expanded tax exemptions for retirement income (PA 21-84)
- Ensured access to virtual visits and monitoring for nursing home residents (PA 21-55)
- Reformed nursing home staffing, policies and supply inventories (PA 21-185)



## A GREENER CT

- Empowered towns to better manage stormwater on a local level (PA 21-115)
- Updated our ecological preservation plan for Long Island Sound (HJ 53)
- Raised bottle deposits to 10 cents, expanded qualifying plastics, and increased funds to towns and redemption centers to responsibly recycle a greater volume of bottles (PA 21-58)
- Regulated the harmful chemical "PFAS" (PA 21-191)
- Required more biodiesel in home heating oil and greater transparency for consumers (PA 21-181)
- Improved clean-up procedures and notifications in the case of a sewage spill (PA 21-42)