



State Representative

# MATT LESSER

The state's fiscal crisis dominated much of our work this year. Yet, in a year of declining state revenues, I am proud that Connecticut's families and seniors gained significant protections with the passage of many important bills.

We fought hard to increase health insurance availability for Connecticut residents and minimize the recession's impact on our towns. Affordable elderly homecare and a Silver Alert system for locating missing seniors, a ban on toxic chemicals in baby bottles, promotion of safe green cleaning products, health insurance coverage for autism treatments, and relief for dairy farmers are among the many new laws that will go into effect this year.

Thanks to all of you who have contacted me over the past year. Your input has been invaluable as I worked to prioritize and focus on what is most important to the residents of Durham, Middlefield, Middletown, and Rockfall.

It continues to be an honor and privilege to represent you in Hartford.



## CONTACT MATT LESSER

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Proudly Serving Durham, Middlefield, Middletown & Rockfall | 100<sup>th</sup> District

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# CAPITOL NEWS 2009



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## Assisting Our Seniors

Safeguarding the independence, health, safety, and economic security of seniors is one of our top priorities. We passed several new initiatives to improve the quality of life for seniors this year.

### SENIOR DISCOUNT PROGRAMS

PUBLIC ACT 09-53 — EFFECTIVE 10.01.09

- » Provides seniors with greater access to senior citizen discount programs
- » Requires businesses to prominently display signs at cash registers or store entrances with details of their discount policy and eligibility

### AFFORDABLE HOMECARE

PUBLIC ACT 09-64 — EFFECTIVE: 04.01.10

- » Expands access to affordable homecare support services that help seniors remain in their own homes

### LOCATING MISSING SENIORS

PUBLIC ACT 09-109 — EFFECTIVE 07.01.09

- » Creates an emergency notification system similar to the Amber Alert which allows law enforcement agencies to issue public alerts for missing seniors

### PATIENTS' RIGHTS AT A NURSING HOME

PUBLIC ACT 09-168 — EFFECTIVE 10.01.09

- » Expands the Nursing Home Bill of Rights to prohibit the solicitation of donations or gifts as a condition of admission
- » Extends this protection to third parties, such as families and friends



Matt Lesser leading in the Pledge of Allegiance at the State Capitol.

## Keeping Us Healthy

This year, we passed several measures aimed at improving access to health coverage and preventative care.

### EARLY BREAST CANCER DETECTION

PUBLIC ACT 09-41 — EFFECTIVE 10.01.09

- » Women with dense breast tissue are more at risk for cancer
- » To make early cancer detection easier, mammography reports must include breast density data so women understand their risk level and detect cancer earlier

### HEALTH CARE FOR STEPCHILDREN

PUBLIC ACT 09-124 — EFFECTIVE UPON PASSAGE

- » Requires health insurance policies to provide the same benefits to stepchildren as biological children



7-year-old Kiyah Reynolds of Middlefield receiving a citation in recognition of donating all of her birthday and Easter presents to charity.

## Keeping Our Kids Safe & Healthy

Our children need our protection from the numerous harms that exist. As a member of the Education and Public Health committees, I worked hard with my colleagues to pass legislation to do just that.

### NEW SAFEGUARDS AGAINST SEX OFFENDERS

PUBLIC ACT 09-199 — EFFECTIVE: 09.01.09

- » Requires the Department of Public Safety to notify the superintendents of schools in communities where sex offenders live or plan to live

### BANNING TOXIC CHEMICALS

PUBLIC ACT 09-103 — EFFECTIVE: 10.01.09

- » Bans bisphenol-A (BPA) an industrial chemical with toxic properties from use in baby bottles, infant formula, and children's food containers

### HEALTH INSURANCE FOR AUTISM TREATMENTS

PUBLIC ACT 09-115 — EFFECTIVE: 01.01.10

- » Group health insurance policies must now cover the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, including behavioral therapy for children, certain prescription drugs, and psychiatric and psychological services

### GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS IN SCHOOLS

PUBLIC ACT 09-81 — EFFECTIVE: 10.01.09

- » Connecticut schools will now use green cleaning products instead of hazardous commercial cleaning chemicals
- » This will not affect the use of disinfectants or sanitizers in schools

### PREVENTING CARDIAC ARREST IN SCHOOLS

PUBLIC ACT 09-94 — EFFECTIVE: 07.01.09

- » If funding is available, schools are now required to have an automatic external defibrillator (AED) and provide training to school staff for its use



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## Saving Dairy Farms

As a member of the legislature's Dairy Farm Task Force, I worked with my colleagues to create a \$17 million dairy farm relief package to save Connecticut's dairy industry. It will allow our dairy farms to remain competitive with out-of-state farms. Our remaining dairy farms not only protect the rural character of our towns, but they are a billion-dollar industry providing jobs to thousands of Connecticut residents.

Matt with Melissa Greenbacker of Durham's Greenbacker Farm outside the capitol on Connecticut Dairy Day.