

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**CRISTIN**  
**McCARTHY VAHEY**

Dear Fellow Fairfielders,

This year's legislative session ended back in June. If you receive my e-mail newsletter, you have already seen some of the updates about the work we accomplished. If you'd like to join the mailing list to receive more frequent updates, please sign up at [www.housedems.ct.gov/McCarthyVahey](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/McCarthyVahey).

The biennial budget maintains critical services to families, results in the largest ever Rainy Day Fund at over \$2 billion, and stabilizes the teachers' pension fund. It generated \$450 million in state employee savings, funded Care4Kids, an important childcare program for working families, and expanded access to Husky A medical insurance and the Medicare Savings Program. All of these steps and more were taken without raising income taxes and avoiding broad based sales tax increases. The budget maintained level state aid to Fairfield and our Board of Education.

Working together with the people of Fairfield continues to be an effective way to achieve important results for our community. I was grateful to join Fairfielders to successfully advocate on behalf of gun violence prevention bills, Tobacco 21, protections and benefits for veterans and seniors, mental health parity, paid family and medical leave and raising the minimum wage.

As we face the challenges and opportunities that surely lie ahead, I remain honored to work alongside you to ensure that our community remains healthy, safe and strong. I am committed to helping our state continue on a trajectory of improved fiscal stability and support for the hard working people of this state.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can be of service. You can reach me directly at **(203) 522-3037** or **(860) 240-8362** or via e-mail at [cristin.mccarthyvahey@cga.ct.gov](mailto:cristin.mccarthyvahey@cga.ct.gov).

*Cristin McCarthy Vahey*



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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## TOBACCO 21

I was proud to lead the bipartisan effort that resulted in Connecticut successfully raising the age of tobacco purchase to 21. This legislation prohibits the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, electronic nicotine delivery systems, and vapor products to anyone under the age of 21, improves enforcement and creates tobacco free school campuses. With teen vaping at a record high, it is more important than ever that we take proactive steps to protect our youth from serious future health conditions.



*The bipartisan group of legislators celebrating the passage of Tobacco 21*

## SUPPORTING WOMEN'S HEALTH

With women's health protections being rolled back across the country, the members of the bipartisan Women's Caucus were determined to reverse that trend. We passed legislation requiring health insurance coverage and cost-sharing for mammograms and breast ultrasounds, combatting sexual assault and sexual harassment, expanding Medicaid coverage for donor breast milk, and requiring the distribution of information concerning domestic violence services and resources to students, parents, and guardians. (See SB 3, SB 838, HB 6997, and HB 7165 for more information)



*Members of the 62-strong bipartisan Women's Caucus*

## ENCOURAGING BUSINESS GROWTH

Growing Connecticut businesses is always one of the top priorities of both the legislature and Connecticut residents. As a part of this year's budget, we expanded the Angel Investor tax credit to additional industries and small businesses, including minority & women-owned, eliminated the Business Entity Tax and began a phase out of the Capital Base Tax to encourage start-ups. These laws will help promote and support investment and expansion.

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# CRISTIN McCARTHY VAHEY

## TEACHERS' PENSION STABILITY



Addressing pension liability was one of my top priorities this session. The legislature established a \$380 million trust fund and re-financed the remaining liabilities without shifting costs to the towns. Wall Street ratings agencies have looked favorably on these steps, which will also result in more achievable pension payments in the coming years.

## COMPUTER SCIENCE INSTRUCTION

If you can code, you will find a job waiting for you. This session, we passed legislation to ensure that teachers and students are well versed in computer science and coding to prepare our workforce for the jobs of the future. This new law adds computer science to the public school curriculum and requires teacher preparation programs to add programming and coding to their skills curriculum.



## SUPPORTING FIRST RESPONDERS



Our first responders sometimes experience not only physical, but mental and emotional trauma as they protect and serve their communities. I was proud to support legislation, passed after years of negotiation among stakeholder groups, which will allow police officers, parole officers and firefighters to receive certain workers' compensation for PTSD caused by traumatic experiences on the job.

## COLLEGE CURRICULUMS FOR THE FUTURE

I co-sponsored legislation that permanently allows independent institutions, like our own Sacred Heart and Fairfield University, to create and modify programs that will be responsive to the needs in the marketplace. This freedom to innovate with curriculum will allow universities to be more responsive to area employers and better prepare students for the jobs of the future.



## HEALTH INSURANCE PARITY

Along with NAMI Fairfield leaders, I joined legislative colleagues in support of stronger mental health parity laws. The bill takes an important step towards equal coverage of mental health and substance abuse disorder benefits, something we know is critical as we face the opioid epidemic and increasing rates of anxiety and depression among our young people. The legislature also took the important step of mandating coverage of pre-existing conditions for health plans not protected by the ACA. (See HB 5521 & HB 7125)



*Former U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy joins bipartisan coalition for mental health parity*

## GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Together with CT Against Gun Violence, Moms Demand Action and other local advocates, we passed three major pieces of legislation to help prevent and reduce gun violence: safe storage in homes with children under 18 (Ethan's Law), safe storage in a vehicle to prevent the theft and illegal use of a stolen firearm, and a ban on "ghost guns" - homemade weapons with no serial numbers that circumvent our background check laws. (See HB 7218, HB 7219, & HB 7223)



*Cristin with Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, Moms Demand Action's Tara Donnelly Gottlieb & CT Against Gun Violence advocates at the bill signing*

## PROTECTING OUR SENIORS

The legislature preserved tax exemptions on pensions and social security income and rejected the Governor's proposed asset test for the Medicare Savings Program for low income seniors. Working with Fairfield Senior Advocates and legislative colleagues, I led efforts to pass a bill expanding background checks for direct care employees and volunteers at long term care facilities. The bill also creates a publicly available elder abuse registry.