

STATE REPRESENTATIVE CRISTIN McCARTHY VAHEY

Dear Fellow Fairfielders,

2020 has been a year of many unexpected and even unwelcome experiences. On March 9th, after the first Connecticut coronavirus case was discovered, Governor Lamont declared a Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency, resulting in an end to the legislative session. As we collectively faced businesses closing, cancellation of school for the remainder of the year, and ongoing uncertainty and anxiety, we began to adjust to a new way of day to day living. Now, as more businesses begin to reopen, we find ourselves needing to adjust once again.

To date, over 4,200 Connecticut residents have died, and close to 150 right here in Fairfield. Thousands have lost their jobs or seen a significant reduction in income. Many of us have joined our black and brown neighbors to protest police violence and systemic racism. My heart goes out to all who are suffering or have lost a loved one during this difficult time. My gratitude goes to all of our healthcare and front line workers who have supported our daily needs throughout the pandemic.

Despite the difficulties and tragedy we have faced, we have witnessed tremendous generosity and resiliency here in our community. Weekly food drives, volunteers stepping up to make and distribute much needed PPE, community building events such as Stratfield's Art in the Village, and so many individual acts of kindness and support have inspired me.

As we face the challenges ahead, I remain committed to work for your health, safety, and well being. This pandemic has reminded us that we are all connected and that we will only thrive if we care for one another.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can be of service. Contact me at 203-522-3037 or Cristin.McCarthyVahey@cga.ct.gov.

Cristin McCarthy Vahey



STAY INFORMED

Sign Up For My Email Updates at
www.housedems.ct.gov/McCarthyVahey

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CRISTIN McCARTHY VAHEY

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STAY INFORMED & BE PREPARED

We continue to be guided by public health experts on the steps we need to take to safely reopen. At the same time we have an opportunity to build a stronger and more robust state.

Please stay informed of the latest guidance by signing up for **CTAlert**, the state and town's emergency notification system. Text **FAIRFIELDCT** to **888777** or visit CTALERT.gov and click "Register for Alerts." For help registering, call the Bigelow Center at **203-256-3166**. We will be able to remain open and avoid a resurgence by continuing to wear masks, test, trace and assure supported isolation.

Many residents have questions about contact tracing. If you test positive for COVID-19, you will be contacted by our local health department asking you to fill out a questionnaire to help protect your family, friends, co-workers, and broader community. There is no tracking via apps and participation is voluntary. Together we can break the chain of transmission.

Hurricane season is predicted to be more robust than in past years. Please prepare not only by signing up for these alerts, but by insuring you have needed supplies on hand. You can find more information online at ready.gov/hurricanes.



STILL WORKING FOR YOU

Throughout these past months, many of you have reached out for support or assistance, particularly with the Department of Labor. While working to address individual constituent needs, I have also worked in partnership with other town leaders to assure access to critical information and resources.

I know that working with state agencies and our partners during this time can be complicated. Phone lines are crowded, and applications are confusing. Call or e-mail any time. My office is here to help.

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MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES



Cristin & Wendy Bentivegna provided QPR suicide prevention training to Fairfield Moms Demand Action

The statewide Social Emotional Learning Collaborative, a group of education, mental health and community stakeholders, is tasked with improving suicide prevention for our students. I have joined this effort, which is now also focused on preparing students' and teachers' return to school. Now more than ever, these conversations about social and emotional health and well being are critical. For information, mental health resources and support, check out The Hub CT, NAMI CT and Fairfield CARES.

VOTING ACCESS

Together with fellow legislators, I asked the Governor and legislative leaders to guarantee safe voting for the primary and general elections. Executive Order 7QQ allows any voter to request an absentee ballot for the August primary. It is expected the legislature will take the same step for the November general election. I will continue to strongly advocate for no-excuse access to absentee ballots. All voters will receive absentee ballot applications in the mail.



NONPROFIT & BUSINESS SUPPORT



If you are a nonprofit or business owner, the Department of Economic and Community Development is developing and updating guidelines on safe ways to operate. The pandemic has been particularly difficult on so many local organizations and businesses. I will continue to advocate for low-interest loan programs, tax relief, and rental support. Here are available resources:

- DECD: ct.gov/Coronavirus/Information-For/Business-Resources
- COVID-19 Business Emergency Response Line: **860-500-2333**
- Low-Interest Disaster Loans: sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance
- Business Guidance: bit.ly/3efqb0F
- Small Business Development Center COVID-19 Business Resources: ctsbdc.com/covid19-businessresourcecenter
- Women's Business Development Council virtual classes & counseling for those impacted by COVID-19: ctwbdc.org
- SCORE Small Business Resilience Hub: score.org/recovery/small-business-resilience

CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES



The CDC and Governor Lamont are continuing to require individuals wear masks in public when you are unable to "social distance" more than 6 feet away from others. Please follow group gathering guidelines and don't forget the importance of hand washing.

For the latest information on the Governor's Executive Orders and Connecticut's coronavirus response, visit ct.gov/coronavirus. If you notice an organization not operating in a safe manner, you can call **2-1-1** or file a complaint at bit.ly/37IYsTn.

EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY



Before the session ended, I was proud to help lead efforts for the passage of The Connecticut Parentage Act (HB 5178). This bill would ensure that the law reflects and protects the diversity of families in our state. With this change, all children would be guaranteed the security of a legal parent-child relationship whatever the marital status, gender or sexual orientation of their parents. In more recent weeks, I have been proud to stand with fellow residents to celebrate Pride Month with our LGBTQ community and to support Black Lives Matter and protest police violence against black and brown community members.

THE SESSION THAT WASN'T

While we were only up in Hartford for a month this year, there were a number of important initiatives underway. As Co-Chair of the Planning and Development Committee, I led the effort to reorganize our zoning code to make it more accessible and understandable for residents and applicants. The bill, HB 5312, was supported by a diverse range of stakeholders. It will provide support and guidance to towns as they create the required affordable housing plans. I also convened advocates and legislators to continue efforts in tobacco prevention, specifically a flavor ban for vaping products. Though we were unable to pass any bills due to COVID, the work continues.

