



Dear Neighbors,

This year the legislature made historic investments in early childcare, increased school and municipal aid to mitigate local tax increases, made voting more accessible, and brought millions of dollars back to Fairfield and Bridgeport. Many of us are talking about how we will pay our bills, access healthcare and housing, keep our jobs in the face of Artificial Intelligence advancements, and protect our children from gun violence and predatory social media practices. Our work this year was aimed at all this and more, particularly in the face of unpredictability from the federal government. This newsletter highlights just some of the legislation we passed this session.

As a social worker and a Mom, I am increasingly reminded of the importance of real human connection and building community. Thank you for the opportunity to represent you and connect with you here in the community and in Hartford. Please continue to reach out with your ideas, questions, frustrations, and joys, either directly by phone at 203-522-3037 or at Cristin.McCarthyVahey@cga.ct.gov. Sign up to receive my e-newsletters for more regular updates on the work we are doing.

Gratefully,

Cristin



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

CRISTIN MCCARTHY VAHEY

PROUDLY SERVING FAIRFIELD & BRIDGEPORT

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**CAPITOL
UPDATE 2026**

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CT HOUSE DEMOCRATS FINALIZE RESPONSIBLE BIPARTISAN BUDGET

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

- \$25 million for Bridgeport Public Schools
- Millions of dollars for Fairfield's Dwight Elementary School rebuild
- \$320 million to the Early Childhood Endowment Fund to establish free and reduced childcare for Connecticut families
- \$12 million to establish a universal free school breakfast program
- \$3.6 million for Greater Bridgeport Transit
- \$1 billion towards paying down long-term debt
- An additional \$50 million to the federal emergency response fund
- New research and development tax credit for small businesses and biotechnology
- Small business tax credit for employers who contribute to employees' individual insurance coverage
- New mortgage assistance program for first responders



FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

- Instituted online ballot tracking and stronger security measures for absentee ballots and replaced the confusing second envelope with a more reliable bar code system
- Allocated funds for new universal no-excuse absentee voting
- Set up a system to check the status of your absentee ballot online
- Expanded independently verified audits and improved oversight to ensure vote count accuracy
- Increased penalties for voter intimidation, vote tampering, and outside interference



LEADING THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

I continue to Co-Chair the legislature's Public Health Committee. This year we:

- Assured and improved access, coverage, and affordability of recommended vaccines, with new options for uninsured and underinsured adults
- Maximized federal funding for healthcare
- Cracked down on private equity ownership and control of hospitals and nursing homes
- Financially protected healthcare employees assaulted on the job
- Improved access to lifesaving Narcan for overdose prevention and assured full immunity to those administering it
- Made breast cancer screenings more accessible to those in prison and increased healthcare staffing for the Department of Corrections
- Required proper background checks for homemakers and companion workers
- Streamlined healthcare facility approvals
- Created in statute an Endometriosis Working Group, a condition that affects one in ten women, and funded the creation of a menopause toolkit for patients and providers
- Required the creation of extreme weather protocols and coordination for the homeless population
- Made it easier for dentist offices to administer x-rays



SAFER NEIGHBORHOODS

- Updated distracted driving laws to account for modern technology
- Suspended licenses for drivers who continue to illegally pass school buses
- Expanded data privacy rights and Artificial Intelligence (AI) safeguards by regulating data brokers; banned the sale of precise geolocation data; and increased transparency around surveillance and facial recognition technology
- Required AI bots to detect self-harm and violence and disclose to users that they are interfacing with a bot not a human
- Increased transparency of AI on social media
- Protected traffic camera data from being used for immigration enforcement
- Banned easily convertible pistols and expanded options for safely surrendering firearms to local police
- Strengthened oversight of federal immigration enforcement, including a statewide ban on federal agents wearing masks



SENIORS AND STUDENTS

- Strengthened oversight of private equity owned nursing homes to protect seniors
- Ensured seniors can use room cameras to stay connected with family
- Expanded caregiver training to improve senior safety and care quality
- Made basic school supplies tax-free
- Reformed homeschooling to ensure student safety
- Strengthened child welfare through family placement, increased training, and additional resources for families
- Strengthened regulations on vape sales
- Toughened the ban on gambling ads targeting children
- Required social media companies to provide mental health warnings
- Ensured students will learn more about AI
- Established a subsidized student loan program for certain students