

2008 Housing Legislation



PILOT FOR PUBLIC HOUSING

For many years, the state budget has included a payment in lieu of taxes program for low and moderate income public housing. Restoration of these funds became a top priority after the funding was cut during the 2007 session. Housing authorities then began to notify their low income tenants that they should expect rent increases in the near future. Therefore, the legislature acted to continue the program's funding through the end of June 2009. (Special Act No. 08-1)

EMERGENCY HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Connecticut law allows eligibility for the Department of Social Services' emergency housing benefits to those in the process of a home foreclosure. Due to a rising rate in home foreclosures, the Connecticut legislature has recognized the benefits of this program do not become active until too late in the foreclosure process. Public Act 08-22 allows foreclosure defendants to be eligible for housing benefits at the time a foreclosure judgment is entered. (PA 08-22)



RESPONSIBLE LENDING AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

The mortgage crisis has hit many Connecticut families hard this year. My office received many calls from homeowners seeking help and guidance for fear of losing their home. As

Vice Chairman of the Banking Committee, my colleagues and I worked hard to draft legislation to address this matter. PA 08-176 offers assistance to these families through the creation of new (HERO and Mortgage Crisis Job Training), and the enhancement of existing (CT Families and EMAP) state programs for mortgage and foreclosure help. The bill also includes the new foreclosure mediation program that the courts will use to determine if and how families can keep making mortgage payments and avoid foreclosure. The bill creates stricter regulations and greater penalties on lenders and brokers when writing loans for people with limited income and who carry higher debt. The agencies to contact regarding these programs are the Department of Banking's Foreclosure Assistance Hotline at 877-472-8313 or the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority at 860-571-3500. (PA 08-176)



**As your State Representative,
I am very proud to represent
the City of Hartford!**

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- 2008 Laws Affecting Veterans
- 2008 Laws Affecting Businesses
- 2008 Laws Affecting Environment

A Message to My Constituents



Dear Neighbors,

It is an honor to serve as your state representative. I will consistently and earnestly strive to prove myself worthy.

As we faced many important topics during the 2008 legislative session, such as education, health care issues and the effects of the real estate crisis, I am determined to not only take a positive stance on the issues but also to make a positive difference.

Your input and participation is essential to the legislative process and helps me be a more effective state representative. Therefore, I highly encourage you to play an active role in the process. I realize that we have much work ahead of us. Your opinions and valuable knowledge will help in making decisions that will better our quality of life.

Please feel free to contact me at 860.240.8585 with any questions or concerns you may have. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Douglas McCrory
State Representative - 7th District





REDUCING CHILD POVERTY

This bill is aimed at reducing child poverty in the state. Federal Food Stamp funds will be directed to reduce child poverty, which will help many local organizations that serve low-income families and individuals. The Department of Social Services will also administer a food stamp employment and training program. Efforts will be made to expand those eligible for enrollment in the program in education, employment, and training activities. (PA 08-161)

EXPANDING THE CARE 4 KIDS PROGRAM

Connecticut's Care 4 Kids program is for low income working families which reaches over 17,000 children. This bill enables the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services to establish extended eligibility for those who previously would have been ineligible for the subsidy due to a temporary interruption in employment or other approved activity. (PA 08-100)



Rep. Douglas McCrory with 2008 intern and his former student, Cherelle Lipscomb, at the Legislative Office Building

SCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



This bill clarifies the in-school suspension limitation and strengthens the bullying policy currently in place. Starting July 1, 2009, out-of-school suspensions may only be allowed after a hearing is held to determine if a student is too dangerous or disruptive. In-school suspensions will now be a maximum of ten days rather than five.

The bill also takes steps to strengthen the current law on bullying in schools. Now verified reports of bullying will be required to be filed in writing with the Department of Education. Schools must also create a prevention strategy in addition to an intervention strategy to address bullying behavior. (PA 08-160)

ERASURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS

If someone has been convicted of a crime, it becomes part of their criminal record. However, if a charge has been dismissed, then it should not appear on a criminal background check. This bill will require that records be erased when someone is found not guilty of a charge or if the charge is dismissed; any charge in a criminal case has been nulled and it has been at least 13 months since; or they have received a pardon for the charge. This change only applies to electronic records and not to paper records. Electronic records means computer printouts and records created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored electronically, including faxes, e-mail, telexes, and Internet messaging. (PA 08-151)

MINORITY HEALTH ADVISORY COMMISSION

The health and well-being of Connecticut's residents is a top priority of the General Assembly. Reports have shown that many minority ethnic groups receive lower quality care than their counterparts, even when income, age, insurance, and health status are taken into consideration. To begin to address the myriad health care related disparities for members of the state's minority communities, the legislature passed a bill this session that establishes a 32-member Commission on Health Equity within the Office of the Health Care Advocate for administrative purposes. The office will work to eliminate disparities in health status based on race, ethnicity, and linguistic ability and to improve the quality of health for all state residents. (PA 08-171)



PRESUMPTIVE ELIGIBILITY FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Connecticut currently provides health care to women who are pregnant if they qualify for Medicaid. The process determining this eligibility can delay the needs of a pregnant woman. In light of this factor, Connecticut legislators have passed Public Act 08-68 in order to give women "Presumptive Eligibility." This will ensure proper care until the verification process is complete. (PA 08-68)

SUPPORT FOR GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVE CAREGIVERS

This bill gives the same rights to grandparents and other relative caregivers appointed through Superior Court, and who are not receiving subsidized guardianship or foster care payments from the Department of Children and Families (DCF). They are now able to apply for grants under the Probate Court administered Kinship Fund and Grandparents and Relatives Respite Fund. Previously, only guardians appointed through the Probate Court were able to receive financial support. (PA 08-97) Effective Date: July 1, 2008.

THE HOMECARE OPTION PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY (HOPE)



The Homecare Option Program for the Elderly (HOPE) offers participants who establish an individual savings account within this state-administered trust fund to provide beneficiaries with funds to pay for qualified home care expenses. Capital gains and dividends earned on contributions to these accounts are exempt from the designated account beneficiary's state income tax. Also, it expands those who benefit from the HOPE account to any beneficiary. Beneficiaries can withdraw funds from the account which would otherwise not be covered by long term health insurance or Medicare. (PA 08-140)

MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON PROJECT

This bill will make sure the people who want to remain at home with their families can be cared for at a level that meets their needs. The Money Follows the Person program reduces reliance on institutional care and develops community-based long-term care opportunities. It will support elderly and disabled Medicaid recipients. PA 08-180 expands and improves this program by increasing from 700 to 5,000 the number of individuals who can be served under the program. (PA 08-180)



Please feel free to contact me if you should have any suggestions, questions or concerns.

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MONEY FOR HARTFORD
 (Fiscal Year 2008 - 2009)

- PILOT State-Owned Real Property**
\$10,835,541
- PILOT Colleges & Hospitals**
\$23,749,220
- Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Sun Grant**
\$9,983,850
- Town Aid Road Fund Grant**
\$611,341

Local Capital Improvement (LoCIP) Program
\$1,929,863

Public School Pupil Transportation
\$3,214,955

Non-Public School Pupil Transportation
\$46,375

Adult Education
\$3,092,497

Education Cost Sharing Grant
\$187,974,890

Total Statutory Formula Grants
\$241,438,532

This reflects an increase of \$10,555,487 compared to Fiscal Year 2007 - 2008.