

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2013 legislative session has ended and I have put together this newsletter to update you about what I, and the legislature, did this year. For instance, we passed a balanced budget that does not raise taxes and helps municipalities hold the line on property taxes while protecting investments in education and job growth to name a few.

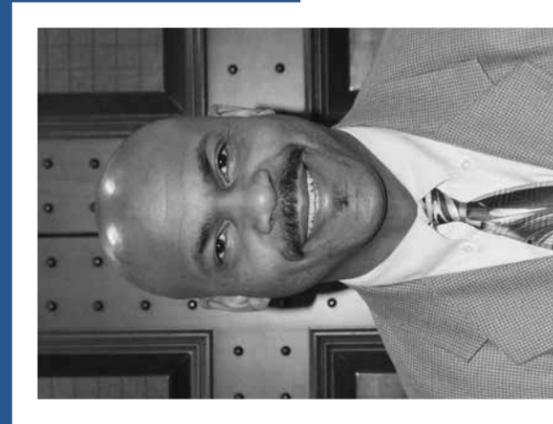
In addition to passing comprehensive legislation, I was able to successfully secure a \$100 million bond to rebuild Weaver High School. Logistics are still being worked out, but construction should begin soon. Weaver High School is an asset to our community. When completed, the school will better serve our kids and give them an education that will better prepare them for their future.

In lieu of the tragedy in Sandy Hook, violence prevention dollars were made available and I was able to secure over \$1 million that will be allocated to the Hartford Knights Youth Organization; Wilson-Gray YMCA Youth and Family Center; Blue Hills Civic Association; Ebony Horsewomen, Inc.; Hartford Communities That Cares; CURET Caribbean Resource Center and the Urban League of Greater Hartford.

Of course we cannot ignore the fiscal disagreements that have been going on with our Congressional Representatives and the White House. The federal budget has an enormous effect on how we, as a state, plan our own spending. My colleagues and I are committed to doing what is best for Connecticut citizens.

I hope this report is informative, and I'm happy to answer any questions you have about issues facing our state or your family. Together we can create a better future for all of our families and communities.

Sincerely,



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Douglas McCrory
PROUDLY SERVING HARTFORD | 7TH DISTRICT

Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: 860-240-8500
www.housedems.ct.gov/McCrory

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD, CT
Permit No. 3937



CAPITOL UPDATE
2013

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DOUGLAS MCCRORY

Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: 860-240-8500
www.housedems.ct.gov/McCrory



A HOMELESS PERSON'S BILL OF RIGHTS

Homeless people often face barriers when attempting to access public resources, including public parks, transportation and buildings. This bill takes a step toward ending discrimination and fostering dignity in homeless people by establishing a bill of rights. Under this law, homeless people have the right to use public spaces without harassment; have equal employment opportunities; receive emergency medical care; register to vote and vote; and receive equal treatment by state and municipal agencies. The law permits municipalities to post the bill of rights alongside municipal notices.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Homeless youth and emancipated minors often face barriers in obtaining jobs, driver's licenses, food stamps, cash assistance, job training or school loans because they do not have proper identification. This law permits a youth who has been certified as homeless by a specified professional to directly request a copy of his or her birth certificate. Previously, a minor was not allowed to access his or her birth certificates without the help of a parent or guardian, posing a problem for those who are separated from their families. Giving these young people the ability to obtain certified copies of their birth certificates will go a long way toward helping them escape homelessness and become self-sufficient.

A BARBERSHOP APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

This year the Public Health Committee heard testimony that some barbers are having difficulty getting licensed in Connecticut. Traditionally, barbering was learned through an apprenticeship, but previous statutes required the completion of formal education and training programs to qualify for a license. These programs can cost as much as \$14,000. Barbers testified that some have learned their trade from family members and practiced for years, but have not attended barber school and therefore cannot obtain a barber's license as required by statute. Some are moving to New York and Rhode Island, which have licensure by apprenticeship programs. Recently some municipalities have started taking action against barbershops that employ unlicensed barbers, forcing them to fire these barbers or close their doors. This law requires the Connecticut State Apprenticeship Council, in consultation with the Department of Public Health, to study the feasibility of establishing a barbershop apprenticeship program within the Department of Labor.

ADULT EDUCATION AND TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

While we hope that everyone with a high school degree is ready for the rigorous demands of higher education, some do need more preparation. This session we passed a law that allows adult education programs in our municipalities to offer college preparatory classes for adults who have a high school diploma or its equivalent. This enables students to enroll in a college or university better prepared for their studies. It also ensures that all of our students are adequately prepared and on more of a level playing field when entering a higher education institution.

INCREASED PENALTIES FOR FAILING TO STOP FOR SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS

This new law strengthens the penalties for drivers who fail to immediately stop when directed to do so by a school crossing guard. Hartford resident and crossing guard Donna Thompson-Daniel suggested this legislation was needed from her experience as a Hartford crossing guard. The new fine mandated by this bill is \$450. The \$450 fine makes this penalty the same as when a driver runs a stop sign extended from a bus when it is stopped.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

This law seeks to prevent students from being improperly assigned to special education classes when they are actually in need of extra help in learning the English language. If the State Department of Education has ruled that a school district has misidentified a disproportionate number of students, that district's Board of Education will have to submit a report to the Department containing a plan that reduces such misidentifications by improving reading assessments and interventions for students who are in kindergarten through grade three. The law also requires the State Department of Education to study these plans to see what improvements can be made to teacher training.

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

Sign Up For Email Updates:
housedems.ct.gov/McCrory

Find us on facebook
[facebook.com/CTHouseDemocrats](https://www.facebook.com/CTHouseDemocrats)



HOMEOWNER PROTECTION RIGHTS

The ability to own a home is part of the American dream, but financial hardship can threaten that dream for families, sending them to the brink of foreclosure. We worked hard this past session to protect homeowners and facilitate a fair and speedy foreclosure mediation process by passing "An Act Concerning Homeowner Protection Rights". A more streamlined process helps both the banks and the homeowners come to a quicker solution to keep homeowners in their homes, while fulfilling their obligation to the bank or lender. The provisions include: at least three mediation sessions before referring a case to a judge; a requirement that banks mediate in good faith, which helps remove blighted properties from neighborhoods by shortening the foreclosure timelines for abandoned property; and requirements that the bank treat a homeowner's most recently submitted financial package as current, which will end the burden of constant requests for new documents. Finally, the law provides the Department of Banking with the authority to create regulations that require banks to disclose various foreclosure related information.

PROHIBITING RESIDENTIAL LANDLORDS FROM REQUIRING TENANTS TO PAY RENT BY ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER

This law protects tenants, especially those who are elderly and low-income, from being required to pay rent exclusively via electronic funds transfer. This legislation allows people greater flexibility in forms of payment that will be accepted by landlords for residential lease agreements entered into after October 1, 2013.