

FROM THE DESK OF
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Robert W. Megna

Dear Neighbors,

Enclosed is a summary of some of the laws passed this year in the 2007 legislative session.

At the beginning of the session, legislators passed a tax package which would have reduced the tax burden for many of the people of the 97th district. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed the package. We were, however, able hold the line on additional taxes and actually increased aid to the city of New Haven to help offset city property tax increases.

If you should have additional questions on some of the information in my legislative update, please contact me at my Hartford office. As always, thank you for allowing me to represent you in Hartford.

Sincerely,
Robert Megna



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ENERGY

Energy Reform legislation passed this year benefits consumers by offering incentives to control usage and making suitable energy decisions by:

- Offering rebates and tax exemptions for consumers who invest in energy-efficient technology as an incentive to replace old air conditioners, boilers, freezers or other appliances with new models that use the latest technology and less energy.
- Encouraging Connecticut consumers to "go green" by allowing the sales tax free purchase of compressed florescent light bulbs (CFL's) and energy star products.
- Redirecting conservation fees currently charged on all customers' monthly electric bills back to the Connecticut Clean Energy and Conservation Fund to be used to finance programs focused on conservation and clean energy.
- Allowing households or businesses the option of installing "advanced meters" to pay for power usage based on "Time of Use" pricing. PA 07-242

State Representative Robert W. Megna

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**YOUR VOICE IN
HARTFORD!**

2007 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



**REPRESENTATIVE
ROBERT W. MEGNA**

**SERVING THE 97TH DISTRICT
NEW HAVEN**

STATE BUDGET

The \$17.6 billion State Budget does some of the following:

- Allocates an unprecedented additional \$8 million to New Haven for ECS (Education Cost Sharing) funding.
- Provides \$39 million to nursing homes for a 2.9% rate increase for next fiscal year and a 3% increase for the non-profits.
- Sets aside \$136 million of this year's nearly \$1 billion surplus for the state's Rainy Day Fund.
- Provides \$94 million in fiscal year 2008 and \$121 million in fiscal year 2009 to increase reimbursement rates to doctors, hospitals, clinics, dentists and ophthalmologists that treat patients covered by Medicaid.
- Sets aside \$27.2 million over two years for grants to students attending public colleges, and \$16.2 million over two years for students attending private colleges.
- Funds \$5 million for Operation Fuel. PA 07-242

TEACHER RETIREMENT

The serious problem of the unfunded liability with the Teachers' Retirement Fund was addressed with PA 07-186. The legislature authorized 30-year general obligation bonds to fund an approximate \$2 billion deficit in unfunded liability. In addition, appropriations of \$300 million from surplus funds should cover the required annual state contributions for the next two fiscal years.



Connecticut soldiers, who have served for at least 20 years in the National Guard, can now be buried in any of the state's three veterans' cemeteries. Due to a separate discharge document from that of their active duty/reservist counterparts, National Guard members were previously prohibited from this burial right. PA 07-13

SAFETY UPDATE

GUNS ON THE STREETS: More than 10,000 firearms were stolen in Connecticut during a 10-year period from 1993 through 2002. Many of these guns ended up on the streets of our cities. New legislation requires that any person who lawfully possesses an assault weapon or firearm that is lost or stolen must report the incident to the proper law enforcement agencies within seventy-two hours of when they discovered or should have discovered the loss or theft. The bill also establishes the crime of firearm trafficking if the person knowingly and intentionally allows firearms they own or possess to be in the possession of someone who is prohibited from owning or possessing any firearm. PA -07-163

INSURANCE

STORM SHUTTERS: Insurance companies cannot refuse to issue or renew homeowner's insurance policies simply because the homeowner has not installed expensive hurricane shutters. In addition, insurers will be required to offer sound premium discounts to homeowners who do install permanent storm shutters or impact-resistant glass to mitigate loss from hurricanes and severe storms. PA 07-77

CONDOMINIUM INSURANCE: Because of the cooperative nature of purchasing condominium insurance, Connecticut's approximately 500,000 unit owners face some unique challenges when trying to purchase insurance coverage. With my experience as both a condominium owner and insurance adjuster, I wrote language that removed some of the inefficiencies that resulted in higher insurance premiums for unit owners. Homeowners, rather than the board of directors, may now decide whether or not to purchase different types of insurance if they so choose to make the decision. PA 07-68

ENVIRONMENT

CLEAN AIR: Full-sized, diesel school buses will be retrofitted with new pollution reducing emission systems to reduce soot emissions by 85%. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will reimburse costs to towns under certain conditions. PA 07-4

RECYCLING: Looking to purchase a new computer or television and wondering how to get rid of the old one? PA 07-189 creates a mandatory recycling program for discarded computers or televisions that is easy, free and accessible for all residents in the state at no or minimal cost to municipalities.

FUEL: To encourage the use of fuel efficient automobiles, those vehicles that average more than 40 miles per gallon are exempt from Connecticut state sales tax until 2010. PA 07-242

PROTECTING OUR WATER: In response to Broadwater Energy's proposed natural gas terminal to be located in Long Island Sound, legislation enacted this year would protect Connecticut's Coastline by creating hazard and security zones around liquefied natural gas terminal. PA 07-94



New Haven Harbor

EMINENT DOMAIN

Public Act 07-141 and PA 07-207 reformed the eminent domain process by prohibiting the taking of property for economic development and tightening the process by which property can be taken and used to improve a rundown area.

SENIORS

HOMECARE: Connecticut's Homecare Options Program will enable more seniors to live at home and delay the need for costly nursing home care. Participants can make deposits into a Homecare Trust Fund account to be used at a later date to pay for such things as companion or homemaker services, adult day care, and preparation of meals or transportation. Interest earned on fund accounts is exempt from the state income tax and any unspent account funds will become part of the beneficiary's estate. PA 07-130

SENIOR DRIVERS DISCOUNT: As of October 1, 2007, drivers age 60 and up will be eligible for an automobile insurance policy premium discount after successfully completing a Department of Motor Vehicles approved accident prevention course. Current law covers drivers 62 and up. For more information, contact AAA at (800) 842-4320 or AARP at 1-888-227-7669. PA 07-05

Need help - www.CtHelpNet.org connects you to a network of elder services for Connecticut's senior citizens.

HANDICAPPED PARKING: People who misuse Handicapped Parking Permits are a constant source of frustration and irritation for those legal handicapped individuals trying to find a parking place. David Hicks, a constituent of mine who depends on handicapped parking, brought the abuse of handicapped parking stickers to my attention. I introduced legislation that became PA 07-52 which increases fines for those arrested for unauthorized parking, misuse of handicapped permits and failure to return license plates or placards issued to a disabled person. This is a first step in the right direction; however, I feel Motor Vehicles needs to take the next step and change its handicapped permitting process to make it easier for police to detect abuse.

BellaVista Block Party 2006

