



Rep. Meskers and Gov. Lamont at the 2019 St. Patrick's Day Parade in Greenwich

STATE REPRESENTATIVE STEPHEN MESKERS

Dear Neighbor,

I am pleased to share with you this update on the recently concluded legislative session. We worked to pass bipartisan legislation that improves the lives of working families, encourages economic growth, and makes critical investments in our state's future.

We crafted a two-year budget that is fiscally responsible and takes care of Connecticut residents. Our budget protects seniors by maintaining the tax exemptions for Social Security and pension income, as well as by rejecting an asset test for the Medicare Savings Program. We also rejected the Governor's proposal to shift teachers' pension costs to the town, thereby saving Greenwich property taxpayers from a local tax hike.

We also worked to ensure that our state becomes more business friendly by repealing the Business Entity Tax, expanding the Angel Investor Tax Credit, and making a new tax credit for craft breweries in order to help this industry continue to grow.

On top of this, the Rainy Day fund has soared to over \$2 billion. We have also taken steps to reduce further pension liabilities. New state employees now have hybrid 401K retirement plans.

I'm proud to announce that our budget is already producing results. Our state's bond rating has increased twice in four months. We will see lower long-term borrowing costs because credit ratings agencies have upgraded the rating on our bonds. This is a sign that Connecticut is moving in the right direction.

Sincerely,

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

STEPHEN MESKERS

PROUDLY SERVING GREENWICH



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE STEPHEN MESKERS



Rep. Meskers addressing the League of Women Voters in Greenwich regarding the accomplishments of the 2019 Legislative session

CONNECTICUT IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The two-year budget we passed in June will have great benefits for Connecticut businesses and residents:

FOR BUSINESSES:

- We repealed the Business Entity Tax starting next year. This will help small businesses and encourage start-ups.
- We expanded the Angel Investor Tax Credit to small businesses, minority and women-owned businesses, and more industries.
- We created a new tax credit for craft beer breweries to help grow this booming industry.
- We cut the Admissions Tax at entertainment venues in half from 10% to 5%.

FOR RESIDENTS:

- We rejected the Governor's proposal to shift teacher pension costs to the towns, protecting Greenwich property owners from potential local tax increases.
- The phase-in of the income tax exemption for Social Security and pension income continues as planned, helping our seniors retire comfortably here in Connecticut.
- We rejected many of the Governor's proposed sales tax expansions on items such as groceries, non-prescription drugs, legal and accounting services, and sugary beverages.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Research shows that if you haven't started smoking by 21, you likely never will. We have made the sale of cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vape products illegal for those under 21. Nicotine creates addiction in teens, and 95% percent of adults who smoke started young. Nationwide, e-cigarette use, also known as "vaping," is on the rise among middle and high school students. This law seeks to keep nicotine out of the hands of minors.

This legislation will:

- Require someone to show their ID proving they are 21 or older to purchase cigarettes / vaping products
- Protect middle school students who often purchase vaping products from 18 year olds
- Protect a generation from becoming addicted to nicotine

TAX REFORM

I had the pleasure of taking out House Bill 7373 which passed unanimously. It updated the CT Department of Revenue Services statutes to include guaranteed payment in pass-through entities allowing residents to effectively claim federal tax credits when filing their tax returns. Additionally, the bill streamlined and established a limit on required filings of \$1,000.00 on estimated payments. This was great work by our Department of Revenue Services and I was impressed with their diligent, robust and thoughtful revision of these tax statutes.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

We have established an exciting new entrepreneurship and economic development partnership through the University of Connecticut. With a focus on new job creation, UConn will foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in concert with other Connecticut higher education institutions for the benefit of students and faculty. In part, this will be done by coordinating and hosting networking events for student and faculty entrepreneurs, as well as increased support for related student clubs and organizations. Additionally, UConn will work to encourage more technology transfers to maximize the number of new business ventures that can be formed through "commercializing" student and faculty research.

GREEN JOBS AND NET METERING

Seeking to use innovative ideas to help us address our environmental and energy challenges, this law will create a Green Jobs Career Ladder website for jobs in the green technology industry, including a listing of careers and jobs available in the state.

Additionally, the measure will promote construction of high performance green state buildings that have reduced emissions and conservative water resource management. We hope to create new and viable career opportunities, benefit the environment, and help protect our planet for generations to come. This legislation will extend renewable energy programs, including traditional net metering and the Green Bank's renewable solar investment program, will expand the virtual net metering cap which will reduce energy costs for municipalities and will require the DOT to put together a land inventory on which lands are suitable for Class I energy resources, for example, solar energy on lands adjacent to state highways.

SUPPORTING OUR SENIORS

In order to ensure the proper care for seniors, we modified continuing education requirements for physicians to include diagnosing and treating cognitive conditions, including Alzheimer's disease, dementia, delirium, related cognitive impairments and geriatric depression.



*Left: Rep. Meskers at a Finance Public Hearing
Right: Rep. Meskers visiting the Samuel Bridge Jr. Nursery of Rare Plants*

*Left: Rep. Meskers at the Lions Club pancake breakfast in the Eastern Civic Center
Right: Rep. Meskers addressing constituents at his first Capitol Update*

*Left: Rep. Meskers celebrating Veteran's Day with Gov. Lamont and US Sen. Blumenthal
Right: Rep. Meskers at the Retired Men's Association of Greenwich*