



Rep. Miller discusses her education reform legislation with Commission on Children Executive Director Elaine Zimmerman

Education Reform

Improving our schools and closing the achievement gap among students is a top priority for me. As a member of the Education Committee, I continued working to make sure that *all of Connecticut's children have access to a quality education*. This year I sponsored legislation reforming our education system by:

- » Establishing a task force to develop a master plan with annual benchmarks to reduce the state's academic achievement gap
- » Raising nearly \$1 million for a pilot study to test alternative reading assessment tools to improve early literacy and help close the academic gap
- » Improving pre-schools by increasing the educational requirements for teachers in state-funded programs
- » Increasing the frequency of reading assessments of young students to improve literacy

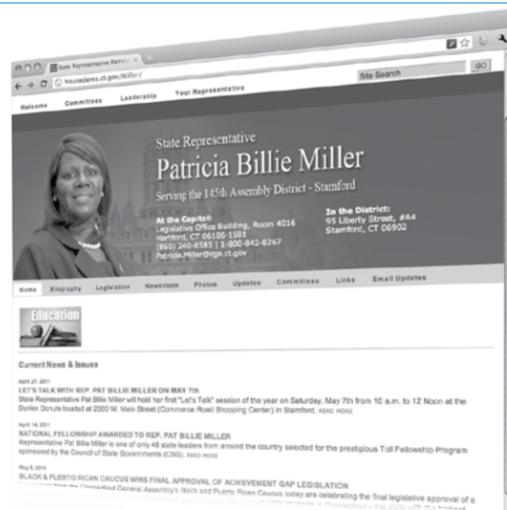


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State Representative

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PATRICIA BILLIE MILLER

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Dear Friends,

This past legislative session proved to be another challenging one with much of the focus on the state budget. We began the year with a \$3.6 billion deficit which was addressed through a balanced combination of spending cuts, tax increases and concessions from state employees.

As Vice-Chair of the Appropriations Committee, I was assigned the task of finding ways to streamline and consolidate government agencies to be more efficient and save the state money.

The budget that passed offers many positives for Stamford such as an increase in municipal aid as well as full funding of the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants to help hold property taxes down. In addition, the budget maintains funding for many essential safety net programs that impact children, seniors, persons with disabilities, job training and more.

For our state to have a skilled workforce we must make sure that all of our students have access to a quality education and opportunities for excellence. I'm proud to have worked on education legislation this session that puts us in the right direction.

Some of our other legislative advances this session include job creation, education reform, improved health insurance and help for veterans, seniors and domestic violence victims.

I hope you find this report informative and as always I am happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Together we can work to create a better future for our friends and families.

Best wishes,

PATRICIA BILLIE MILLER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

CAPITOL
REPORT 2011

Patricia Billie Miller

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State Representative
Patricia Billie Miller

If you need additional assistance or have questions, please contact me:

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CAPITOL REPORT 2011

Better Healthcare

Health care benefits are one of the largest expenses faced by individuals and employers. We enacted an important new law to protect and increase access to quality, affordable health care. The Connecticut Health Care Partnership offers the state health insurance coverage to municipalities and to non-profit organizations. Taking advantage of the increased bargaining power and reduced administrative costs associated with the state plan will allow municipalities and non-profits to provide quality care with less cost. When municipalities save money on health care, those savings are passed down to property taxpayers.

Reducing Domestic Violence

We continued our efforts to improve our state's response to incidents of domestic violence. About 30 percent of the state's criminal court dockets stem from domestic violence arrests. Improving law enforcement response and prosecution is critical when you consider the immeasurable impact domestic violence has on victims, families and society at large. This session our efforts included:

- » Increasing access to restraining and protective orders
- » Improving information sharing between public safety and judicial agencies
- » Facilitating victims' access to support services
- » Providing police with more tools to protect communities
- » Requiring the judicial branch to recommend long-term solutions



Rep. Miller speaks at legislative forum to address education reform.

Education and Children

This year, we:

- » Expanded eligibility for schools to provide free breakfast for hungry children
- » The Department of Social Services must now post a notice on its website and provide written notice to participants and providers when it makes to changes to the Care4Kids program
- » Raised the drop-out age to 18 to ensure our children are getting high school diplomas
- » Strengthened our school bullying laws by requiring school employees to get annual training and include cyber bullying as a part of the definition
- » Ensured families requesting special education services receive an evaluation in 60 days
- » Required teachers working with autistic children to be certified

Putting CT Back to Work

Through cooperation and hard work, we crafted several measures to stimulate our economy and create jobs.

Creating Jobs

New legislation creates the "First Five" program which will reward companies who create 200 or more Connecticut jobs with tax credits. The program has already helped attract NBC Studios to Stamford as the fourth company to take advantage of the "First Five" economic development program. NBCUniversal's NBC Sports Group will consolidate much of its northeast operations, including its existing Connecticut workforce, at new studios and offices in the former Clairrol factory in Stamford. The project, slated to start in September 2012, will create 450 jobs and allow room for the company to grow in the future.

Vocational Education

We saved our Vo-tech schools that teach the skills that put people to work. I also remain committed to working with the State Department of Education to make sure J.M. Wright stays on schedule to re-open to teach the trades that prepare people for good paying jobs.

Helping Working Families – Paid Sick Days

A new law grants service workers, like food servers, the right to earn up to five paid sick days at businesses with 50 or more employees.



Rep. Miller speaks to a constituent visiting the Capitol for MS Awareness Day.

Protecting our Seniors

The legislature focused on improving the quality of life for our senior citizens by:

- » Allowing people to enroll in ConnPACE if they are not eligible for Medicare
- » Rejecting the proposal to raise cost-sharing in the Connecticut Home Care Program
- » Expanding the state's Money Follows the Person program
- » Establishing Nursing Home Grievance Committees at each facility

Saluting our Veterans

This year, we worked to:

- » Create a one-stop website for services available for veterans: www.ct.gov/ctva
- » Provide disabled wartime veterans with free parking, admission, and boat access parking to state recreational areas
- » Offer veterans' license plates to a member of the U. S. armed forces or their surviving spouse
- » Allow veteran status to be on a driver's license or identity card
- » Expand the waiver of property tax interest for certain armed forces members

Assisting Homeowners

New legislation provides several adjustments to extend the Foreclosure Mediation Program to assist lenders and homeowners in negotiating an agreeable resolution.

The act provides protections for certain tenants of foreclosed homes. These provisions are nearly identical to those in the federal Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act.

The law limits the circumstances in which an owner, who is an immediate successor with an interest in a property following foreclosure, may take the property or terminate the lease of tenants receiving assistance under federal rental assistance programs.

