

**Dear Neighbor,**

We began the 2012 legislative session committed to education reform and I'm pleased that we ended the session by passing historic legislation so our children can succeed.

The legislature continues focused on job creation building on last fall's bipartisan jobs bill that improves Connecticut's ability to grow and retain jobs. We enhanced our higher education system by refining programs to match current and anticipated workforce needs, especially in advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, defense, aerospace, and medical research.

Connecticut became the 49th state to have Sunday liquor sales, and we gave new hope for those who suffer debilitating illnesses by becoming the 17th state to legalize the palliative use of marijuana.

We fixed a 3.5 billion dollar state deficit and kept municipal aid intact. The legislature also strengthened the state's domestic violence laws to better protect victims and repealed the death penalty.

I introduced several successful bills on the floor of the House, including a sewage spill right to know bill, a state open space plan, a phosphorus water bill, and a dam safety that establishes a standard inspection program.

In late May, I joined Congressman Larson, Senator Blumenthal, and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar at the Hartford boathouse, as our venerable Connecticut River became the nation's first Blue Way, a conservation distinction. Among those gathered were a dozen plus longtime conservationists from Haddam, Chester, Deep River and Essex.

I have received hundreds of letters, emails and calls from many of you. Your input and ideas are very helpful and help me focus on what is important to the district.

Thank you,



State Representative | 36<sup>th</sup> District

**Philip Miller**

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## CAPITOL UPDATE 2012

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# Improving Care For The Elderly And Disabled

## Improving Hospice Care

With just two licensed hospices in the state, this new law will permit hospices to follow federal standards, giving smaller hospice facilities the opportunity to provide high quality services that allow patients to stay closer to family and friends. This bill will help our state to ensure that residents have access to health care services across the full continuum of care.

# Preparing For Future Severe Weather

## Storm Response and Power Outages

In the aftermath of the October Nor'easter and Tropical Storm Irene that left much of the state without power, the legislature passed sweeping reforms to better prepare for future severe storms and avoid wide-spread and lengthy loss of utility service, where:

- Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response
- Noncompliance could result in penalties of up to 2.5 percent of an electric or gas company's annual distribution revenue, approximately \$25 million in the case of Connecticut Light & Power.

## Let's Keep In Touch In A Green Way

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# Preserving Our Environment

## Sewage Spill Alerts

Sewage spills can impact the health and property of residents as well as take an environmental toll on our waterways and beaches. Spill alerts will now occur for breaches at sewage treatment plants, whether caused by storm overflow or operational problems. The new law establishes a process to inform the public whenever a sewage spill occurs by requiring the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to post information on sewage spills on the agency's website beginning in July 2014.

## State Representative **PHILIP MILLER**

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## Coastal Management

Balances and protects the interests of municipalities, individual property owners and the state from damage caused by rising sea levels in Long Island Sound, increased coastal flooding and severe erosion. New legislation creates a framework to address those concerns and encourage long-term coastal management planning efforts in areas repeatedly damaged by storms.



Rep. Miller and Sen. Meyer attending a Shoreline Task Force meeting.

## Phosphorous Reduction

Improves the quality of state waters and allows towns to seek reimbursement from the state's Clean Water Fund for planning, design and construction of wastewater collection and treatment projects.

## Open Space

A new law requires the DEEP commissioner to update the state's open space plan by December 15, 2012 and at least once every five years thereafter. The Commissioner must include in the plan, among other things:

- An estimate of how much state land is preserved as open space
- Potential methods, costs, and benefits of establishing a system to accurately track open space land
- Identify state-owned land that should be conserved and develop a plan to preserve it forever as open space land

# Protecting Our Children And Families

## "Caylee's Law"

Sets criminal penalties for the failure to report the disappearance of a child. The law is in response to the circumstances surrounding the death of Florida toddler Caylee Anthony, and applies to any parent, guardian or person who has custody or supervision of the child.

## Reducing Domestic Violence

We have made great progress in helping families affected by domestic violence in recent years, but the problem persists in our communities. Building on earlier successes, this year we strengthened the state's laws to better protect victims, hold abusers accountable, and give new tools to law enforcement. The 2012 bill provides police officers the tools they need to better identify and respond to domestic violence; requires courts to share protective and restraining orders with schools that victims attend; and extends the maximum length of restraining orders to one year from the current six months. With increasing numbers of people using texting as their primary way of communicating, the bill also charges the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications with conducting a study to determine the feasibility of developing a 911 texting system.

# Creating A Successful Education System For Students And Teachers

## Education Reform

Ensures all of our children have a brighter future by supporting teachers' development and providing students with effective educators; increasing Pre-K slots; and building a framework for meaningful intervention in our lowest-achieving schools. This legislation also allows the Commissioner of Education to assist struggling schools.

## Protecting Children with Special Needs

New laws offer protection and support for children with special needs. One bill eliminates the unnecessary use of so-called seclusion or "scream rooms." While another improves the special education student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and finally another creates a study on workforce development, training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.