



Representative Miller with Lisa Sobolewski of Just Food at the Chester Farmer's market.

WHO'S YOUR FARMER?

GMO labeling will help consumers to avoid highly processed, genetically engineered foods. The antithesis of this is whole and real food such as that which we find at our Farmers Markets. In this district, we have three such markets: Higganum on Friday afternoons, Ivoryton center on Saturday mornings Chester on Sunday mornings.

Agriculture is a growing industry throughout Connecticut. Twenty thousand farmers grow crops and raise livestock in Connecticut, working hard to provide residents with the best products from farm to table and more.



Scan this QR Code using your smartphone to directly access my State homepage.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE Philip Miller

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Philip Miller

SERVING THE 36TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

CHESTER, DEEP RIVER, ESSEX, HADDAM

2013 Session Summary

Dear Neighbor,

The 2013 Legislative Session began on a somber note, convening less than one month following the tragedy in Newtown. While tackling issues of gun violence, schools safety, mental health and assisting first responders, the legislature also examined numerous other pertinent issues, including the budget, changes to existing laws and new legislation.

I am grateful for the privilege of serving the people of Haddam, Chester, Deep River and Essex. As always I urge you to contact me with your questions, concerns, and comments by e-mail at Philip.Miller@cga.ct.gov or by phone at 860-842-8267. Your input helps me keep working for you and for a better Connecticut.

All the Best,

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
PHILIP MILLER



THE STATE BUDGET

The new two year budget is balanced and has no new taxes. It is under the spending cap and every municipality in the state will receive no less than it did in 2013.

Threatened cuts to town aid were avoided, and the same was done with school transportation funding. Hospitals will still have cuts, but the provider tax will be reconfigured to allow additional funding to be returned.

There is no increase in income or sales taxes, and the standard offer energy auction was eliminated.

PA 13-184

COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY STRATEGY

Connecticut enacted a new strategy which is considered to be a path to cleaner, reliable and less expensive energy. This bill was debated deeply into the end of session and the result guaranteed more investment in wind, solar and geothermal energy.



Now, there are more incentives for weatherization and equipment upgrades and low interest financing and advanced metering technology is further developing.

The state will now look to get 20% of all electricity from class one renewable sources by the year 2020.

PA 13-303



Representative Miller discussing legislation in the House Chamber with Paul Mounds of the Governor's Office.

MINIMUM WAGE

We were mindful of the economic realities facing working families, and so we raised the minimum wage from the current \$8.25 an hour to \$9.00 over the next two years. This is a reasonable and overdue increase which will help tens of thousands of Connecticut families make ends meet, and studies show that raising this minimum has a stimulative effect on local economies. **PA 13-117**

GUN SAFETY

Legislative leaders created a bipartisan task force to study gun violence prevention and children's safety issues. Methods of implementing home and school safety, and access to mental health services were studied. After a series of overflow public hearings and lengthy deliberations, we passed the strongest gun safety law in the nation.

PA 13-3

FOI REEXAMINED

We met with Newtown families and others who have had family members murdered and they did not want crime scene photos released, and we passed SB 1149 which will protect such families and loved ones from further pain. The balance between privacy and freedom of information will likely be further examined. **PA 13-311**

CONNECTICUT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

The gun safety task force which studied mental health services and access made several recommendations to be taken up by the Connecticut Behavioral Health

Partnership (CT BHP). Back in 2005, the Department of Social services and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) formed the CT BHP to implement an integrated public behavioral health services system for children and families enrolled in the state's Medicaid program and for other children with complex behavioral health needs and DCF involvement. Along with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the CT BHP impacts nearly seven hundred thousand Connecticut citizens.

I am the legislative chair of CT BHP and I am hoping to help the impressive team of leaders to make progress. We meet monthly and our reporting is straight forward. The good news is that people in our state do recover from accidents, illness, unemployment, and circumstance to establish and return to full productivity. Our efforts are challenged by new cases of people who have fallen on tough times.

Let's Keep In Touch

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GMO LABELING

"GMO" stands for genetically modified organism. These are plants or animals created through the gene splicing techniques of biotechnology, (also called genetic engineering or GE). GE crops are created by transferring genetic material from one organism into another to create specific traits, such as resistance to treatment with herbicides, or to make a plant produce its own pesticide to repel insects. Unlike traditional plant and animal breeding, which tries to develop better varieties by selecting traits from the same species, genetic engineering techniques can insert specific genes from any plant, animal, or microorganism into the DNA of a different species.

Our own Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) never applied its own science to testing GMOs before giving them a "GRAS" (generally recognized as safe) rating nearly twenty years ago. Several states had tried unsuccessfully to force the labeling of (GE) ingredients.

This was my bill and I was the lead sponsor and introducer. I led a task force in 2012 to learn more and I worked with a huge statewide grassroots effort from groups such as Connecticut GMO Right to Know, Food and Water Watch, the Center for Food Safety, and the Northeast Organic Farmers Association (NOFA). These groups were instrumental in encouraging citizens throughout the state to contact their legislators to ask them to help us invigorate our economy as fully informed consumers.

There were eventually some three dozen other legislators who joined with me to sponsor this legislation and we passed the bill--twice! The first time, we had inserted a last minute amendment which passed but seriously weakened the bill, so in the last two days, we passed a better version and so we are the first state in the nation to pass this legislation, and Maine recently followed us!

I'd like to thank the hundreds of citizens from the 36th House district of Haddam, Chester, Deep River and Essex who contacted me on this issue, and I'd also like to thank my fellow legislators from both sides of the aisle and Governor Malloy for supporting us. **PA 13-183**



Rep. Miller argues for GMO legislation with Sen. Blumenthal.