

# CAPITOL UPDATE 2015

Dear Neighbor,

The 2015 legislative session was full of posturing. Some are still insisting the sky is falling. The media found legislative and executive ideas and personalities fascinating. The legislative process featured ever-changing ideas, and people find this maddening. This session we had a number of challenges, including revisions to our criminal justice system and conservation. We also made efforts to encourage economic development and assist our working families. Our largest challenge for the session was adopting a balanced budget that would not further burden the middle class within the state.

We closed loopholes in our taxing system that allowed corporations to avoid paying taxes in our state and it raised taxes slightly for the very high income earners within the state. While many have suggested for years that our state is unfriendly to the business community we are actually average among our peer states, and the corporate income tax only accounts for about 3% of the state's annual budget, far below other states.

We have also made a commitment to improve our transportation infrastructure. This will assist in our daily commute and also encourages business, through the facilitated transport of goods and people as well as transit oriented development.

For our district, I was also able to secure a \$3.8 million bonding project for the affordable elderly rental units as part of a larger commitment within the state to create more affordable housing.

I am privileged to serve the citizens of Haddam, Chester, Deep River, and Essex. I am proud to live in such a beautiful region of Connecticut that was recently touted as the New Hamptons by the New York Times for our proximity to the shoreline and our quiet village charm. I am even more proud of the hundreds of people of our lower Connecticut River towns who reached out to me this session, sharing their concerns, and contributing thoughtful advocacy and optimism. By working together, we will create a better region and state.

Sincerely,



## STATE REPRESENTATIVE **PHILIP MILLER**

PROUDLY SERVING THE 36TH HOUSE DISTRICT | ESSEX, HADDAM, DEEP RIVER, AND CHESTER

Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
Capitol: (860) 240-0553, [www.housedems.ct.gov/MillerPJ](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/MillerPJ)

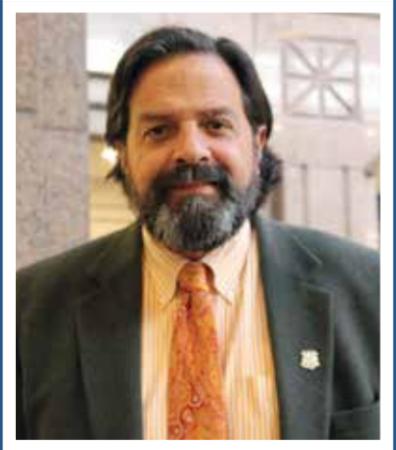


PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HARTFORD, CT  
Permit No. 3937

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# PHILIP MILLER

PROUDLY SERVING THE 36TH HOUSE DISTRICT  
ESSEX, HADDAM, DEEP RIVER, AND CHESTER



## CAPITOL UPDATE 2015



[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/REPPHILMILLER](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/REPPHILMILLER)

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS OP-ED I WROTE FOR THE VALLEYNEWSNOW

[HTTP://VALLEYNEWSNOW.COM/CATEGORY/OP\\_EDS/](http://VALLEYNEWSNOW.COM/CATEGORY/OP_EDS/)

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# PHILIP MILLER

PROUDLY SERVING THE 36TH HOUSE DISTRICT | ESSEX, HADDAM, DEEP RIVER, AND CHESTER



## WE HAVE A STATE BUDGET!

When the Governor submitted his budget in early February, he was attempting to keep his election year pledge not to raise taxes. His two year budget proposal had almost two billion dollars in cuts in areas such as education, advanced studies, and human services.

When these proposed cuts became understood, I received hundreds of correspondences from citizens of Haddam, Chester, Deep River and Essex. People were alarmed over anticipated cuts to programs and efforts in early childhood, cultural arts, conservation, hospitals, libraries, mental health, serving intellectual and developmental disabilities, municipal aid, tourism, veterans services, state universities and community colleges, and even our public health districts, youth service bureaus and prevention councils. Many told me that they felt the state should properly be the backer and partner for these programs.

When I came to the legislature in 2011, we had to fix a \$3.5 billion dollar deficit. It came from substantial cuts, state employee concessions, and raising new taxes. This further burdened middle class taxpayers. When I ran for re-election last year, I campaigned on opposing new regressive taxes, making the case that our middle class is doing their fair share and disproportionately bearing the brunt of relieving higher earners and corporations of their tax obligations in recent times.

## DELIVERING FOR CONNECTICUT'S MIDDLE CLASS

We worked to adopt a budget that represents the wide-ranging priorities of our diverse state, and sets us on a path that encourages economic growth. The budget is balanced, under the spending cap, and it invests in Connecticut's transportation infrastructure, which is critical to our future economy. By investing in transportation projects, such as the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail line, the widening of Connecticut's highways, the I-84 viaduct in Hartford, and the restructuring of Route-9 to eliminate traffic stops and improve on-ramp access as well as repairing many other roads, bridges, and ports. We are encouraging smart growth, addressing traffic congestion and bringing sustainable jobs home to Connecticut.



*Representative Miller speaking at "The Preserve" Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.*

## ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING FARMERS

Invasive species and poor conservation plans can lead to a deterioration of Connecticut's natural resources. This year we encouraged the conservation and preservation of farmland by requiring the state to reimburse farmers for the cost of developing, implementing, and complying with a farm resource management plan or farmland restoration plan. We also increased the maximum reimbursement under the program for management or restoration of certain state or municipal lands.



## A SECOND CHANCE SOCIETY

In the past decades Connecticut's drug policies have cost the state millions of dollars and swelled our prisons with nonviolent drug offenders who struggle to reintegrate into society upon release. The Second Chance Society will ensure public safety, save money, and help end the culture of mass incarceration by lowering sentencing for nonviolent offenses. The Second Chance Society will give ex-offenders the opportunity to get back into the workforce – and will also save residents' tax dollars.

## VARIABLE ELECTRIC RATES

This year Connecticut became the first state in the nation to protect residents from electricity providers who offer a low introductory rate that increases rapidly afterwards. The protections enacted require competitive electric suppliers to give their customers a 60-day notice before the end of their contracts. Suppliers cannot charge these customers a termination or early cancellation fee and must allow customers who want to switch to standard service the ability to do so within 72 hours. We also set up a process for Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to further investigate and take measures to completely eliminate variable electric rates when a customer's contract expires.



*Rep. Miller in discussion at the Capitol with House colleagues.*



*The historic Essex Steam Train.*

# CAPITOL UPDATE 2015