



Rep. Morin at the bill signing for the Highway Safety Bill

WORK ZONE SAFETY

Construction and repairs on Connecticut's roads are inevitable, and it is important that we protect employees who are working close to vehicle traffic. Stiffer penalties await drivers who violate highway work zones laws. The law doubles the penalty for drivers who use hand-held cell phones in a highway work zone and also requires violators of the highway work zone safety law to attend a driver retraining program. It creates a work zone safety account that will be used for highway traffic enforcement. Tests for drivers' licenses now require knowledge of how to drive in a highway work zone.

AUTOMOBILE GLASS REPLACEMENT

This law improves the ability of independent glass shops to compete for business by requiring that insurance companies doing business in Connecticut inform consumers about their right to choose where to have work done. The law also prohibits insurers from requiring or prohibiting that glass repairs be performed by a particular shop and prohibits insurers from steering consumers to a glass shop owned by the insurance company or an affiliate unless they provide the name of at least one other shop.



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE RUSSELL A. MORIN

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE Russell A. Morin

CAPITOL UPDATE 2013

Dear Neighbor:

This was a difficult year where we dealt with tough issues over the five month legislative session. The Newtown tragedy weighed on our hearts and minds and guided the policies we debated in the session's opening weeks.

From school security to mental health and gun safety we tackled a myriad of incredibly difficult issues - then turned to face another challenging state budget. We produced a balanced budget and I am very pleased to report your team in Hartford was able to protect Wethersfield's state aid from the budget axe.

This year I worked hard to secure \$250,000 to study the intersection improvements in Old Wethersfield as well as \$250,000 to benefit families in Wethersfield by renovating soccer fields, funding improvements to Mill Woods Park and adding an ADA accessible playground to one of our elementary schools.

I was very pleased with the legislature's continued commitment to small business and job growth. We reactivated the economic development advisory commission to modernize the state's manufacturing base and help defense industry-dependent manufacturers spread their wings in new directions.

I hope you find this report informative, and I'm happy to answer any questions you have about issues facing our state or your family.

Sincerely,

RUSSELL A. MORIN, STATE REPRESENTATIVE



UNIFORM FINANCIAL AID

Students and parents are now able to do side-by-side comparisons on each school's financial aid package, allowing you to make a more informed decision. We passed legislation that requires every higher education institution in Connecticut to use the financial aid shopping sheet developed by the Feds - so everyone is literally on the same page.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Parents need peace of mind knowing that their children are safe at school. It is now required that any armed guard working in a school either be a police officer, a retired police officer or state trooper who was in good standing at the time of their retirement. This law ensures that all armed guards in a school are receiving the same training on school security and firearms as active duty police officers.



Rep. Morin at a committee meeting

PRICE GOUGING

When catastrophic weather events hit our state, it is important that you have access to the goods and services necessary to restore normalcy. This law extends the ban on excessive price increases to goods and services sold during any severe weather emergency, as declared by the governor.



Rep. Morin with a constituent in the House Chamber

PROTECTING CHILDREN

Mandated reporters have to make difficult decisions to protect our youth from abuse and neglect. To ensure that mandated reporters are protected, we passed a law that prohibits an employer from hindering or preventing, an employee's efforts to make a good faith report, or to testify in a child abuse or neglect proceeding. The employer cannot discharge, discipline or penalize an employee who makes a good faith report of suspected child abuse and neglect.

TRAGEDY IN SANDY HOOK

In response to the tragedy that took place in Sandy Hook this past December, the legislature worked in a bipartisan manner to find solutions to try to prevent such a catastrophic event from happening again. The resulting legislation makes our families, our communities, and our school children safer.

This legislation improves the security of our schools by:

- Establishing a task force to establish minimum-security standards for school construction.
- Creating a grant program for schools to upgrade their security infrastructure.
- Establishing emergency plans for all schools.

This law also enhances security for institutions of higher education by:

- Requiring state public safety officials to conduct a security audit of all colleges and universities.
- Establishing threat assessment teams.

This law makes major changes in firearm laws pertaining to assault weapons, handguns (pistols and revolvers), long guns (rifles and shotguns), and large capacity magazines (LCM's) by:

- Banning the sale or purchase of LCMs that can hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition.
- Banning the sale of armor-piercing bullets.
- Expanding when mental health history disqualifies you for gun permits.
- Requiring anyone buying ammunition to have an ammunition certificate.
- Requiring a firearms dealer to initiate a background check.

With regard to mental health, the law focuses on helping individuals and their families overcome obstacles to accessing mental health treatment and support, by:

- Adding slots for case management and coordination to assist people with mental illness who are involved with the probate system.
- Establishing the ACCESS-MH program to provide training, support, and professional consultations for pediatricians.

CHANGE TO FOI LAWS

The right of the public to have access to information is important in our society; however, it is equally important to respect the privacy rights of victims of crime. The change allows law enforcement to keep crime scene photos of victims of homicide confidential. The identities of minor witnesses are also kept confidential. There is also a one-year moratorium on the release of audio recordings that describe the physical condition of a homicide victim.

SMALL BUSINESS EXPORTS

Now the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development has the ability to give priority for Small Business Express funding to businesses that attempt to export products and services to foreign markets. This legislation will have a synergistic effect as it allows more Connecticut businesses to get involved in exporting and creates another funding source for a small business looking to expand into international markets.



Rep. Morin at a press conference with Sen. Murphy

CT COMMISSION ON BUSINESS

We restored the Connecticut Commission on Business, renamed the Commission on Connecticut's Future, whose mission is to devise strategies to help defense-dependent businesses convert to non-defense products with a focus on environmentally sustainable civilian manufacturing, creating good jobs for Connecticut's families.

STATE AGENCY AND SMALL BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP

We created a better regulatory environment and a better working relationship between state agencies and small businesses in Connecticut by granting more discretion to the Commissioner of the Department of Revenue services.

FEDERAL MEDICAID WAIVERS

This legislation supports Connecticut's efforts to provide more services for seniors and people with disabilities in home- and community-based settings. It requires the Department of Social Services to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of providing home care versus institutional care for Medicaid and HUSKY B recipients under age 18. It also makes recommendations on other Medicaid options the state may use to provide home care services to this population.

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