



Rep. Morris discusses policy with Rep. Perone and Congressman Himes in the House Chamber.

## Creating Jobs - My #1 Priority

The Legislature worked hard for business growth by enacting laws that:

- » Encourage businesses to create jobs by providing tax incentives through the "First Five" program
- » Fund clean-up of "Brownfields" - contaminated and long abandoned properties that can be remediated and turned into productive and safe sites for economic development; the catalyst for job creation and real estate development
- » Save our vo-tech schools that teach the skills that put people to work
- » Build a world class bio-science research center that will support hundreds of temporary construction jobs and permanent bio-science jobs at the UConn Health Center
- » Provide student loan reimbursements for green-tech degree holders after two years of employment in the field
- » Encourage the state to seek out financial service companies and banks to relocate and expand operations in Connecticut. Provide student loan reimbursements for green-tech degree holders after two years of employment in the field
- » Protect job applicants from being forced to consent to a credit inquiry as a condition of employment
- » Invest funds in Norwalk Community College, Center for Science, Health and Wellness which will provide expanded employment opportunities for students in the health care and applied science sectors

## Contact Me For Your Copy of Major Acts

These reports provide brief highlights of new laws affecting different issue areas enacted during the 2011 regular session.

- » Business
- » Education
- » Environment
- » Firefighters
- » Criminal Justice
- » Agriculture
- » Housing
- » Town Clerks
- » Transportation
- » Health Professions
- » Veterans and the Military
- » Seniors
- » Taxes
- » Insurance
- » Real Estate

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State Representative | Assistant Majority Whip

# Bruce V. Morris

Proudly Serving Norwalk | 140<sup>th</sup> District

HOUSE DEMOCRATS of CONNECTICUT

Legislative Office Building  
Room 4030  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Capitol Phone 860.240.8585  
800.842.8267

Home Phone 203.979.9261

www.housedems.ct.gov/Morris



State Representative

# Bruce V. Morris

Proudly Serving Norwalk | 140<sup>th</sup> District

Dear Neighbors,

There is no point in pretending that this wasn't a tough year or that we do not continue to face tough times. That being said, this was the first time, in a long time, the legislature worked with the Governor to pass a budget that is fair and balanced. This budget is not filled with stop gaps and one time quick gimmicks; we focused on long term goals with long term savings for the residents of Connecticut.

As we continue to recover, we need to keep Connecticut's finances in check and moving in the right direction. We crafted a balanced budget without borrowing for operating expenses. The state budget protects the middle class by increasing the millionaire's tax, restoring a \$300 property tax credit and eliminating the proposed increase to the gas tax. Our budget protects cities and towns - almost all municipalities will receive more funding than they received in the past.

The state budget ensures a leaner more efficient government. The number of state agencies has been reduced from 81 to 56. We created a smaller government that will still serve the people of our state.

This newsletter includes highlights to the 2011 legislative session. I always welcome your comments, calls and messages and look forward to hearing from you on these issues or any other that concern you. It has and continues to be an honor to serve you as your State Representative and I thank you.

Sincerely,

HOUSE DEMOCRATS of CONNECTICUT

# CAPITOL REPORT 2011

State Representative

# Bruce V. Morris

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State Representative  
**Bruce V. Morris**

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

Capitol Phone 860.240.8585  
800.842.8267

Home Phone 203.979.9261

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## CAPITOL REPORT 2011

### Housing

We improved the quality of life and enhanced basic rights in housing by giving tenants and condominium owners more direct involvement in the building's administration and their own living conditions. We passed housing laws that:

- » Gave public housing tenants the right to petition to conduct an election to select the tenant commissioner and, creates a jurisdiction-wide resident council
- » Established fair and efficient standards regarding tenant complaints and grievances in public housing facilities
- » Made changes to the Common Interest Ownership Act, Connecticut's law governing condominium communities, to protect homeowners
- » Created a standardized process in which the housing commissioner collects data from public housing tenants regarding complaints and grievances
- » Created a low-interest loan program to assist building owners with renovations and repairs to apartment buildings in distressed municipalities



Rep. Morris at the DNA bill signing with Governor Dannel P. Malloy and Co-Sponsors and supporters.

### Public Safety and Privacy

- » This legislative session I co-sponsored a new law requiring people convicted of a serious felony offense to provide a DNA sample if they had previously been convicted of a felony. It will help law enforcement resolve crimes quicker and prevent repeat offenders from causing more pain to families. It will also exonerate people wrongfully arrested
- » We passed legislation to lessen the incidence of domestic violence by providing police with more tools to protect communities, requiring the judicial branch to recommend long-term solutions, and increasing access to restraining and protective orders
- » We increased sanctions against repeat drunk drivers by expanding the use of ignition interlock devices
- » Placed more stringent requirements on new power plant construction projects to avoid another tragedy like the explosion in Middletown
- » Passed a bill that would prohibit police officers, paramedics and other first responders from photographing victims at accident and crime scenes, or forwarding such photos to others

### Educating our Children

This year, we have taken a number of steps to close the achievement gap and, ensure that all children have access to a quality education and opportunities for academic excellence, through:

- » Increasing the educational requirements for teacher's in state-funded early childhood programs. By 2015, 50 percent of the teaching staff working in these programs must have a degree in early childhood education, childhood development or a related field, or they must have a teaching certificate with an endorsement in early childhood or special education. By 2020, all teaching staff must have one of those degrees
- » Streamlining the process to get qualified teachers in charter schools
- » Modifying requirements for school districts to establish school governance councils for schools whose students do not meet academic performance standards
- » New legislation authorizing the education commissioner to conduct a pilot study to promote best practices in early literacy and closing academic achievement gaps

### Protecting Our Children

- » We passed legislation that strengthens school anti-bullying laws, including cyber-bullying, whether it occurs in or out of school
- » The school breakfast program has been expanded
- » We strengthened laws requiring reporting and investigating cases of abuse or neglect
- » Children with special education needs will now be evaluated within 60 days whenever it is suspected that a child requires special education services

### Better Health Care Access & Affordability

The state is now closer to the goal of guaranteeing affordable health insurance for all Connecticut residents. The Legislature:

- » Opened the state health care pool to municipalities and non-profits to save money.
- » Established the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange where individuals and companies with up to 50 employees can compare and purchase health insurance
- » Extended coverage for young adults and those with pre-existing conditions
- » Expanded the state's Money Follows The Person program
- » Allows people to enroll in the ConnPACE plan if they are not eligible for Medicare
- » Passed legislation that allows service employees at companies with 50 or more workers to earn up to 5 paid sick days annually to care for themselves or their families
- » Required insurance coverage of MRIs for breast cancer screening if a woman is found to have "dense" breast tissue
- » Rejected the Governor's proposal to significantly raise cost-sharing in the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders



Rep. Morris with constituents at the Cablevision Ponus MLK celebration.

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