

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
BRUCE V. MORRIS

PROUDLY SERVING THE 140TH HOUSE DISTRICT | NORWALK

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

While the legislature's regular session ended on June 7th, there is still plenty of work ahead of us as we'll be going into a special session shortly in order to pass a state budget.

Closing a \$2.3 billion deficit for the fiscal year requires many tough decisions, but it is our responsibility as a legislature and we take it seriously.

Moving forward on the budget we are committed to:

- Passing a responsible budget that helps strengthen our state and local economies, and reflects the priorities of the people of Connecticut.
- Making sure every tax dollar is spent more efficiently
- Investing in our aging transportation infrastructure
- Proceeding deliberately in bipartisan matter

In addition to passing the state budget we also have the goal of keeping Connecticut a great place to live, work, and raise a family. We need to keep our young people living and working here and make sure that everyone feels welcome. That has been and will remain our mission.

While our work is not yet done, I would like to recognize several important pieces of legislation that passed this session in this newsletter.

Please don't ever hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance.

Have a Safe and Happy Summer!

Sincerely,

Bruce V. Morris



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2017



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JOB CREATION AND SMALL BUSINESS

Increased Access to Funding and Resources for Small Business

Most business owners have no trouble investing their time and effort, yet sometimes struggle to find the financial backing and resources to get off the ground. This package of legislation will help foster small business expansion and real job growth. In support of small business, I will also be hosting a minority and women owned business forum later this summer in Norwalk.

- Legislation we passed establishes a fund of accredited investors to support small business and provide access to business mentors.
- We established a business information hot line that provides prospective small business owners with one stop customized advice, education, and network resources.
- In addition, we created a new Workforce Training Authority to help both businesses and workers have access to customized training programs that link to hiring and coordinated services.

VETERANS

Gold Star Veterans

This bill allows municipalities the option to grant a tax exemption to parents or spouses of service members who lost their lives while performing active military duty, also known as a Gold Star recipient. Any Gold Star parent or spouse can apply for this tax exemption, and it is granted at the discretion of the municipalities. A municipality may exempt up to \$20,000 or 10% of the property's assessed value.

SENIORS

Protecting Seniors from Fraud

Consumers, especially seniors, have been falling prey to financial planners who misrepresent their education or training. This bill establishes requirements for financial planners and prohibits them from claiming they have experience serving seniors unless they meet certain education requirements.



TRANSPORTATION

Regulating Ride Share Companies

As "ride-sharing" companies like Uber and Lyft grow more and more popular, we need to ensure they are safe and accessible to all. This common-sense legislation protects both passengers and drivers, by establishing requirements for minimum car insurance coverage, driver background checks, accessibility and nondiscrimination policies.

Blocking a Mileage Tax

A new law prohibits the Department of Transportation from spending any state money on a study of, or other activity concerning, a mileage-based user fee system without legislative approval. A mileage-based user fee system is one in which motorists pay a fee for each mile they drive. The bill awaits the Governor's signature.

Transportation "Lockbox"

CT's aging roads and bridges mean we need to prioritize funding to ensure transportation infrastructure projects are completed. Because we passed this resolution, a question will appear on the 2018 ballot asking voters to weigh in on whether CT should amend its constitution to "lock-box," or protect, special transportation funds. If enacted, the legislature would be prevented from spending transportation funds on other purposes.

EDUCATION

Student Loan Forgiveness

Making college more affordable is one of our priorities. Under federal law, public service employees get a break on their student loans after ten years of repayment. These programs are often under-promoted and under utilized. This bill will help by requiring Boards of Education and non-profits to advertise federal student loan forgiveness programs to their employees.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Body Cameras

This year the legislature extended by one year a grant program to reimburse municipalities for purchasing police body cameras. The new law expands the types of law enforcement personnel equipment eligible for the program to include electronic defense weapons, recording equipment, and dashboard cameras. We also established a 26-member task force to examine the use of body cameras by state and municipal police and report its findings and recommendations.

Hate Crimes

Responding to recent incidents of intimidation and bigotry, this bill allows certain hate-crime offenders to be placed in community programs aimed at addressing their intolerance, and creates a state-wide Hate Crimes Advisory Council. It also imposes minimum fines for certain hate crimes, including cross burning and desecration of property and toughens the penalties for targeting and desecrating a house of worship.

Opioid Abuse

This year in Connecticut, more people will fall victim to drug overdoses than from car accidents and gun violence combined. This session, Connecticut took action and passed legislation to combat drug abuse and addiction. The legislation reduces the maximum opioid drug prescription for minors from a 7 day to a 5 day supply, requires health insurers to cover medically necessary detox treatment and eases restrictions on destroying unused medications.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Pregnant Women in the Workplace

Under the law, employers would be required to make reasonable accommodations for pregnant employees, such as being allowed to sit while working or taking more frequent breaks. It would also prohibit limiting or segregating an employee in a way that would deny her employment opportunities due to her pregnancy.