

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

MARY MUSHINSKY

SERVING THE 85TH DISTRICT

Dear Neighbor,

I am pleased to share with you this update on the recently concluded legislative session. The need to encourage economic growth, help working families, and make critical investments in the future of our children, as well as our state, was clear. My committee, the bipartisan Program Review and Investigations, worked on re-employment of older workers and the long-term unemployed, restoring state park services, substance abuse, and UConn affordability.

Working in a bipartisan manner, we were able to increase funding for education and enable more children to attend pre-school. We also made additional investments in job creation programs such as STEP-UP, which encourages employers to hire veterans and the unemployed, and Platform to Employment, which will help our long term unemployed regain jobs. Please visit www.ctdol.state.ct.us for job assistance.

Spurring more economic development was also a priority that we met by helping United Technologies Corp. upgrade and expand its aerospace research and manufacturing facilities across the state. This in turn will have a domino effect and help UTC's suppliers and related businesses.

Our town did very well. Wallingford legislators teamed up to pass a law that will create an Enterprise Zone and got assistance to meet phosphorus requirements, additional town aid, and restoration of funding for local access television. The enclosed information is a brief summary.

Feel free to call or email me for additional details or if you need any assistance.

Sincerely,

Mary Mushinsky



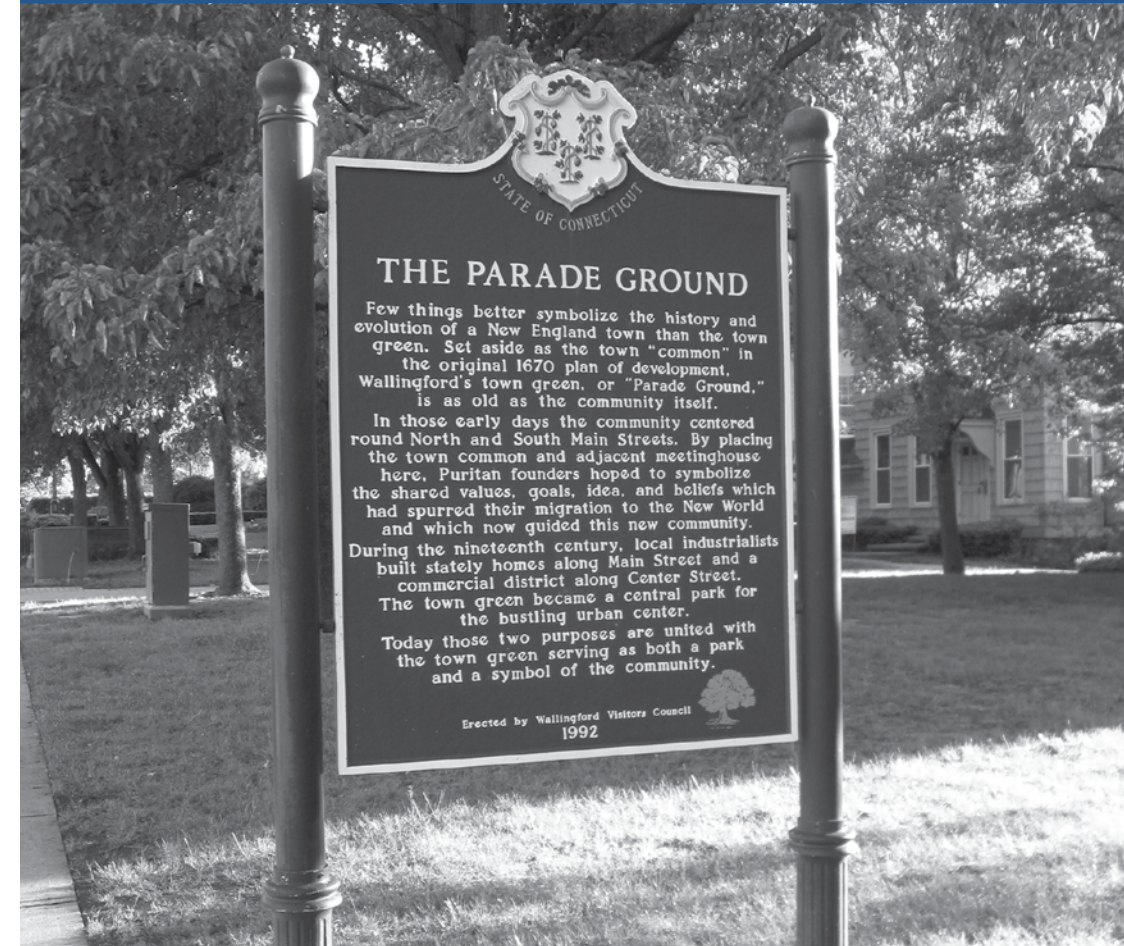
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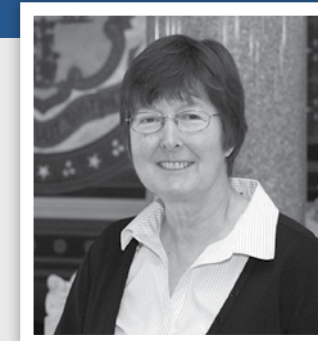
CAPITOL UPDATE 2014



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Please visit my website at:
www.housedems.ct.gov/Mushinsky

HEALTH

ACCESS TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT: Substance abuse is a growing problem in our state and town. In order to begin addressing some of the problems, we are requiring the Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Public Health, and Children and Families to develop a proposal to establish a behavioral health urgent care center. This will provide 24/7 access to behavioral healthcare services to increase quick access to care. This was a recommendation of the Program Review and Investigations Committee, which I co-chair.

EMERGENCY ROOM MANAGEMENT: Our Program Review and Investigations Committee studied how to reduce overuse of hospital emergency rooms by Medicaid patients and determined that one hospital, Middlesex, achieved the best success rate by using intensive case management. The legislature approved our plan to introduce this technique more widely and thereby reduce costs to the taxpayer.

EDUCATION

UConn AFFORDABILITY: Our committee recommended and UConn agreed to more transparency regarding fees and more accountability to allow greater use of transfer credits to reduce the cost of higher education.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: It is important for our children's development to form an early foundation for educational growth. This bill formally establishes the Office of Early Childhood as a cabinet level agency. This agency will administer programs and funding that affect our children from birth until elementary school.

GO BACK TO GO AHEAD: This initiative will encourage Connecticut residents who have some college credits, but have not attained either an associate's or bachelor's degree, to return to the state's universities, community technical colleges or Charter Oak State College to complete their degrees. Students who are eligible for the program will be able to receive up to 3 free college courses.

ENVIRONMENT

The Water Planning Council (WPC) will prepare a state water plan and submit it to the legislature by January 2018. The WPC must seek public input, consider the various planning activities already underway, promote the adoption of the state's model water use restriction ordinance, recommend utilization of the state's water resources in a manner that balances public water supply, economic, recreation, and ecological needs, and identify changes to laws and regulations necessary to implement the state water plan. I worked with five legislative colleagues to write the law.

STATE PARKS

Spurred by a Program Review and Investigations report on the deterioration of state parks, the legislature approved allowing the 100-year-old park system to raise some of their own funds through cabin rentals, which has proven successful in other states.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Unsolicited, pre-recorded telephone calls, referred to as robocalls, are intrusive and annoying. I co-sponsored a bill which increases the fine to \$1,000, from \$500, when a company's robocall fails to disconnect when you hang up. Complaints can be submitted to the Public Utilities Regulation Authority through their website: www.ct.gov/pura



UNSOLICITED TEXT MESSAGES

Although we created a "Do Not Call" list to address unwanted sales pitches, some companies continue to make unwanted calls. We increased the penalty for violating the do not call list to \$20,000 from \$11,000. In addition, we added text messages to the Do Not Call List. This law will become effective on October 1, 2014.

Do Not Call Registry: 1-888-382-1222

PUBLIC SAFETY

Every institution of higher education in the state is responsible for the welfare of its campus community. A new law now requires the reporting of every incidence of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, or stalking in a Campus Crime Report. In addition, the measure fosters prevention and awareness of sexual assault, by establishing campus resource teams which will respond to incidents and review procedures of higher education institutions. Further, the institutions of higher education will be required to provide victims of sexual assault with written information that concisely informs them of their rights.



VETERANS

STOLEN VALOR: It's now a crime to lie about receiving a military medal or other Congressional decoration with the intent to fraudulently obtain money, property or other tangible benefits. It is also a crime to wear a military uniform with the intent to commit fraud. Violators can receive a fine between \$500 and \$1,000, up to six months imprisonment, or both.

THE VETERAN'S OPPORTUNITY FUND is a pilot program that will allow our veterans to re-enter the workforce. The long-term unemployed will receive assistance in the form of job programs, financial coaching, and an eight-week subsidized work experience.

JOBS AND COMMERCE

My committee, Program Review and Investigations, studied the problems of older workers (50+) and the long-term unemployed to find jobs and recommended several bills which became law. To make it easier for older workers and the long-term unemployed to re-enter the workforce, we increased funding for the retraining programs with the highest success rate, including Platform to Employment. The Department of Labor and the Superintendent of the Connecticut Technical High School System will report information regarding traditional and adult students' job readiness to the legislature.

WALLINGFORD



Several hard-fought laws and budget items will benefit the town and taxpayers:

- Wallingford has its own Enterprise Zone to recruit new businesses as the US Postal Service phases out their facility
- The New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Line is on schedule for 2016 service
- The state will assist more towns with the cost of phosphorous reduction
- PEGPETIA grants for public access television and schools were restored
- We increased Town Aid over last year's amount
- Every town will have a drop box for unwanted prescription drugs; grants are available.

SENIORS

This session we took several steps to help our seniors and we:

- Expanded the Small Nursing Home Pilot Program allowing more seniors to move away from traditional institutional nursing homes into smaller, more personal and welcoming facilities and included Masonicare in Wallingford
- Authorized a study of private funding sources for home and community based care for the elderly and those afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia
- Lifted the suspension and re-opened the Renters' Rebate Program providing partial rental payment and utility rebates to the elderly and disabled.

