

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# MARY MUSHINSKY

Dear Friends,

This year the legislature again passed a bipartisan budget. Revenues were healthier than in 2017. As a result, we were able to increase municipal aid to the towns. An additional \$2.2 million in aid to Wallingford prevented a \$143 per person property tax increase to local taxpayers. There was also the release of \$3.2 million in long-awaited bonds for repairs to the senior housing complex at McGuire Court.

Working with my colleagues and allies from other affected towns, we were able to defeat an attempt by the Metropolitan District Commission to take \$47 million of Wallingford's sewage treatment funding. To help children, we added \$10 million in school security funding and increased the per pupil allotment to the vocational agriculture schools. We also restored \$3 million for greenways such as the linear trail.

We protected the apprenticeship program, Platform to Employment ("P2E"), and extended manufacturing apprenticeships at the request of local businesses that cannot get enough trained recruits into their workforce.

It was again necessary to trim the budget by cancelling \$400 million in previously authorized bonds and to find new ways to reduce budget growth. The revised budget growth rate in the General Fund is a very tight 1.6% when comparing Fiscal Year 2019 to the original FY 2018 appropriations. We were unsuccessful at establishing a two years free college program, but will try again next session. Finally, new commuter rail service to Wallingford started June 15. I anticipate it will boost our economy and provide an affordable alternative to commuting by car.

It has been an honor to serve you as your state representative this session. Please contact me if you need assistance.

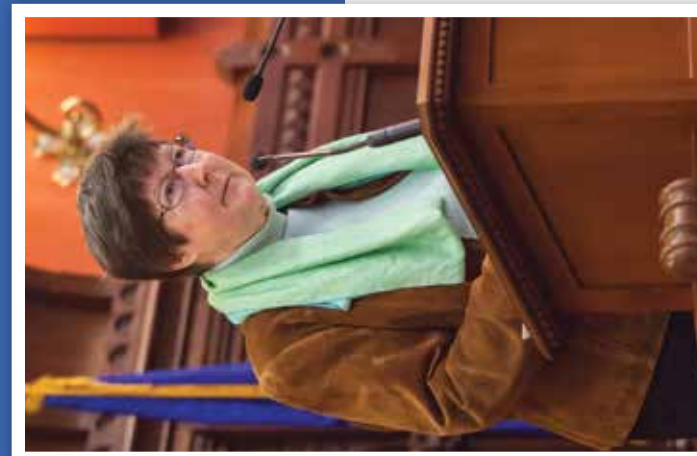
Sincerely,

Mary Mushinsky  
State Rep. 85th District/Assistant Deputy Speaker



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**MARY MUSHINSKY**  
PROUDLY SERVING WALLINGFORD



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## CAPITOL UPDATE 2018

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## HEALTH

One step in trying to help combat prescription drug abuse is requiring a review of how pharmacists and prescribers are complying with the requirements of the electronic prescription drug monitoring program. *PA 18-100*

In response to disputes between insurers and large healthcare providers, consumers now must be properly notified and are able to remain "in network" while these disputes are resolved. If the dispute ends in contract termination, both must abide by that contract's terms for 60 days after the contract ends so that patients have a grace period to figure out what to do should their provider contract change or be terminated, assuring continuity of care. *PA 18-115*

The Affordable Care Act currently requires health insurance plans to cover ten essential health benefits including maternity and newborn care, prescription drugs, preventive and mental health services, and chronic disease management. We passed legislation to safeguard these benefits to ensure that Connecticut policies must still cover these basic health services no matter what happens nationally. We also went a step further and made sure twelve-month contraceptive prescriptions are covered. *PA 18-10*

To combat having one of the highest rates of breast cancer in the country, insurance companies must now cover all forms of mammograms. Tomosynthesis is now specifically covered. This is an advanced type of mammogram that takes a three dimensional image of a breast. These steps will reduce out-of-pockets costs and lead to early detection of breast cancer in more cases. *PA 18-159*

## VETERANS

We were able to extend certain state benefits, available to veterans honorably discharged, to veterans with a qualifying condition who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable or for bad conduct. Under this new law, a qualifying condition is a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, a traumatic brain injury, or a military sexual trauma experience disclosed to an individual licensed to provide care at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility. *PA 18-47*

## CONSUMERS

I have always worked to protect Good Samaritans and this year I supported legislation that would help those entering a vehicle to protect an animal. If you see an animal in a hot car and jump to action to save that animal, you will be protected against civil damage or criminal penalty. Also in terms of motor vehicles, you may see an uptick in DMV services provided by state contractors such as AAA. They asked the state to raise the maximum convenience fee from \$5 to \$8 so that they can continue to offer services such as license renewal. *PA 18-164*

You know those annoying robocalls that use a local number and make you think it could be someone you know? We made it a crime to intentionally use such a blocking device or service to get around our caller IDs. *PA 18-135*

Reverse mortgage lenders sometimes prey on the vulnerabilities of those facing tough financial burdens who are looking for help. These mortgages are complex and this can often result in devastating outcomes due to misrepresentation or misinterpretation of the product being offered. Connecticut now requires counseling for those considering a reverse mortgage so that they will make an informed decision. *PA 18-38*

Recognizing that prescription drug prices are the number one driver of rising healthcare costs, we passed legislation to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable by increasing transparency and requiring them to explain large price increases for drugs that have a substantial cost to the state. Additionally, insurance companies must now submit information about which drugs are most frequently prescribed and which are provided at the greatest cost. By collecting more data and holding drug companies accountable, we can get closer to lowering drug costs for Connecticut residents. *PA 18-41*



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## EDUCATION

The legislature approved a measure that would prohibit the Governor from making midyear cuts to vital education dollars in FY19 in order to offer our towns greater predictability and more certainty when budgets are adopted. *PA 18-81*

We also passed legislation to allow cities and towns to modify their municipal charters to change the date by which they must adopt a budget. Currently many towns are required to adopt a budget before a state budget is adopted. This will allow municipalities to better plan their next fiscal year because they will be able to adopt a budget when they have more certainty about their state grants. *PA 18-12*

A startling number of today's students are unaware of the history and tragedy of the Holocaust. Another new law ensures the subject will be covered as part of social studies classes in Connecticut schools as well as the study of other genocides from around the world and throughout history. *PA 18-24*

## ENVIRONMENT

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is now required to make its best efforts (we amended the law) in making a final determination on permit applications within ninety days as well as in notifying the applicant of any deficiencies. They will also set up a pilot program which allows them to use Licensed Environmental Professionals to assist in the processing of applications. *PA 18-121*

As a means of protecting future generations, current law requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% of its 2001 levels by the year 2050. We doubled down on that with legislation that requires the state to reduce by 45% of 2001 levels by the year 2030. *PA 18-82*

A new law prohibits the commercial trade in snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*) until DEEP adopts applicable regulations. The law also protects native turtles by banning (1) with two exceptions, importing red-eared slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) and (2) releasing red-eared slider turtles to Connecticut's land or waters. *PA 18-114*

Under a proposed amendment to the State Constitution, no land can be conveyed from DEEP or the Department of Agriculture without a vote of two-thirds of the legislature. This, along with the requirement that a public hearing be held on other transfers, will prevent a transfer of this valuable land to anyone outside of Connecticut's ownership. This proposed constitutional amendment will now appear on this November's election ballot. *SJ 35*

