



Strengthening Connecticut Schools

The difference in the achievement levels among Connecticut schools is one of the highest in the nation. We took steps to help turn around low-achieving schools, increase our chances for federal education dollars, improve our vocational high schools and help students with autism.

The legislation:

- » Strengthens the state's application for federal Race to the Top education funds
- » Develops new programs to help turn around low-achieving schools
- » Requires public hearings before closing low achieving schools allowing for more parent involvement
- » Ensures adequate staff and supplies
- » Makes sure students with autism get quality services through their special education individualized education plans (IEP)
- » Improves vocational schools by adding manufacturing and vocational education experience to the Connecticut State Board of Education criteria

Transportation School Bus Safety

To ensure that our children are protected on public school buses, I voted to:

- » Increase fines for bus companies that do not meet state safety inspection rules
- » Increase fines for negligent school bus operators
- » Provide incentives for school districts that require newly purchased buses to have seat belts

Safer Sports Student Athletes & Concussions

Head injuries in school sports are often hard to diagnose and have too often turned tragic.

To avoid serious long-term injuries we enacted the following new protections:

- » Student athletes who sustain head injuries will need medical clearance before rejoining athletic activity
- » Athletic coaches will now be trained to recognize and respond to concussions
- » Anyone with a coach's permit issued by the Connecticut State Board of Education will need to complete a course by the start of their sports season next school year
- » The state can revoke a permit if any requirements are not followed



State Representative

Frank N. Nicastro, Sr.

Proudly Serving Bristol/Forestville | 79th District

STATE REPRESENTATIVE of the CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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CAPITOL UPDATE 2010

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

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Important phone numbers

To reach many state services, call InfoLine **211**

ConnPACE 800.423.5026
Medicare Hotline 800.633.4227
Long-Term Care 800.547.3443
Commission on Aging 860.240.5200
Medicare Advocacy 800.262.4414
Consumer Protection 800.842.2649
CT Veterans Affairs 860.616.3600
CT Elder Services 866.218.6631
Health Care Advocate 866.466.4446

Bristol/Forestville Saves by Working Together

Property Taxpayers May Get Relief

Bristol/Forestville can now team-up with other towns to save money while delivering necessary services.

House Speaker Christopher G. Donovan created the blue ribbon commission on Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (MORE) and appointed Rep. Nicastro co-chair of one of the subcommittees. The commission was charged with initiating a new approach to state and local government in Connecticut that would make our state more economically competitive in the short and long term.

Over the coming year, additional cost savings will be discussed with local government officials and business leaders – all working together to encourage more cooperation between municipalities.

This year we worked for:

- » Cost savings by allowing towns to join the state in bulk purchasing of prescription drugs
- » Saving money on school transportation by giving money to towns that work together to provide transportation services
- » Health insurance savings by allowing two or more municipalities or boards of education to purchase employee health benefits
- » Relieving local taxpayers from the cost of storing the belongings of evicted tenants while protecting tenants' rights



Rep. Nicastro addresses guests at the Wall of Honor Memorial Day tribute to Connecticut soldiers killed this past year in Afghanistan and Iraq.

A BALANCED BUDGET for CONNECTICUT

On Time and On Target

Partnering with Governor Rell, we balanced the state's budget – on time and without any tax increases. The budget contains no cuts in municipal aid funds and a \$60 average decrease annually in electric bills for many residents.

This year's budget bill included \$163 million in additional spending cuts across a host of state agencies and a reduction of \$300 million from a previous borrowing plan.

We erased a \$10 billion deficit, balancing the budget on time and on target.

The spending cuts are deep, but necessary. Thankfully, we protected the services critically important to Bristol/Forestville, including:

- » \$2,086,057 in non education town aid funding for Bristol/Forestville
- » \$42,828,213 in education funding for Bristol/Forestville
- » Funding for programs that assist seniors and the disabled
- » Maintained funding for hospitals, schools, libraries, and courthouses

We also provided a helping hand, through:

- » Lower co-pays for home care services saving the average client nearly \$100 each month
- » \$500 individual property tax credit to help offset local property taxes
- » Funding for programs that help prevent mortgage foreclosure

Additional good news for state residents this summer:

- » We reduced last year's increase on state park fees and fishing/hunting licenses

Town Aid for Bristol/Forestville

Fiscal Year 2010-2011	
Education	\$41,924,492
Town Aid Road Fund Grant	\$340,369
Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP)	\$486,019
Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$675,777
Pequot/Mohegan Aid	\$583,892
School Transportation*	\$903,721
Total State Funds to Bristol/Forestville	\$44,914,270

*includes \$305,418 to be set aside for special education



Good News for Seniors Saluting Our Veterans

Home Care Services VA Drugs in Nursing Homes

Seniors using the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders will soon see a reduction in their monthly costs for critical home services, such as meal deliveries and personal care assistance. The budget reduces the percentage seniors pay for these services from 15% to 6% -- saving the average client nearly \$100 each month.

Alzheimer's Patients

Last year's budget protected the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, which provides small grants to family members caring for people with Alzheimer's to fund personal care, home health and adult day care services. Governor Rell closed the program in 2009, but working with advocates, the legislature was able to reopen the program in May, allowing Connecticut families to receive these important services.

Senior Driver Program

New legislation encourages seniors to keep their driving skills sharp by making it easier to qualify for safe driver discounts. People age 60 and older will now be able to complete a shorter, 4-hour driving program to be eligible for a two-year discount of 5% or more on their automobile insurance.

Medicaid Spend Down

New legislation will help seniors protect their assets when their spouse needs to enter a nursing home. Under current law, the spouse remaining at home must spend down half of his or her assets in order to allow the ill spouse to qualify for Medicaid coverage. This year, we increased the asset cap, so that the couple can keep assets up to \$110,000 and still qualify the ill spouse for Medicaid.

Connecticut nursing homes now allow veterans the choice to use their VA prescription drug benefits. VA prescription drug benefits are often less expensive.

Driver's License Renewals Extended

The driver's license of a service member on active duty outside Connecticut will remain valid beyond the expiration date. After returning to Connecticut or they receive an honorable discharge, the service member now will have an additional 30-day period for renewal.

This new law applies if:

- » The license has not been suspended, cancelled or revoked
- » The service member was out-of-state on active duty service
- » The service member has the license and discharge or separation papers

Vietnam War Veterans Welcome Home Day

The Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day will be held March 30 of each year to commemorate the return home of the last members of the Armed Forces who served in Vietnam. Each year we will now officially recognize and thank all Vietnam veterans for their important sacrifice and service to our country, which remains a vital part of our history.

