

Education Reform

Our education initiative provides new support to help turn around underperforming schools. The bill includes:

- More funding for school-based health centers and family resource centers.
- 1000 new Pre-K readiness seats.
- Increased funding for vo-tech, vo-ag, charter and magnet schools.
- More classroom experience for teacher preparation.
- Creating a distinguished educator designation.
- Requiring relevant masters degree for professional certification.
- Improved teacher evaluation procedures.
- A pilot program on teacher evaluations.
- Creates the Commissioner's Network, to provide the intensive supports and interventions needed to turn around 25 of the most chronically low-performing schools.
- Giving the state commissioner of education the needed authority to develop or modify plans with teachers and parents at "turnaround schools."

Children with Special Needs

Support for children with special needs was improved by:

- Eliminating the use of "scream rooms."
- Making improvements to the individualized education plan process.
- Studying ways to enhance workforce development, training and employment for young adults with autism spectrum disorders and developmental disabilities.

Family Medical Leave

Thousands of paraprofessionals who work in our public elementary and secondary schools now have access to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). It requires individuals to be employed for at least 12 months and have worked at least 950 hours (a reduction from the previous 1,250 required) during the year.

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Rep. Frank N. Nicastro, Sr.
Legislative Office Building, Room 4034
Hartford, CT 06106

State Representative

Frank N. Nicastro, Sr.

Serving Bristol and Forestville | 79th District

HOUSE DEMOCRATS of CONNECTICUT

www.housedems.ct.gov/Nicastro

Legislative Office Building
Room 4034
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Capitol Phone 860.240.8500
Home Phone 860.585.6070

www.housedems.ct.gov/Nicastro

PPSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD, CT
Permit No. 3987



State Representative

Frank N. Nicastro, Sr.

Serving Bristol and Forestville

79th District



Dear Neighbor,

From jobs to education to improved response to natural disasters, the legislature helped citizens across our state in many ways.

It started last October when we passed comprehensive, bipartisan jobs legislation that invested hundreds of millions of dollars in small businesses, gave firms hiring incentives, aligned education programs with jobs-in-demand, encouraged entrepreneurship and innovation and eliminated red-tape for growing companies.

Historic changes were made to our educational system so our children can succeed. We made it easier for people to exercise voting rights and demanded that utility companies respond better when storms hit and the power goes out.

We helped children with special needs by improving Individualized Education Plans and created a study on workforce development, training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS of CONNECTICUT

CAPITOL
REPORT 2012



State Representative

Frank N. Nicastro, Sr.

Proudly Serving Bristol and Forestville | 79th District

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

Capitol Phone 860.240.8500

Home Phone 860.585.6070

www.housedems.ct.gov/Nicastro

CAPITOL REPORT 2012

Reducing Domestic Violence

We have made great progress in helping families affected by domestic violence in recent years, but the problem persists in our communities. Building on earlier successes, this year we strengthened the state's laws to better protect victims, hold abusers accountable, and give new tools to law enforcement by:

- Improving access to and enforcement of protective and restraining orders.
- Giving police officers new tools, including a model policy for responding to domestic violence incidents.
- Allowing victims to report email and texting violations of restraining and protective orders in the town where they reside, where they receive the communication or where the communication was initiated.
- Extending the maximum length of restraining orders from six months to one year.
- Ordering a feasibility study for a 911 texting system.
- Requiring the courts to share protective orders with schools that victims attend, upon request of a victim.
- Strengthening the definition of stalking, including digital stalking to ensure that criminals are properly punished.

Caylee's Law

"Caylee's Law" sets criminal penalties for the failure to report the disappearance of a child. The law is in response to the circumstances surrounding the death of Florida toddler Caylee Anthony and applies to any parent, guardian or person who has custody or supervision of the child.

Move-Over Law

This new law requires drivers move-over one lane if an emergency vehicle or maintenance vehicle with flashing lights is parked on the shoulder of any state highway. This increases the safety for roadway workers and motorists. The new law requires drivers to move over on two-lane highways as well, for road maintenance vehicles and tow trucks.

Hurricane deductibles – protects homeowners by prohibiting insurers from applying hurricane deductibles if a hurricane is downgraded to a tropical storm before it strikes Connecticut. This bill responds to complaints from consumers who were charged large hurricane deductibles for property damage caused by Tropical Storm Irene after it was downgraded from a hurricane before entering the state in August 2011. Under the new law, homeowners and businesses are also protected from price gouging by vendors overcharging for goods and services during unusual weather events.

Hospice Care Improvements - with just two licensed hospices in the state, this new law permits more hospices to follow federal standards, giving smaller hospice facilities the opportunity to provide high quality services that allow patients to stay closer to family and friends. This bill helps our state ensure residents have access to health care services across the full continuum of care.



Jerry Brick, Lake Compounce General Manager, receiving legislative citation from Rep. Nicastro and Rep. Wright for providing employment opportunities for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders



Rep. Nicastro presenting a citation to his intern, Justin Knapp, for his outstanding work during this legislative session

Housing and Energy

The legislature created a PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program for qualifying commercial properties which allows CEFIA (Clean Energy Fund and Investment Authority) to issue clean energy bonds to those businesses.



Rep. Nicastro working in the House Chamber

Custody Orders While on Deployment

In order to reduce the psychological trauma a parent feels when they leave a small child for an extended period of time, we protected parents' permanent custody orders in the event of deployment. We provided an opportunity for the military parent to create temporary custody orders that remain in effect only as long as they are away on deployment and for as much contact as possible between children and the parent who is absent while on military duty by providing contact by phone or email.

Supporting Local Businesses By Encouraging Their Growth

I initiated a proposal which reconfigures Bristol's portion of the multi-town Bioscience Enterprise Corridor Zone by removing two residential census tracts and designating two commercial and industrial ones instead. Bioscience businesses in these commercial and industrial tracts now qualify for the zone's incentives, which are property tax exemptions and corporation business tax credits for improving property and creating jobs.

Communication For Better Planning

I proposed this law which saves the taxpayer's money. It allows municipal planning commissions to notify regional planning agencies (RPAs) about proposed subdivisions by email, instead of certified mail. By law, municipal planning commissions must notify RPAs about proposed subdivisions that abut or include land in two or more towns located within an RPA's area of operation and send the notice at least 30 days before the required public hearing.

Storm Response and Power Outages

In the aftermath of the October Nor'easter and Tropical Storm Irene that left much of the state without power, the legislature passed sweeping reforms to better prepare for future severe storms to avoid wide-spread and lengthy loss of utility service, where:

- Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response.
- Noncompliance could result in penalties of up to 2.5 percent of an electric or gas company's annual distribution revenue, approximately \$25 million in the case of Connecticut Light & Power.



Cut along dotted line.

Please check the boxes below and indicate which important issues you would like more information about.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job Creation | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN & ZIP _____

YOUR E-MAIL _____

www.housedems.ct.gov/Nicastro | 860.240.8500