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Route 11 & The Roadmap For Connecticut's Economic Future

Following up on last year's modest transportation bill, this year we passed a truly bold and comprehensive transportation initiative that contains the elements necessary to relieve gridlock throughout our state, including southeastern Connecticut.

This year's \$2.3 billion initiative includes several projects important to our region. The measure emphasizes mass transit, including important enhancements to the Shoreline East commuter rail system. However, it also provides a potential source of funding for current transportation improvement projects such as the completion of Route 11. In addition, the bill will set in motion planning and environmental studies to make way for the widening of I-95 all the way to the Rhode Island border. I also introduced legislation that will make it easier for the Route 11 Greenway Commission to obtain land for the greenway, while also permitting the Commission to seek state funds for future land acquisitions.

This landmark legislation will go a long way toward easing traffic congestion and be an incentive for Connecticut companies to stay and grow and encourage new companies to move to our state.



Rep. Linda Orange with Colchester 1st Selectwoman Jenny Contois and East Haddam 1st Selectman Brad Parker, working in partnership to better serve our communities.

Bringing The Money Back

Salmon River Flood Control Project:	\$225,000
Sidewalk Construction in Moodus Village:	\$250,000
Erosion control for Lyman Viaduct & Airline Trail in Colchester:	\$500,000

Linda Orange
state representative
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State Representative

Linda Orange



2006 End of Session Report

Dear Neighbor,

It has been an honor and a privilege to represent the 48th District this legislative session. In this newsletter you will find information on many pieces of legislation we were able to pass this session.

I am pleased we used the state surplus responsibly. It will be spent for several one-time payments, including \$246 million to the underfunded Teachers' Retirement Fund; \$85.5 million to pay off economic recovery notes from the 2003 fiscal crisis; and \$22 million for property tax relief. We were able to put \$305.1 million into the Rainy Day Fund, bringing our state surplus to a total of \$971 million, the highest level ever.

We passed legislation that will invest billions over the next decade to overhaul Connecticut's aging transportation system and adopted a comprehensive plan designed to spur job growth in Connecticut. We also phased out the manufacturing property tax, eliminated the corporate tax surcharge for 2007 and created targeted tax credits for the film and entertainment industry.

The flow of funding to our area has been steady. The Salmon River flood control project is now in its 3rd and final phase of completion. An additional \$193,000 will go toward the state's fire training schools' operating budget, representing the first increase in 5 years. Although the state's bonding budget is just about at its ceiling, we have still secured \$500,000 for erosion control and other short-term improvements for the Lyman Viaduct in Colchester. The Route 11 Greenway construction was my first project upon reelection. As a member of the advisory committee for Route 11, I am happy to report that the project will finally be moving forward again.

Some of my most satisfying work is attending to constituent requests for help. I encourage you to contact me if you have any concerns. If you want specific information on any of the topics in this newsletter, please contact my office.

Working for East Haddam, Moodus & Colchester

END OF SESSION REPORT

Bullying Policies in Schools

In an effort to reduce the incidence of bullying among school children, the General Assembly passed sHB 5563. It expands the definition of bullying to include incidents of harassment that occur on the school bus and strengthens local policies to enable students to report bullying acts anonymously. Also, the bill requires that local policy offer case-by-case interventions, which may include counseling and disciplinary action to students who repeatedly bully and students who are frequently bullied. If bullying occurs off school grounds but has a negative effect on a student's safety and academic performance, local policies may now include provisions to address that situation. Finally, the bill increases parental notification of bullying incidents.

Public Act 06-115 (sHB 5563)

Rep. Orange testifying with Tonya Cutler from Colchester.



Tax Deductions for College Savings

This act allows taxpayers to deduct contributions to the Connecticut Higher Education Trust, the state-sponsored college savings plan, from their adjusted gross income for state income tax purposes. It allows joint filers to deduct \$10,000 a year and single filers \$5,000. Public Act 06-186 (sHB 5845)

Imaging Services Co-payments

This act limits the co-payments that a person must make for imaging services performed in-network. It limits the co-payments for MRI and CAT scans to no more than \$75 each and \$375 annually. It limits co-payment for PET scans to no more than \$100 each and \$400 for all scans annually. These limits apply only if the physician ordering the service or someone in the same practice group does not perform it. Public Act 06-180 (sHB 5372)



Whitney Meade, Shannon Walsh & Lindsay Beck from Youth Services of East Haddam observe the General Assembly at work.

Posting Of Gas Prices

The General Assembly passed legislation which requires that both member and non-member prices be posted using the same size on signs advertising the price. It also requires that all prices such as full-serve, mini-serve and self-serve are clearly visible at the pump. This protects consumers from being misled about the price of gas prior to filling their tank. Public Act 06-29 (HB 5558)

Identity Theft And Theft Of Personal Information

This legislation makes it illegal to obtain the information on the electronic strip of a credit card without the permission of the owner. It also makes it illegal to use an encoder to take the information off a credit card and put it onto a different card with the intent of defrauding the owner. This legislation gives the Attorney General the ability to prosecute for up to 10 years in prison, a \$10,000 fine or both. It also makes it illegal to possess the items with the intent to violate the law and carries a penalty of one year in prison or a \$2,000 fine or both. Public Act 06-60 (HB 5694)

Encroachment on Open Space Lands

Open space is preserved in order to safeguard Connecticut's rural heritage from its susceptibility to development and despoilment of the land. This bill addresses the serious problem of persons who encroach upon open space by installing buildings, driveways, and even swimming pools. This bill protects the noble intention established under the land trust by authorizing anyone with property interest to bring action against the violator. Public Act 06-89 (HB 5447)

Office of Property Rights Ombudsman

Heated debate on the subject of eminent domain swept across the nation, producing a serious need for the establishment of this office as the state weighs its options on this highly controversial issue. This office will develop expertise in law governing eminent domain by advising property owners, assessing government actions, informing the public, mediating for arbitration if requested, and recommending changes to the legislature. Passage of this legislation will ensure an informed office exists as the state reforms its eminent domain policy. Public Act 06-187 (HB 5846)

Hospital Acquired Infections

In response to the concerns of the residents of the state, the General Assembly formed a Committee on Healthcare Associated Infections. This committee will advise the Department of Public Health on developing a mandatory reporting system for hospital associated infections. This will go far in increasing patient safety during hospital stays by holding hospitals accountable for the spread of disease. Public Act 06-142 (SB 160)

Medicare Part D

In continued response to the deficiencies of the federal Medicare Part D Program, House Democrats have set up a process to provide additional services to the state's seniors by providing funding for nonformulary drugs if it is medically necessary, and paying claims for prescription drugs for dually eligible clients who are denied coverage because the drug is not on the plan's formulary.

Social Security Offsets Under the Worker's Compensation System

The General Assembly took action this session to provide fairness and protection to one of the most vulnerable groups in Connecticut: working people over the age of 65. Prior to passage of this legislation, injured workers eligible for workers' compensation had their Social Security retirement benefit deducted from the benefit. The offset was harmful to a population of senior citizens who, in most cases, are in the workplace because their Social Security benefits are insufficient to sustain a living. Because of this legislation, a senior citizen injured on the job would be eligible for their rightful workers' compensation benefits rather than being left to fall through the cracks. Public Act 06-84 (SB 25)



Rep. Orange with Theo Sowell (left) of Bacon Academy and his dad. Theo visited the legislature as part of the 2006 Connecticut All-Star Football Team.

Questions ~ Concerns? Call Representative Linda Orange at 1-800-842-1902