



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for your support. It has been an honor to represent you in the General Assembly for another term. There have been many intensely debated issues this legislative session and it has been a privilege to represent the people of Colchester, Lebanon, Mansfield and Windham in each of those discussions.

We continued to make important investments in Connecticut's Small Business Express Program, which has succeeded in helping to grow our small business community. The property tax burden has also remained a primary concern for many small businesses, and thankfully we worked to increase municipal aid in order to ease property taxes.

We have also made historic investments in our transportation system and increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding for many cities and towns. These investments are critical to growing our economy as businesses will not come to Connecticut if their employees cannot get to work in a safe and timely manner and if we do not have an educated workforce ready to fill 21st century jobs.

Sometimes illness or difficulty with transportation can make it hard to get to the pharmacy to refill a monthly prescription. It also can be a challenge if you are heading south for the winter and need your medications. This session I introduced legislation that allows you to have a three-month supply of a prescription so you don't have to worry about getting to the pharmacy each month. (Co-pays and other insurance restrictions will still apply.)

I hope you find this information to be of use and please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

State Representative Linda Orange



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
LINDA ORANGE

PROUDLY SERVING THE 48TH HOUSE DISTRICT | COLCHESTER, LEBANON, MANSFIELD AND WINDHAM

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ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs will now be required to conduct benefits and services outreach for women veterans, and offer recommendations to the legislature on what types of service initiatives would be best for women veterans. It is critically important that we protect those who protect us and this legislation is a good way to honor these brave women.

BETTER LABELING ON PRESCRIPTION BOTTLES

To better protect and inform consumers we are now requiring that pharmacists include with generic drugs the manufacturer's name, the website and telephone number for the US Food and Drug Administration's drug safety and reporting program (MedWatch). If the patient is being given a generic drug, the pharmacist must include the brand name on the label. This will help to ensure that patients are aware of what drugs they are taking, where these drugs come from and where to report adverse effects of the drugs.

STRENGTHENING OUR LAWS FOR SENIORS

We have taken steps to protect our seniors from abuse and from being taken advantage of financially. This law adds a number of protections, including:

- EMT's are added to the list of mandated reporters of elder abuse.
- Certain financial agents must receive training on elderly fraud, exploitation, and financial abuse.
- Someone convicted of 1st or 2nd degree larceny or 1st degree abuse of an elderly or disabled person is prohibited from inheriting, receiving insurance benefits, or receiving certain property.

REDUCING REQUIRED TESTING IN SCHOOLS

Since the rollout of No Child Left Behind almost 15 years ago, standardized testing has come under a lot of scrutiny. One area of concern is that there are simply too many tests. For example, juniors in high school are currently required to take the SBAC exam at a time when many of them are taking the SAT or ACT college admission tests. As we work statewide and across the country to improve the use of standardized tests, the legislature took another big step forward this year by allowing schools to waive SBAC testing for any students taking these college admissions tests.

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Rep. Orange and colleague Rep. Dargan work on legislation during legislative session.

STANDING UP FOR CONSUMERS

We passed a number of important consumer protection laws this year. We have also prohibited companies from requiring mandatory product registration for certain consumer warranty coverage. In addition, anyone who provides material information which results in the successful investigation of a solicitor who tries to mislead consumers—commonly known as spoofing – will be compensated by the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP).

We've also required new car dealers to provide consumers with written information explaining that the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act makes it illegal for new motor vehicle manufacturers or dealers to void warranties simply because aftermarket or recycled parts were installed in the vehicle or because someone other than the dealer performed service on the vehicle.

PROTECTING ELECTRIC CONSUMERS

This year Connecticut became the first state in the nation to protect residents from electricity providers who offer a low introductory rate that increases rapidly afterwards. The protections enacted require competitive electric suppliers to give their customers a 60-day notice before the end of their contracts. Suppliers cannot charge these customers a termination or early cancellation fee and must allow customers who want to switch to standard service the ability to do so within 72 hours. We also set up a process for Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to further investigate and take measures to completely eliminate variable electric rates when a customer's contract expires.

REDUCING HEALTH CARE COSTS TO CONNECTICUT CITIES AND TOWNS

Allowing municipal employees and retirees to join state employee health plans will considerably reduce health care costs for towns and cities around our state. The coverage costs are reduced because employees from participating towns would join a shared risk pool with state employees and other participating towns. The State Comptroller will be required to offer this coverage to towns and cities and to undertake certain actions to ensure that coverage is maintained.

ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING FARMERS IN RESTORING FARMLAND

Invasive species and poor conservation plans and efforts can lead to a deterioration of Connecticut's natural resources. This year we encouraged the conservation and preservation of farmland by requiring the state to reimburse farmers for the cost of developing, implementing, and complying with a farm resources management plan or a farmland restoration plan. We also expanded the items reimbursable to farmers under the farmland restoration program, which encourages farmers to restore farmland that has gone out of production. We also increased the maximum reimbursement under the program for management or restoration plans for certain state or municipal lands, while expanding what can now be included in the restoration programs. The commissioner must approve of the management or restoration plans for it to be reimbursable.



Rep. Orange and Dr. Lee in the House Chamber during his visit to the State Capitol with his forensic class.