

CAPITOL UPDATE 2012

Price Gouging and Pain at the Pump

Skyrocketing gasoline prices are a result of global factors such as growing demand from expanding economies such as China, turmoil in the Middle East and oil market speculators. Faced with the reality of a global dilemma, the legislature acted in a bipartisan manner to be a part of the solution, by capping the state petroleum gross receipts tax on motor fuels and enacting new price gouging laws to protect consumers from oil companies and gasoline dealers that try to exploit abnormal market conditions for profit.

Education Reform

Our education initiative will provide new support to help turn around underperforming schools. The education reform package has long-term implications for our children and for the state's economic well-being. The better we prepare children for the 21st Century workforce, the stronger we'll make Connecticut's economy. The bill:

- Includes more funding for school-based health centers and family resource centers.
- Recognizes the critical importance of early childhood education by underwriting 1,000 school readiness slots for preschoolers and funding initiatives to improve early reading success.
- Creates the Commissioner's Network, to provide the intensive supports and interventions needed to turn around 25 of the most chronically low-performing schools.
- Gives the state commissioner of education the needed authority to develop or modify plans with teachers and parents at "turnaround" schools.



Dear Neighbor:

From jobs to education to improved response to natural disasters, the legislature helped citizens across our state in many ways in 2012.

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.

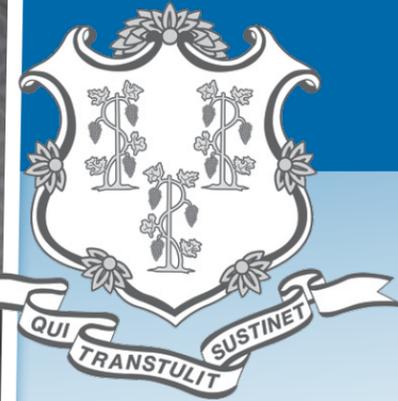
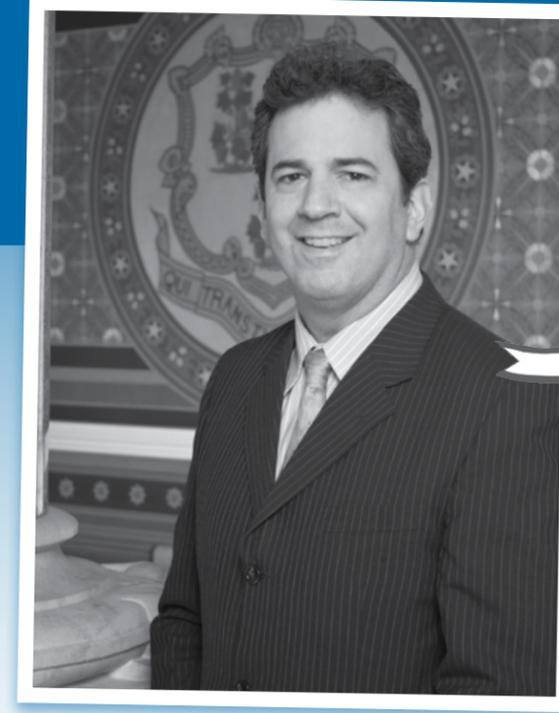
This spring, we balanced a budget by keeping our funding promise to cities and towns without raising taxes. Historic changes were made to our educational system so our children can succeed. We made it easier for people to exercise voting rights, and demanded that utility companies respond better when storms and crises hit. We also further protected victims of domestic violence.

I am proud to have supported a budget that includes state funding for Norwalk, with additional funding for education and vital services to help stabilize our property taxes.

I hope this report is informative. I'm happy to answer any questions about these issues or any others. Please feel free to contact me anytime.

Sincerely,

Chris Perone



State Representative

Chris Perone

Proudly Serving Norwalk | 137th District

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Encouraging Job Growth

We continued the state's commitment to job growth and economic recovery with new legislation during special session that expands the Small Business Express Program, allowing an estimated 3,600 additional businesses to have access to much-needed state funding for capital investments and hiring.

In addition, the bill:

- Establishes the Unemployed Armed Forces Member STEP-UP (Subsidized Training and Employment Program) with grants to subsidize a business's cost of hiring unemployed veterans during their first 180 days (about six months) on the job.
- Creates the "Connecticut Made" and "Connecticut Treasures" programs to promote products made in Connecticut and promote the state's cultural, educational and historic attractions.
- Develops a plan to allow the state to give preferential incentives and economic development assistance to companies that will relocate jobs from overseas to Connecticut.

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Jobs are Priority #1

We created new job opportunities for young people by funding the Youth Employment Summer Jobs program. We also supported adult evening education programs, as well as the Small Business Express program and a Connecticut Made initiative to promote products from local businesses.

Additional high level job opportunities will result from economic development funding for the Jackson Labs project that builds on our decision to become a world leader in bioscience and biotechnology.

We recognize the challenges facing cities and towns and secured funding for municipalities, relieving pressure on local property taxes.



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 and 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.

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 to ensure that stalking incidents—including digital stalking—are appropriately punished.

Job Creation Through Brownfield Cleanup

We allowed swifter conversion of contaminated and long-abandoned properties to productive sites for economic development, open space and other public uses. This session, we directed the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to perform an in-depth analysis of the state's brownfield remediation and development programs and recommend changes to those programs.

Hospice Care

With just two licensed hospices in the state, this new law will permit 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 will help our state to ensure that residents have access to health care services across the full continuum of care.