

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
CHRIS PERONE

PROUDLY SERVING THE 137TH HOUSE DISTRICT | NORWALK

CAPITOL UPDATE 2015

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 Norwalk in each of those discussions.

The legislature took significant steps this session to lower the cost of higher education. We passed a law which has led to the lowest student loan interest rate ever offered by the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA), and became the first state in the country to establish a Student Loan Bill of Rights.

We also focused on protecting our environment by banning plastic microbeads which pollute our waters and broadened the ban on harmful pesticides to better protect our children from exposure to these chemicals. The legislature also voted to ensure that future generations can enjoy one of our most valuable natural resources by developing a Blue Plan for Long Island Sound.

We stood up for our seniors by passing more laws to protect them from potential abuse. We have expanded the definition of neglect to include elderly people who do not live alone but are mistreated by a caretaker and now require the Department of Social Services to notify a nursing home resident's designee within 24 hours if abuse is suspected.

I hope you find this information to be of use and please know that Norwalk's working families remained at the heart of each vote I cast in the House Chamber. As always, please do not hesitate to call my office if you have any questions.



Chris Perone

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“As Chair of the Commerce Committee, I am proud to support innovative centers like Jackson Labs which encourage scientists to come live and work in our state.” - Rep. Perone

LONG ISLAND SOUND BLUE PLAN AND RESOURCE & USE INVENTORY



The Long Island Sound remains one of our most precious state resources. To protect the Sound, the “Blue Plan” will inventory the resources, uses, and conservation areas of our portion of Long Island Sound. With this plan in place, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection along with the newly established 16-member Long Island Sound Resource & Use Inventory and Blue Plan Advisory Committee will be able to more clearly and effectively manage our offshore waters through a data-driven process. It will also help streamline, allocate, and coordinate our resources which include state agencies, academic institutions, user groups and other stakeholders. Plans similar to this have been instituted by a number of our neighboring coastal states with great success.

Norwalk Day at the Capitol

PATIENT-DESIGNATED CAREGIVERS

This law is known as the CARE (Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable) Act. Increasingly, family members are becoming the caregivers for their loved ones. However, many times patients are discharged from hospitals without being given proper instructions. The result is that patients may end up returning to the hospital because they had not been instructed properly on their follow-up care. This law requires that a hospital document a designated caregiver in the patient’s discharge plan, attempt to notify the caregiver of the patient’s discharge, and instruct the caregiver on any post-discharge tasks with which the patient will need assistance.



Rep. Perone speaking in the House Chamber

STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS

This session, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to establish a Student Loan Bill of Rights. As part of this initiative, we created an office of the Student Loan Ombudsman to assist student borrowers in navigating the loan process and educate them about the different options they have for repaying their loans. The Student Loan Ombudsman will also be responsible for handling student issues and complaints about their loan servicers, and will be investigating these claims to ensure loan servicers are conducting themselves in a proper manner.



Independence Day Celebration at Harbor View Beach In Norwalk

VARIABLE ELECTRIC RATES

This year the state legislature took a historic step in protecting Connecticut residents, particularly the elderly, from electricity providers who offered a very low introductory rate that increased rapidly within a few months. This law protects residential ratepayers from predatory variable rate contracts charged by electric suppliers. This measure makes our state the first in the nation to enact these protections. Competitive electric rate suppliers must now give their customers a 60 day notice of 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. The legislation also sets up a process for the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to further investigate and take measures to completely eliminate variable electric rates when a customer’s contract expires. This legislation will help Connecticut ratepayers better manage their electricity costs and keep them better informed.

IMPROVING OUR ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

If Connecticut is to make true economic progress and attract new businesses, then we must first have a detailed understanding of our business and tax climate and our overall competitiveness. This session, I fought for the creation of a Commission on Economic Competitiveness designed to analyze Connecticut’s business tax policy climate and develop policies that promote economic growth in our state. The Commission will consist of legislators, members of state economic agencies, and members of the business community.

IMPLEMENTING THE COMPREHENSIVE CHILDREN’S MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLAN

In the aftermath of the Sandy Hook tragedy, the state worked on an implementation plan to meet the mental, emotional, and behavioral needs of our children. The newly created Children’s Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board will bring professionals together to help our state monitor how we are taking care of our young children.

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