

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ROBYN A. PORTER

CHAIR OF THE LABOR COMMITTEE
PROUDLY SERVING HAMDEN AND NEW HAVEN

Dear Neighbor,

The pandemic created numerous challenges and exacerbated existing institutional inequities. Throughout the 2021 session, my colleagues and I worked to address these new issues and existing injustices by passing over 350 bills and resolutions.

I know the past year has been uniquely difficult for each individual and family in our community, and I believe the legislation passed in Hartford will benefit everyone in our district. This session I advocated for equitable public health policies, increased access to mental health resources, and additional support for our seniors, schools, and small businesses. I also worked with my colleagues to pass a bipartisan budget that will strengthen our economy and invest in our infrastructure, sustainability efforts, and education. I have fought to ensure Hamden and New Haven will see an increase in funding in both Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 through this budget. I am confident that these state investments will help our community to both recover and thrive as we move out of this pandemic.

Please continue reading for more information on some of the legislative achievements that will make a difference for your family, our district, and our state.



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2021

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END OF SESSION UPDATE FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE ROBYN A. PORTER

SUPPORTING CT WORKERS

- Championed legislation to prohibit workplace discrimination based on hairstyles historically associated with race, such as afros, bantu knots, braids, cornrows, locs, and twists. With the passage of the CROWN Act, Connecticut becomes the 8th state to ban discrimination on the basis of natural hair or texture. (PA 21-2)
- Ensured unemployment tax rates would not be affected by the surge in pandemic-related layoffs last year. This will provide immediate relief to businesses as we build back our economy. (PA 21-5)
- Passed workers' recall rights legislation to ensure laid-off workers are brought back in order of seniority before filling vacant positions with new hires. (PA 21-189)
- Required employers to provide a wage or salary range for job applicants throughout the hiring process, as well as for current employees upon request. This will help address the gender wage gap in Connecticut. (PA 21-30)
- Passed legislation to ensure that Connecticut remains at the forefront of fair labor throughout all industries; especially as we transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. (PA 21-43)
- Ensured domestic workers get upfront information on the terms of their employment including: job duties, compensation and living arrangements and any costs that may be passed on to them for providing around the clock care. (SB 1202)
- Expanded workers' comp benefits for PTSD to cover emergency responders, corrections workers, dispatchers and health care providers who were on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. (SB 660)

STATE FUNDING FOR HAMDEN

Hamden can expect to receive over \$64 million in education funding over the next two years – a \$3.7 million increase for the biennium. Additionally, the town is expected to receive over \$12 million in Tiered PILOT funds from this budget. This is a significant increase based on legislation we passed last year to fully fund the Tiered PILOT program. In total, the town can expect to receive \$40,839,958 in state aid for Fiscal Year 22 – a \$4.2 million increase – and \$42,084,721 for Fiscal Year 23 – a 5.5 million increase.

STATE FUNDING FOR NEW HAVEN

New Haven can expect to receive over \$329 million in education funding over the next two years – a \$7.3 million increase for the biennium. Additionally, the city is expected to receive over \$182 million in Tiered PILOT funds from this budget. This is a significant increase based on legislation we passed last year to fully fund the Tiered PILOT program. In total, the city can expect to receive \$279,452,701 in state aid for Fiscal Year 22 – a \$52 million increase – and \$281,838,159 for Fiscal Year 23 – a \$54 million increase.

HOUSING EQUITY AND FAIRNESS

- Championed new zoning reforms to address rising housing costs, equity and opportunity in our communities. (PA 21-29)
- Passed legislation that guarantees the right to counsel to provide legal representation for tenants facing eviction. (PA 21-34)
- New pilot program that provides resources to move closer to your child's charter or magnet school. (HB 6436)
- Strengthened numerous programs designed to keep people from losing their homes during tough times: Foreclosure Mediation, Lien Assistance and Emergency Mortgage Assistance. (SB 891)

ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

- Regulated the harmful chemical "PFAS" (PA 21-191)
- Raised bottle deposits to 10 cents, applied deposits to more products and provided more money to towns and redemption centers to ensure these products don't end up as litter or in a landfill (PA 21-58)
- Created higher renewable energy standards for heat and electric utilities (PA 21-118)
- Required more biodiesel in home heating oil and greater transparency for consumers (PA 21-181)

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE

- Ended the practice of charging prisoners to make phone calls to their loved ones. (PA 21-54)
- Declared racism a public health crisis and created a Commission on Racial Equity tasked with eliminating health disparities. (PA 21-35)
- Put community violence prevention programs on a path to sustainable funding and growth in our state to serve more victims of gun violence and their families. (PA 21-36)
- Voters will get to decide on the 2022 ballot if Connecticut will allow early, in-person voting and in 2024, voters will decide if every registered voter will have the option to vote by absentee ballot. (RA 21-1 and RA 21-2)
- Ended prison gerrymandering – the practice of counting prisoners as registered voters within the district of their prison, rather than the district they lived in prior to incarceration, when determining the districts our elected officials represent. (PA 21-13)
- Restored voting rights for individuals in community facilities or on parole. (SB 1202)
- Passed groundbreaking Clean Slate legislation that will help thousands of justice-impacted citizens by clearing their records and paving the way for re-entry with access to good paying jobs, education, and quality housing. (PA 21-32 & PA 21-33)
- Crafted a comprehensive program to legalize adult-use cannabis and established an equity fund to create economic opportunities and erased past criminal convictions related to cannabis possession. (PA 21-1)
- Continuing conversations with stakeholders in our efforts to fight against the inhumane practice of solitary confinement.

