

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As another legislative session comes to a close, I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve our community.

One of the greatest privileges of this job is hearing directly from residents. Whether we meet at a town hall, community event, over coffee, through email, or in the grocery store, your stories and concerns help shape my work every day. The challenges facing Connecticut families are real. The rising cost of housing, groceries, childcare, healthcare, and energy continue to place enormous pressure on household budgets, and many families are worried about the future.

This session, I remained focused on the issues I hear about most often: affordability, education, fiscal responsibility, and protecting Connecticut's quality of life.

As Vice Chair of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, I worked to support responsible investments that strengthen our communities while maintaining Connecticut's strong fiscal foundation. We continued paying down long-term debt, protecting our Rainy Day Fund, and making investments in schools, transportation, public safety, and local communities. Responsible budgeting helps ensure Connecticut remains financially strong and prepared for the challenges ahead.

As a member of the Education Committee and former Vice Chair of the Guilford Board of Education, I was especially proud to help secure significant investments in public education. One accomplishment especially meaningful to me was establishing universal free school breakfast for every public school student in Connecticut. I have worked on this initiative for years because no child should start the school day hungry. We also expanded support for schools, invested in early childhood education, strengthened literacy, and continued efforts to recruit and retain excellent educators.

Throughout the session, I worked alongside colleagues, educators, advocates, and residents to advance policies that improve affordability for working families, protect consumers, support seniors, strengthen healthcare access, and help ensure Connecticut remains a place where young people can build a future and families can afford to stay.

While we accomplished a great deal this year, I know there is still more work to do. My commitment remains the same as it was on the day I first took office: to listen, lead thoughtfully, and make decisions based on what is best for our community and our state.

Thank you for your engagement, advocacy, and trust. Your voices continue to guide this work, and I am grateful for your continued collaboration.

With Gratitude,

Maira M. Rader

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CAPITOL UPDATE 2026

FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE MOIRA RADER

PROUDLY SERVING GUILFORD & BRANFORD

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CAPITOL UPDATE 2026



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2026 SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

While much was accomplished during our **2026 session**, I wanted to share some key legislation that will directly and positively impact the lives and opportunities of so many here in Connecticut.



EDUCATION & CHILDCARE

- Invested nearly \$200 million in additional support for Connecticut schools.
- Established universal free school breakfast statewide.
- Deposited \$300 million into the Early Childhood Endowment to expand childcare access and affordability.
- Increased funding for special education and education equalization grants.
- Expanded scholarships, mentorship programs, and workforce pathways to recruit and retain educators.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Invested in law enforcement training, equipment, and first responder support.
- Strengthened protections against gun violence by banning firearm conversion devices.
- Increased efforts to combat human trafficking and protect vulnerable children.
- Strengthened regulations around vaping, youth gambling advertising, and online safety.
- Required DCF to check for cases of abuse and neglect prior to a child being withdrawn from school.

TRANSPORTATION

- Increased funding for Shore Line East service and micro-transit (XtraMile).
- Prevented public transit fare increases and expanded transportation assistance.
- Improved rideshare safety requirements and school bus enforcement.
- Expanded free or reduced-cost transit for students and veterans.
- Created employer incentives to help workers cover commuting costs.
- Strengthened worker protections, workplace safety, and wage enforcement.

CONSUMER PROTECTIONS

- Cracked down on junk fees, deceptive pricing, and ticket scalping.
- Required greater transparency in vehicle pricing and strengthened used-car warranty protections.
- Expanded privacy protections by limiting the sale of personal and geolocation data.
- Regulated companies that collect and sell consumer data.
- Protected homeowners by requiring mortgage overpayments to be applied directly to principal.

ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

- Expanded access to solar energy and battery storage while focusing on affordability.
- Lowered costs for low-income households and residents in distressed communities participating in clean energy programs.
- Improved emergency response and safety standards for energy infrastructure.
- Protected Connecticut's natural resources, waterways, fisheries, and wildlife.
- Helped farmers preserve working lands and invest in future growth.

HEALTHCARE

- Worked to lower prescription drug costs and strengthen oversight of healthcare pricing.
- Expanded insurance coverage for infertility treatment, athletic prosthetics, pharmacists' services, and other critical care.
- Improved access to vaccines and preventive health services.
- Strengthened protections for patients and increased transparency in hospital ownership.
- Created new resources to improve diagnosis and treatment of menopause and women's health conditions.

VETERANS & FIRST RESPONDERS

- Expanded property tax relief and benefits for veterans and their families.
- Created mortgage assistance and tuition assistance programs for first responders.
- Expanded access to dental care for veterans.
- Increased support for recruitment, training, and retention of police officers and firefighters.
- Strengthened partnerships between public safety professionals and mental health providers.

DEMOCRACY & ELECTIONS

- Continued implementation of early voting and no-excuse absentee voting while strengthening election security.
- Modernized election administration and ballot tracking systems.
- Increased training and support for election workers.
- Protected polling places from intimidation and interference.
- Created a statewide ban on federal agents wearing masks.

HOUSING

- Created grants to help communities address rising construction and housing costs.
- Strengthened protections for renters, homebuyers, and condominium owners.
- Increased transparency in mortgage lending and property transactions.
- Protected tenants through stronger enforcement of security deposit requirements.
- Improved utility and disclosure requirements for residential properties.

SENIORS

- Increased oversight and accountability for nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- Required advance notice before major fee increases at assisted living facilities.
- Strengthened training requirements for caregivers and homemaker companions.
- Expanded protections against abuse, neglect, and retaliation.
- Improved transparency regarding ownership and financial practices at long-term care facilities.



MAKING CONNECTICUT MORE AFFORDABLE

Families across Connecticut continue to face rising costs for housing, groceries, healthcare, childcare, utilities, and other everyday necessities. Economic uncertainty, inflationary pressures, and decisions made in Washington continue to impact household budgets. While many of these challenges originate beyond Connecticut's borders, we remain focused on practical solutions that help families manage costs, strengthen our communities, and protect our state's long-term financial health.

Connecticut's approach has been guided by a simple principle: make strategic investments in people and communities while maintaining fiscal responsibility. This year, we continued paying down long-term debt, maintained one of the strongest Rainy Day Funds in state history, and made targeted investments designed to reduce costs for residents today while strengthening our economy for the future.

Here's what we did to help make life more affordable:

- **Delivered more than \$300 million in relief for cities, towns, and schools, including \$100 million to help reduce pressure on local property taxes.**
- **Established universal free school breakfast for every public school student in Connecticut.**
- **Invested \$300 million in Connecticut's Early Childhood Endowment and expanded support for affordable childcare.**
- **Created a Family Caregiver Tax Credit for residents caring for aging parents and loved ones.**
- **Expanded Sales Tax-Free Week and made school supplies tax-free year-round.**
- **Capped the taxable value of older vehicles to protect residents from rising tax assessments.**
- **Strengthened efforts to lower prescription drug costs and improve access to affordable healthcare.**
- **Required mortgage lenders to apply extra payments directly toward principal, helping homeowners save money over the life of their loan.**
- **Cracked down on junk fees, deceptive pricing practices, and surveillance pricing.**
- **Expanded public transportation investments and commuter benefits.**
- **Increased direct funding for public schools while helping communities manage rising education costs.**
- **Invested in workforce development, paid internships, and career training programs to help residents access good-paying jobs.**

Affordability means more than helping families manage today's expenses. It means creating a Connecticut where young people can afford to stay, families can build a future, and seniors can remain in the communities they love.