

STATE REPRESENTATIVE | DEPUTY SPEAKER
GERALDO REYES JR.
PROUDLY SERVING WATERBURY

Dear Neighbor,

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

I know the past year has been difficult for each individual and family in our community, and I believe the legislation passed in Hartford will empower 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 Waterbury will see an increase in funding in both Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 through this budget. I am confident that these state investments will see our community recover and thrive as we move out of this pandemic.

Please continue reading for more information on legislative highlights and resources developed this session that will benefit your family, our district and our state.

Best,



Geraldo Reyes Jr.



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE / CHAIR OF BPRC
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SESSION HIGHLIGHTS:

- Improved fair balance of hospitalization and medical services to those in need
- Bi-partisan budget increased funding for education
- Increased funding for Greater Valley, Waterbury Rail Line extension
- Aid for municipalities including fair housing, land use regulation and Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Program
- The Bonding Act increased funding for school construction, housing and rehabilitation programs
- School Lunch Debt which prohibits public shaming of any unpaid meal charges
- 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
- Foreclosure Mediation, Emergency Lien Assistance Programs and the Right to Counsel in eviction proceedings
- The legislature passed several measures aimed at addressing the impact COVID-19 has had on children’s mental health

ASPECTOS DESTACADOS DE LA SESIÓN:

- Mejora del equilibrio justo de los servicios médicos y de hospitalización para los necesitados
- El presupuesto bipartidista aumentó los fondos para la educación.
- Mayor financiamiento para la extensión de la línea ferroviaria de Waterbury en Greater Valley
- Ayuda en los municipios, incluida la vivienda justa, el programa de regulación del uso de la tierra y pago en lugar de impuestos (PILOT)
- La Ley de Fianzas aumentó los fondos para la construcción de escuelas, programas de vivienda y rehabilitación
- Desarrollo económico y comunitario implementando el Programa Small Business Express junto con los Fondos de Inversión Comunitaria
- Los votantes podrán decidir en la boleta de el año 2022 si Connecticut permitirá la votación anticipada y en persona; y en el año 2024, los votantes decidirán si cada votante registrado tendrá la opción de votar en ausencia (RA 21-1 y RA 21-2)
- Enmienda de la Constitución para permitir la votación anticipada y el voto en ausencia sin excusa
- Mediación de ejecución hipotecaria, programas de asistencia para gravámenes de emergencia y derecho a un consejo en procedimientos de desalojo
- La Legislatura aprobó varias medidas destinadas a abordar el impacto que ha tenido el COVID-19 en la salud mental de los niños

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Investment Fund 2030

The bond act authorizes up to \$875 million in bonds for a five-year bonding program to fund qualifying projects and grants in eligible municipalities that are designated as public investment communities or alliance districts. It establishes a 21-member board, the Community Investment Fund 2030 board, within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), to accept applications for funding under the program from municipalities, community development corporations, and nonprofits undertaking eligible projects. The act establishes a process by which the board reviews the applications and submits them to the governor for his review. Each eligible project for which the governor recommends a bond allocation must be considered at a Bond Commission meeting within two months after the board’s recommendation to the governor (PA 21-111, § 112, as amended by SB 1202, JSS, as amended, § 601, effective July 1, 2021).

Small Business Express Program

As part of the FY 22-23 budget implementer, the legislature passed various changes to DECD’s Small Business Express program (EXP), generally increasing flexibility in the department’s administration of the program and allowing for increased participation by private lenders. Among its changes, the act does the following:

1. Expands the types of assistance that may be provided from the revolving loan fund and eliminates related requirements on the uses, amounts, rates and terms and prioritization of these loans;
2. Allows the DECD commissioner, in consultation with Connecticut Innovations (CI), to establish a new EXP component;
3. Eliminates the job creation incentive and matching grant components;
4. Removes the requirement that there be no more than two minority business revolving loan funds, instead requiring a minimum of one, and increases the maximum size of loans these funds can provide;
5. Makes changes to the administration and funding allocation of the EXP component operated in collaboration with Connecticut-based banks; and
6. Establishes a goal for the department that by July 1, 2026, EXP (a) will be self-funded and (b) have a default rate of 20% or less for small businesses receiving assistance, most provisions effective July 1, 2021).

