

REGULATING 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 variable rate to electricity customers, only to rapidly increase those rates upon the completion of the initial contract. Starting in October, retail electric suppliers can no longer enter into variable rate contracts with customers or automatically renew those contracts. Electric providers must also conform with existing laws that require proper notification to go out to their customers who have contracts expiring.

The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) will begin to develop recommendations in regards to how electric customers should be treated upon the completion of their contracts, when they have not signed up for a new one. This will include information on what type of month-to-month rate suppliers can fairly charge a customer. This legislation will help ratepayers see a reduction in their bills while keeping them better informed.

(PA 15-90) Effective Date: October 1, 2015

PREVENTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OPIOID OVERDOSE

According to 2013 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than half the drug overdose deaths in the United States were related to pharmaceutical drugs. To help combat this public health problem, as Co-Chair of the Public Health Committee, I helped to pass legislation requiring prescribers (physicians, physician assistants, APRNs and dentists) to be trained in how to properly prescribe controlled substances. If prescribing more than a 72-hour supply of any controlled substance, the practitioner must check the patient's record in the prescription drug-monitoring program, and report those prescriptions to the program immediately. Pharmacists will also be allowed to prescribe opioid antagonists, used to treat drug overdoses, if they receive special training and certification to do so.

(PA 15-198) Effective Date: October 1, 2015



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
MATT RITTER

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CAPITOL UPDATE 2015

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

It has been and continues to be an honor to represent you in the General Assembly. As Co-Chair of the General Assembly's Public Health Committee, I was heavily involved this past session in issues affecting our city and state related to health care access and outcomes.

The highlight of this session was the major changes we made to our state's property tax system. After decades of trying to do something about high municipal property and car taxes, the legislature finally made historic progress toward alleviating this burden. Beginning in July 2016, car owners in Hartford will see their tax bills decline by 50% on average. In addition, the city will receive an additional \$16 million in PILOT funding beginning in fiscal year 2016-2017 and annually thereafter. This funding will help restore necessary city services and lower your property tax bills.

We took steps to begin transforming our state's transportation system. We have crumbling roads and bridges and traffic jams that are preventable but we must invest resources into highway redesign, fast and reliable train service and additional bus routes.

I am also happy to share that the Department of Transportation has implemented my request, on behalf of Shiloh Baptist Church, for additional green traffic light time on Sundays between noon and 1pm for the Green Street approach to Albany Avenue where traffic backs up.

I hope you find this information to be of use and please do not ever hesitate to contact me regarding any issue or if I can ever be of assistance. My home number is 860-519-5685 and my email address is matthew.ritter@cga.ct.gov.

Matt Ritter



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ESTABLISHING A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR RESIDENTS OF CONTINUING-CARE RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

This year we created a bill of rights for senior citizens living in continuing care retirement communities. This bill of rights gives residents a voice in decisions that affect them within these communities. It requires transparency regarding the financial stability of the facility, and notification to residents of major construction or any changes in ownership. It also gives residents more independence in making decisions about their medical care and assisted living services and requires reasonable accommodations for disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Rep. Matt Ritter was honored to give citations to seniors who volunteer in the West End and Asylum Hill communities.

(PA 15-115)

Effective Date: October 1, 2015

HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES

This year we allocated more funds for the highly successful Small Business Express Program. We are also requiring the Department of Economic and Community Development to dedicate funds to develop a program for construction projects for minority business enterprises. These measures will create jobs and improve economic opportunities for Connecticut families.

(SS PA 15-5) Effective Date: July 1, 2015

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MENTAL OR NERVOUS CONDITIONS

Several recent reports have identified a gap between publicly funded mental health services and those covered by the private insurance market. This year we required certain services be covered by private health insurance plans, including mental health and substance use screenings, crisis stabilization services, inpatient and outpatient hospital and residential care, home-based services, and programs to improve outcomes for children and families.



Rep. Matt Ritter speaking at a Public Health Committee meeting.

(PA 15-226) Effective Date: January 1, 2016



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A SECOND CHANCE SOCIETY

For years, Connecticut's drug policies have swelled our prisons with nonviolent drug offenders who struggle to reintegrate into society upon release. "A Second Chance Society" will reverse these policies largely by reducing jail time for such offenders. Penalties for possession of small amounts of illegal drugs will be reduced from a felony to a Class A misdemeanor and a drug-dependent offender may complete a substance abuse treatment program on a second offense. During probation, the offender must perform community service. We also ensured victims are notified of a parole hearing and have access to the inmate's complete file prior to the hearing. The expedited pardon review process for nonviolent crimes will also be streamlined; now offenders must receive a "pardon eligibility notice." These provisions will give ex-offenders a better chance to get back into the workforce – and also save millions in taxpayer dollars.

(SS PA 15-2) Effective Date: October 1, 2015

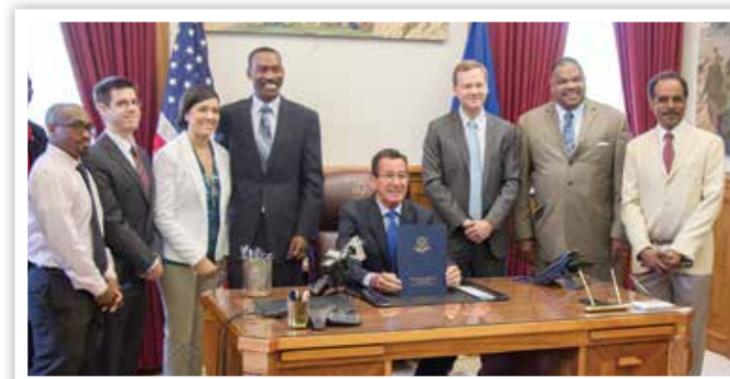
BEEFING UP STUDENTS' FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION

To make sure high school and college students are prepared to manage their personal finances and understand the importance of maintaining a good credit score, new legislation broadens the curriculum topics that must be developed by the Department of Education, Board of Regents, and the UConn Board of Trustees. The curriculum must include the topics of banking, investing, savings, and the handling of personal finances.

(PA 15-138) Effective Date: October 1, 2015



Rep. Matt Ritter met with constituents from CRT's Thomas D. Ritter Early Care and Education Center which is named after Matt's father.



Rep. Matt Ritter joins Governor Malloy, Doug and Tiffany Glanville and other community leaders at the bill signing.

IMPROVING COMMUNITY POLICING

I sponsored legislation which will improve community policing and hopefully reduce unnecessary interactions between police officers and residents. A lot of publicity occurred over an incident this past winter in which a police officer from a neighboring town crossed into Hartford and questioned a resident for shoveling his own driveway. The bill passed by the legislature prohibits a municipal police officer from crossing town lines simply to enforce a local ordinance. When police officers from another town come into Hartford, they do not know the residents or neighborhoods and it only increases the likelihood of a bad interaction. I was proud to stand with dozens of Hartford residents who testified in favor of this legislation.

(PA 15-83) Effective Date: October 1, 2015