



*Hartford Crossing Guard, Donna Thompson-Daniel and Rep. Matt Ritter joined Governor Dannel P. Malloy for the bill signing for Failing to Stop for Crossing Guards*

### ENSURING SAFETY FOR KIDS GOING TO SCHOOL

I am pleased to have introduced PA 13-22, AN ACT CONCERNING INCREASED PENALTIES FOR FAILING TO STOP FOR SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS, a new law which strengthens the penalties for drivers who fail to immediately stop when directed to do so by a school crossing guard. Hartford resident and crossing guard Donna Thompson-Daniel suggested this legislation was needed from her experience as a Hartford crossing guard. The new fine mandated by this bill is \$450. The \$450 fine makes this penalty the same as when a driver runs a stop sign extended from a bus when it is stopped. **(PA 13-22)**

### THE CARE 4 KIDS PROGRAM

The Care 4 Kids program helps low- to moderate-income families in Connecticut pay for child care costs. This session we expanded the Care 4 Kids program to include those parents who are on maternity leave. This law requires the state to grant up to six weeks of continued eligibility for Care 4 Kids funding to mothers on maternity leave who take unpaid leave from their jobs, securing their current child's spot in the program. **(PA 13-50)**

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

We passed a law to help ensure that students who are English language learners will receive the appropriate support they need to succeed. Some local Boards of Education have misidentified students who are English Language Learners (ELL) as needing special education, when what is needed is improved reading instruction. If a Board of Education is found to be mislabeling ELL students as special education students, it must report annually to the State Department of Education on how it is reducing the misidentifications - such as improving teacher training in reading instruction. **(PA 13-193)**

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**Matt Ritter**

PROUDLY SERVING HARTFORD



*Dear Neighbor,*

*Connecticut faced many challenges in 2013. I'm proud to have participated in a legislative session that successfully met those challenges and moved the state in a positive direction.*

*As always it is very important to me to listen to your ideas and thoughts. Please do not ever hesitate to contact me at the Capitol (860-240-8500) or at home (860-519-5685).*

*Some of the highlights of this past session include:*

- *We gave seniors a choice in their long-term care through the Aging in Place program.*
- *We increased funding for affordable housing.*
- *The General Assembly passed laws to improve safety at public school swimming pools.*
- *We established the first mattress stewardship program in the nation.*
- *We increased the minimum wage to give working families a raise.*

*I look forward to answering your questions about any issues facing our state.*

*Sincerely,*

*Matt Ritter*  
 Matt Ritter  
 State Representative



**CAPITOL UPDATE 2013**



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE MATT RITTER

HARTFORD | 1ST DISTRICT

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## CAPITOL UPDATE 2013

### SYNCHRONIZING PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

Insurance companies are now required to cover prescriptions filled in a synchronized manner - meaning that all of a patient's refills are coordinated to occur on the same day every month. By simplifying the prescription refill process, this legislation helps small pharmacies that traditionally offer home delivery of prescriptions, allowing them to cut down overhead costs by only delivering to a specific home once a month. **(PA 13-131)**



*Hartford Police Chief Rovella, Deputy Chief Hightower and Representative Matt Ritter joined Hartford community leaders on a tour of Albany Avenue*

### HOMEMAKER COMPANION AGENCIES AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Protecting our most vulnerable citizens is always a main concern of the legislature, especially those that require assistance in their homes. To help defend against unscrupulous personal aides, we passed a measure requiring homemaker companion agencies to notify clients in writing that comprehensive background checks were performed on their employees before sending anyone to a client's residence for the first time. **(PA 13-88)**

### M.O.R.E. COMMISSION

This session I was appointed to the M.O.R.E. (Municipal Opportunities, Regional Efficiencies) Commission, where we crafted policies to make government more efficient and cost-effective. This was a truly bipartisan effort and I believe it will improve services and save taxpayer dollars, while bringing our town and surrounding towns closer together.

### HOMEOWNER PROTECTION RIGHTS

The ability to own a home is part of the American dream, but financial hardship can threaten that dream for families, sending them to the brink of foreclosure. We worked hard this past session to protect homeowners and facilitate a fair and speedy foreclosure mediation process by passing An Act Concerning Homeowner Protection Rights. A more streamlined process helps both the banks and the homeowners come to a quicker solution to keep homeowners in their homes, while fulfilling their obligation to the bank or lender. The provisions include:

- At least three mediation sessions before referring a case to a judge
- A requirement that banks mediate in good faith, which helps remove blighted properties from neighborhoods by shortening the foreclosure timelines for abandoned property
- Requirements that the bank treat a homeowner's most recently submitted financial package as current which will end the burden of constant requests for new documents

Finally, the law provides the Department of Banking with the authority to create regulations that require banks to disclose various foreclosure related information. **(PA 13-136)**

For more information please call the Department of Bank Foreclosure Assistance Hotline: 1-877-472-8313.

### PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

Electricity costs for Connecticut businesses are among the highest in the nation. Encouraging clean energy projects and the use of renewable energy resources through tax municipal tax exemptions is one way to help reduce those costs. Providing tax abatements for clean energy projects helps businesses remain competitive. Municipalities also can use the tax exemptions to recruit and retain businesses, furthering economic development. This new legislation achieves the goals of helping business and economic development by allowing businesses to exempt from property tax any Class I renewable energy source installed for the generation of electricity for commercial or industrial use. **(PA 13-61)**



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### NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN HARTFORD

Earlier this year the State Bond Commission approved \$13 million to be used for four new housing development projects proposed by the Capitol Regional Development Authority. The four projects will be at 5 Constitution Plaza, 179 Allyn Street, 201 Ann Street and 287-91 Asylum Street, adding approximately 300 new apartments to downtown Hartford.

### UConn's DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

UConn announced earlier this year that it would be moving its West Hartford campus to downtown Hartford. The addition of students attending classes and living downtown will bring an influx of money to Hartford's businesses, as well as strengthen the partnership between UConn and the City of Hartford.

### BROWNFIELDS

A brownfield is a property on which expansion or redevelopment is complicated by contamination from past use. A new law the General Assembly passed consolidates all of the brownfield funds into a single non-lapsing account and allows loans to be used for anti-blight purposes. It also simplifies the process for the DECD commissioner to select project funding sources and allows municipalities to use up to 5% of their grant for administration and to keep a larger share of the proceeds from the sale of remediated brownfields. **(PA 13-308)**

### SMALL BUSINESS EXPRESS PROGRAM

The Small Business Express Program is helping businesses grow and expand, and it's helping Connecticut's economy get back on its feet. It provides customized financial incentive packages tailored to fit individual businesses. The legislature increased support for the Small Business Express Program by authorizing an additional \$60 million in bonds for it, increasing its total bond authorization to \$160 million. **(PA 13-2)**

