

## Consumer Protection

### Strengthening Laws Regulating Night Clubs

After several unfortunate incidents at night clubs in downtown Hartford, I introduced legislation to prohibit certain bars from serving alcohol to customers without a wristband indicating they are of legal drinking age. This new law also mandates that certain operators provide local police with more notice of events and allows the local police chief to designate more than one officer to attend the event, at the owner's expense. (PA 14-181 )

### New Protections for Consumers Regarding Medications

- A doctor must now label a prescription "brand medically necessary" or "no substitution" when the doctor feels the brand name drug is required. This can be done in writing, electronically, or by phone.
- The Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) will now be required to investigate when it is suspected that counterfeit drugs or devices are being sold. If violations are found, DCP can fine the pharmacy or revoke a pharmacy's license. (PA 14-224)



*Matt reviewing legislation with colleague Rep. Jason Rojas.*

### Increasing the Fines on Robocalls

This year we increased the fine to \$1,000 when a company's robocall fails to disconnect when you hang up. Complaints can be submitted to the Public Utilities Regulation Authority through their website: [www.ct.gov/pura](http://www.ct.gov/pura) or by phone: 1-800-382-4586. (PA 14-14)

### Strengthening the Do Not Call Registry

We increased the penalty for violating the Do Not Call List to \$20,000 from \$11,000. In addition, we added text messages to the Do Not Call Registry List. (PA 14-53)

### Electric Customer Consumer Protection

Many consumers, who counted on paying less for energy after signing up for low introductory rates from suppliers, soon discovered that their rates jumped and they were paying more. Energy suppliers will now be prohibited from offering consumers short-term energy contracts with low rates, then switching to much higher variable rate contracts within weeks. Termination fees will be capped at \$50 under the new law, and a consumer can switch back to the standard rate charged by CL&P within 72 hours. (PA 14-75)

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**MATT RITTER**  
PROUDLY SERVING HARTFORD | 1ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

CAPITOL UPDATE 2014

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**MATT RITTER**

Dear Friend:

*The legislative cycle has come to a close. From continuing the focus on job creation and financial assistance for small businesses to promoting healthy, safe community environments, the 2014 General Assembly worked hard to craft legislation to improve the quality of life for the people of Connecticut.*

*Families across Hartford and the state will see the benefits of an increased minimum wage and our continued investments in job creation programs like STEP-UP, which encourages employers to hire veterans and the unemployed.*

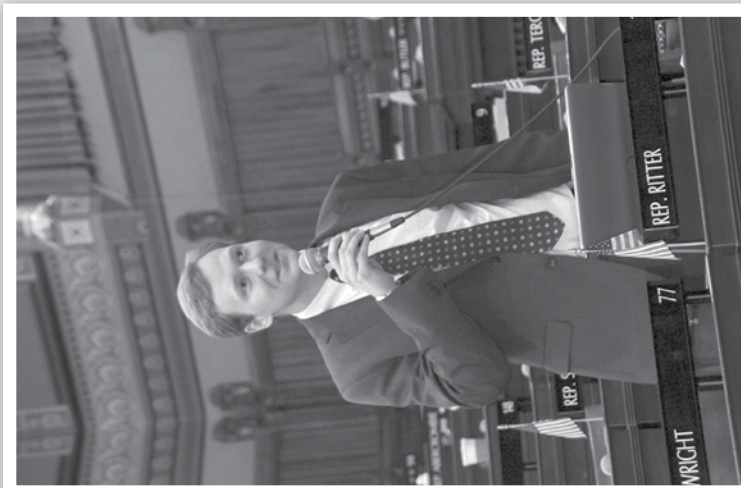
*During the session, I was proud to work with my legislative colleagues to secure funding for several initiatives and projects in Hartford, including funding for Elizabeth Park, a new Weaver High School and arts organizations such as Hartford Stage and HartBeat Ensemble. I helped the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center secure a \$20,000 Historic Preservation Grant. I also worked with the City and Department of Transportation to finalize plans for the renovation of Albany Avenue in Hartford, which has been studied for over 14 years.*

*A summary of other highlights from the session is included in this newsletter, which I hope you will find informative. If you would like more information about these topics or any other issues, please call me at (860) 240-8500 or email me your thoughts at [Matthew.Ritter@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Matthew.Ritter@cga.ct.gov).*

Warmest regards,

*Matt Ritter*

Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
Capitol: 860-240-8500  
At Home: 860-519-5685  
[www.housedems.ct.gov/RitterM](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/RitterM)



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# MATT RITTER

PROUDLY SERVING HARTFORD

Capitol: 860-240-8500 | Matthew.Ritter@cga.ct.gov

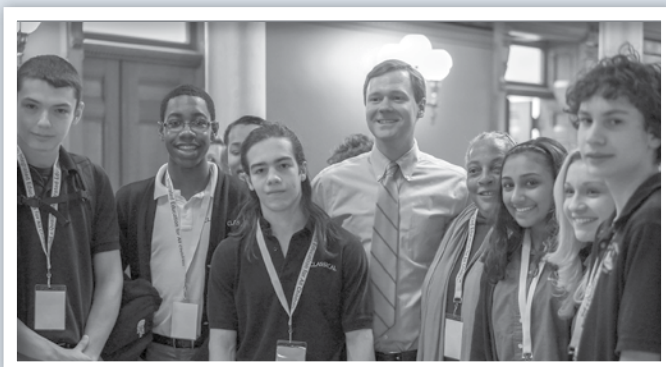
## Education

### Improving Access to Universal Pre-K

The newly established Office of Early Childhood will develop a plan to improve access to preschool programs and achieve universal pre-k in Connecticut. In the meantime, we have increased school readiness reimbursements and added 1,020 new preschool slots. Competitive School Districts now may receive more than the \$107,000 grant to accommodate additional preschool spaces. (PA 14-39)

### Protecting Our Children and Making Our Schools Safer

This year we authorized \$22 million for another round of school security grants, including \$653,314 for work at 15 Hartford schools. (PA 14-98)



Hartford students visit Matt at the Capitol.

### Encouraging Education for Adults: Go Back to Get Ahead

Students who dropped out of college before earning a bachelor's degree will be eligible to take three free courses at a Connecticut state college or community college. This initiative is part of the governor's "Transform CSCU" plan that includes facilities upgrades that will connect classrooms with 21st century technology, and give our students the tools and skills to be competitive in the increasingly competitive workforce. (PA 14-217)

### CHET Baby Scholars Program

The newly established CHET Baby Scholars fund makes it a little easier to save for college. The program will offer new parents up to a \$250 investment in a tax-free college savings account for their child. (PA 14-217)



Matt and Majority Leader Joe Aresimowicz discuss legislation on the floor of the House.

## Jobs

### Minimum Wage Increased

Raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2017 will help thousands of struggling working families in our state, and add hundreds of millions of dollars to our economy. (PA 14-1)

### Streamlining Occupational Licenses for Veterans

Connecticut veterans can now apply their military training toward occupational licenses, including public safety positions and a variety of trades. In addition, college credits can be awarded for specialty training and apprenticeship credits applied to specific trades. (PA 14-131)

### Encouraging the Creation of Businesses with a Social Purpose

To attract young college graduates, and to encourage giving and protect businesses from liability, we supported the creation of social enterprise businesses and benefit corporations. Social Enterprise businesses operate like traditional corporations but they must have the purpose of creating a material, positive impact on society and the environment stated in their articles of incorporation. They may also identify the specific public benefits that they seek to create. (PA 14-217)

## HARTFORD FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 AID

Education Cost Sharing	\$200,830,551
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$14,800,528
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$25,441,415
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$6,685,522
School Transportation	\$1,935,776
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$1,895,234
Town Aid Roads	\$1,205,202
Adult Education	\$1,852,824
MRSA Payments	\$1,334,719

**Total State Funds to Hartford \$255,981,771**

## Seniors

### Renter's Rebate Program

This measure will re-open the Renters Rebate program to eligible seniors and individuals with permanent disabilities to receive partial reimbursements related to rental payments. (PA 14-217)

### Helping Seniors Remain in Their Homes

Most seniors would prefer to live in their own homes for as long as possible. This year we created a \$6 million grant program for home modifications and other assistive technology that will allow people to remain in their homes longer. The program is open to seniors and individuals with disabilities who are at risk of being unable to live independently without the modifications.

We also required the Commission on Aging to recognize communities that are implementing livable community initiatives, which include affordable and accessible housing, community and social services, planning and zoning regulations, walkability, and transportation related infrastructure. The Department on Aging and the Department of Social Services will hold quarterly meetings with nutrition service providers in order to improve elderly nutrition services. (PA 14-73)



Governor Dannel Malloy joins Matt in welcoming visitors from Hartford during a tour of the State Capitol.

## Environment

### Developing a Water Plan for Connecticut

This year we took a major step towards a comprehensive statewide plan for the supply, distribution, quality, protection, and conservation of one of the state's most vital resources – our water.

The Water Planning Council (WPC) will prepare a water plan and submit it to the legislature by January 2018. The WPC must seek input from stakeholder groups, including the public, and recommend utilization of the state's water resources that balances public water supply, economic, recreation, and ecological needs. (PA 14-163)