

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

KARA ROCHELLE



Friends and Neighbors,

Our state had its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on March 8th. The following day, a state of Public Health and Civil Preparedness emergency was declared. The global COVID-19 pandemic cut the 2020 legislative session short, shifting our priorities from enacting legislation to improve the quality of life for Connecticut residents, to directly helping you navigate state resources, access healthcare and food, pay your utility bills, file for unemployment insurance, support your small businesses and lessen the financial burden of the COVID-19 emergency.

As the state works towards the goal of safely reopening, the General Assembly plans to convene for a special session this summer to address time-sensitive matters that impact your life, like expanding absentee balloting for elections so those who are vulnerable can vote safely.

I have included in this newsletter resources to help you and your family during these unprecedented times. I have also included a snapshot of some of the work we accomplished last year and the work that was cut short.

It is an honor and privilege to serve you and our community. As a member of the legislature's Commerce Committee, Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee, and Vice-Chair of the Housing Committee, I have worked to introduce and support legislation that prioritizes workforce and economic development in communities like ours. As a member of the Waterbury Rail Line, Fire/EMS, Manufacturing, and Women's Caucuses, all bipartisan, I have advocated fiercely and collaboratively for policy and resources for the people of our community.

There is more work to be done, and I hope the information in this mailer is helpful and insightful. If there's anything I can do to better support you and your family, local business, or community efforts, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. By working together, we will come out of this stronger and more resilient.

I remain committed to fighting for you and our community every step of the way.

All my best,

Kara Rochelle
Proudly Serving Ansonia & Derby



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
KARA ROCHELLE
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COVID-19 RESOURCES

For the most up to date COVID-19 information please visit: portal.ct.gov/coronavirus



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|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Elderly Services | Children & Families | Support Services |
| Meals on Wheels | Infant/toddler care & Preschool | Home Heating Assistance |
| Homemaking | Home Visitation | House Assistance |
| Adult incontinence | Diaper Bank | Income Tax Assistance |
| Medical Transportation | Toys 4 Kids | Basic Needs & other help |
- Please email Info2@teaminc.org or call 203-736-5420.

United Way Infoline General Assistance, call 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org

If you are out of work, you have the right to file for unemployment insurance.
 Go to www.FileCTUI.com to file your claim.

Small Business Support
DECD Small Business Hotline: 860-500-2333

The Department of Economic and Community Development Business reopening and recovery support: <https://business.ct.gov/Recovery>

Mental Health Support
 If you are feeling stress or anxious, sometimes it helps to talk. Here are some great resources with professionals who care:

The BHCare Community Warmline: Call the warmline at 203-732-2004. It is available Sunday-Thursday from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Connecticut's Talk It Out hotline for parents and caregivers: 1-833-258-5011. It is available Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence can provide support, counseling services and legal assistance. Call the 24-hour line at 203-736-9944 and 203-789-8104 or toll-free at 1-888-774-2900 or send a confidential email at UCDVS@bhcare.org.

- Other Important Resources**
- Office of the Healthcare Advocate: 866-466-4446**
 - Department of Social Services: 855-626-6632**
 - Department of Rehabilitation Services: 800-537-2549**
 - Agency on Aging of South Central CT: 203-785-8533**
 - Care for Kids: 1-888-214-5437**
 - Workforce Development: ctdol.state.ct.us/gendocs/training.html**



FIGHTING FOR FAMILIES, BUSINESSES, AND HEALTHCARE

Looking Back to 2019

We established a **Family & Medical Leave Insurance program** funded through employee contributions so that **no one has to choose between a paycheck and caring for a sick family member.**

Over **330,000 Connecticut workers** and around **5,600 Ansonia and Derby residents** will see **pay increases and a better quality of life** as a result of the minimum wage increase continuing gradually over 4½ years to \$15 an hour.

Nearly **300 families** in Ansonia and Derby have benefited from **increases to Care4Kids** early childhood education funding.

The legislature expanded tax breaks on social security and pensions, and fully funded the Medicare Savings Program.

I wrote, sponsored, and passionately advocated for, Public Act 19 - 103, An Act Establishing a Pilot Program for the Expansion of Advanced Manufacturing Certificate Programs, to provide opportunities for high school students and adults to access the training needed to compete for good-paying manufacturing jobs.



I voted to extend certain tax credits and priority status to businesses developing in federally-designated "Opportunity Zones" like here in Ansonia which will help attract business investment.

We live in a region with a high number of **brownfields, like Ansonia Brass.** I listened to local investors' concerns that the Transfer Act was holding back brownfield development. We revised the Act to make it **easier for brownfield properties to be remediated and developed, which will stimulate economic growth, support real estate transactions, and unlock new opportunities for development in the 104th.**

I fiercely advocated for expanded health insurance coverage for pre-existing conditions to include whether or not medical advice, diagnosis, care, or treatment was recommended or received before the coverage effective date for certain short-term health insurance plans.

The well-being of our first responders is critically important. I fought to reform workers' compensation statutes to allow for police officers, parole officers, and firefighters to receive certain workers' compensation **benefits for PTSD** caused by traumatic experiences on the job. It also required a study for the expansion of these benefits to EMS personnel, **and I advocated to pass an EMS PTSD bill in 2020.**

All healthcare needs should be treated equally and seriously, whether it's an illness of the brain or body. I advocated for a bill requiring equal treatment for mental health and substance use disorder and the prescription drugs to get people healthy.

MOVING FORWARD

Although bonding authorization was the only bill we passed this session due to the COVID shutdown, I want to highlight for you **some of the bills** I was working on to support the people and businesses in our community.



Reducing Healthcare Costs

You should not have to choose between buying needed prescription drugs and covering your bills. This session, I supported legislation that would help you to better afford healthcare and prescription drugs:

- An Act Concerning Diabetes and High Deductible Health Plans - this bill would **cap the monthly cost of insulin and diabetes supplies.**
- An Act Concerning Health Care Cost Growth in Connecticut, this bill requires **more affordable prescription drugs** to be imported from Canada **saving you and the state serious money.**
- An Act Concerning Dental Insurance Coverage for Children, Stepchildren, and Other Dependent Children, this bill allows **dependents to stay on their parents' or guardians' dental insurance plans until the age of 26.**

State Education Funding

Town	2019	2020	2021 Budgeted
Ansonia	\$16,722,772	\$17,328,186	\$17,933,601
Derby	\$8,084,161	\$8,498,976	\$8,913,791

Economic Development & Jobs

I am a vocal advocate for expanding service on the Waterbury Rail Line.

Investing in our local train service is critical for the next stage of our area's revitalization and will lead to **more development, a larger grand list, more jobs and potentially lower local taxes if we work together** to make it happen. This year, I introduced a bill to fund the purchase of trains for the Waterbury Rail Line. I advocated strongly and bipartisanly with the other members of the Waterbury Rail Line Caucus and we hosted local mayors and business leaders for a Valley team effort fighting for our much needed trains.



Additionally, I was crafting a bill through the Commerce Committee to **save manufacturers money on their energy costs and incentivize them to move to or increase jobs in economically distressed municipalities, like Ansonia and Derby.** I am grateful for the opportunity to support local business and job growth for our people in Ansonia and Derby.