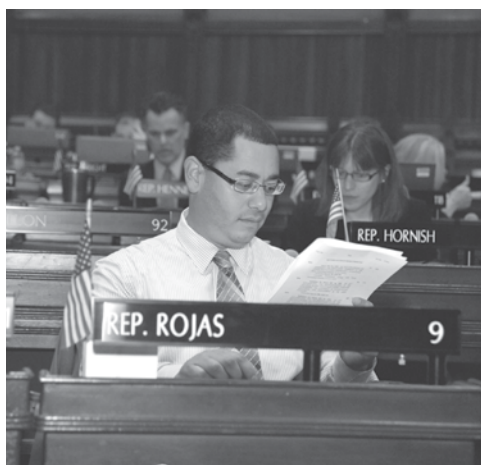




Jason with Pamela Greenberg for Multiple Sclerosis Advocacy Day.



Rep. Rojas reading a bill in the House Chamber.

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## EDUCATION REFORM

### A Big Step Forward

The difference in the achievement levels among Connecticut schools is one of the highest in the nation. We took steps (SB-438\*\*) to help turn around low-achieving schools, increase our chances for federal education dollars, improve our vocational high schools and help students with autism.

#### The legislation:

- » Strengthens the state's eligibility for federal "Race to the Top" education funds
- » Ties teacher evaluations to multiple indicators for student growth
- » Creates a statewide accountability plan
- » Develops new programs to help turn around low-achieving schools
- » Increases parent involvement, including two, not one, parent-teacher conferences a year
- » Adds members with manufacturing and vocational education experience to the state Board of Education
- » Requires school boards to create parent-based school governance councils in schools with high levels of low achievers
- » Changes the in-school suspension statute

\*\*legislation I sponsored



State Representative  
**JASON ROJAS**

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State Representative

# Jason Rojas

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State Representative  
**Jason Rojas**

Proudly Serving East Hartford, Glastonbury & Manchester

## Capitol News 2010



Dear Neighbors,

Another legislative session is behind us. While it was a challenging session, we made great strides in a number of policy areas important to the 9th Assembly District. We began the session with a \$500 million deficit for the current fiscal year and a \$700 million deficit for the next. We worked with the Governor to develop a budget compromise that recognized the fiscal realities of our national and state economies while also taking into account the responsibilities of state and local governments in maintaining critical services. It was not a perfect solution and I did not agree with all of the provisions. What I heard from many of you in my constituent survey was to make the difficult decisions and get our work done on time. I did that.

While the media focused primarily on the budget, I am proud that we passed critical legislation in a number of areas that has a real impact on our families and the quality of life in our communities. I am proud to have worked on legislation which improves our state's response to domestic violence, makes the necessary reforms in education and improves academic achievement for all of our students. We have begun to move our state away from an over-reliance on property taxes through regional collaboration and increased efficiency in the delivery of quality services your tax dollars deserve.

As we continue our work, I ask you to share your thoughts and opinions on issues as it makes me a more effective and better informed legislator. Many of you have already contacted me and I appreciate your efforts. Together we can shape the direction of our state, our district and our communities.

Sincerely,





State Representative

# Jason Rojas

Proudly Serving East Hartford, Glastonbury and Manchester

9<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



If you need additional assistance or have questions, please contact me:

**State Representative  
Jason Rojas**

Capitol Phone 860.240.8585

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## HEALTH CARE

### *Moving Forward on Health Reform*

This session, the legislature took steps to lower costs and enhance transparency and accountability in our health care system.

*The new legislation:*

- » Allows municipalities to pay less for prescription drugs through state discounts. The bargaining power, low administrative costs, and volume discounts negotiated by the state will save cities and towns money (HB-5295\*\*)
- » Requires insurance companies to disclose denial rates so consumers can compare the quality of different plans (HB-5235)
- » Improves coverage for chemotherapy patients (SB-50)
- » Extends state COBRA coverage from 18 to 30 months so laid off employees can keep their health insurance for a longer period as they look for new jobs (HB-5219)
- » Requires insurance companies to refer consumers to the state Office of the Health Care Advocate for assistance with denials of coverage (HB-5235)

**\*\*legislation I sponsored**

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Jason presents a citation to Kellsey Walls recognizing his achievement as an Eagle Scout, the highest honor from the Boy Scouts of America.

## CREATING JOBS & PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Working with the Governor, we passed a significant new jobs bill (HB-5435\*\*) that will help put Connecticut on the road to economic recovery with:

- » Up to \$500,000 in loans and lines of credit for small businesses and nonprofits
- » Student loan reimbursement for careers in new and emerging fields
- » Income tax credits for investments in new technology businesses
- » Sales tax exemptions for machinery, supplies and fuel in renewable energy industries
- » Tax credits for small businesses of up to \$200 per month per new employee
- » Up to \$150,000 in pre-seed financing and technical services to businesses developing innovative concepts
- » A Community-Technical College advisory board to assess the training needs of unemployed residents.
- » A Bradley Development Zone offering tax credits to business that move or expand in this enterprise zone.

## REGIONALISM: SAVING DOLLARS BY WORKING TOGETHER

### *Streamlining the Permitting Process*

Obtaining state permits faster saves businesses time and money. HB-5208\*\* improves our business climate while still protecting the environment.

### *Saving on Health Insurance*

Cities and towns can now save money on health insurance costs through HB-5295\*\*. Two or more towns or boards of education can join together to purchase health care benefits at lower costs. A larger group size can achieve lower premiums, better benefits for employees and more bargaining power for towns.

### *Sharing Service Agreements*

HB-5336\*\* encourages two or more municipalities to enter into agreements for shared services between boards of education creating better economies of scale.



Jason and State Rep. Tom Reynolds discuss a bill in the House Chamber.

## PROTECTING FAMILIES

### *Responding to Domestic Violence in our Communities*

The legislature made the most sweeping reforms to our domestic violence laws in the past 25 years. HB-5497\*\* will empower educators, service providers, law enforcement officers and survivors with new tools that make:

- » Improvements to educator training and the enforcement of protective orders
- » Employment and housing protections
- » GPS monitoring for high risk offenders
- » Additional domestic violence court dockets
- » Increased staffing at 24 hour emergency shelters

## BUDGET & SPENDING REFORM

### *Our Work Continues*

Although our budget process still needs improving, there were several proposed measures I co-sponsored that will move the process in the right direction. HB-5105\*\* sought to increase the amount of funds in the Rainy Day Fund by requiring all surplus revenues to be directed to that account. These funds will allow us to continue providing vital services for our community despite economic challenges. Additionally, HB-5106\*\* sought to reduce unfunded liabilities in the state employees retirement system and for state employee post-retirement health and life insurance benefits. I certainly recognize the need to properly fund these programs and will continue pushing responsible legislation that will address this issue.

I understand the need to make state government accessible and transparent for all citizens. SB-316\*\*, passed by both the House and Senate, will examine the adequacy of funding nonprofit providers of health and human services and ensures that adequate funding is distributed to the most needed organizations. Another bill I co-sponsored, HB-5169\*\*, would have required a cost-benefit analysis of all state tax expenditures determining the efficacy of sales tax exemptions that are currently provided for certain industries, services and products. Although this bill did not pass this year, I plan to introduce it again next year.

**\*\*legislation I sponsored**

