

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JASON ROJAS

PROUDLY SERVING EAST HARTFORD & MANCHESTER


Dear Neighbor,

The 2016 session of the General Assembly was as challenging as I have had in my four terms in office. It was dominated by the budget. Although there were no simple solutions, we approved a budget that is balanced but cuts approximately \$830 million. The cuts will impact many people and programs but they will help address the structural deficits that have developed because we have not properly adjusted our policies to effectively compete in a global and knowledge-based economy.

Despite the magnitude of the daunting issues we faced, we were still able to pass significant bi-partisan legislation that helped to protect and improve the quality of life for Connecticut families. We also made strategic changes to our laws regarding innovation and entrepreneurship. The strength of Connecticut’s economy is grounded in our system of primary and secondary education, a vast network of manufacturers and one of the most productive workforces in the world.

Keeping Connecticut a great place to live, work, and raise a family is our ongoing responsibility. Though the 2016 legislative session presented one of the toughest budget challenges in decades, we succeeded in moving our state forward.

Sincerely,



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2016

TACKLING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

In recent years, Connecticut, like other New England states, has seen a heartbreaking increase in fatal opioid overdoses. Earlier this year we passed groundbreaking legislation to combat this crisis. This lifesaving law will allow any licensed healthcare professional to administer drugs that reverse opioid overdoses, require municipalities to equip their first responders with the opioid reversal drug Narcan, and cap first-time opioid prescriptions at a seven-day supply.

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INVESTING IN A NEW ECONOMY

- **Innovation Places** – We established incentives to develop walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods focused on entrepreneurs, tech talent, support organizations and research institutions.
- **Entrepreneur Support Programs** – We repurposed \$5 million a year to support a range of needs for entrepreneurs like start-up funds, co-working spaces to reduce the cost of starting a new business and technical assistance and mentoring for aspiring business leaders.
- **Tech Talent Development Fund** – 10 year goal to at least double Connecticut’s stock of software developers and other tech talent we’re short on. Tactics will include: recruitment from out of state, upskilling or reskilling current workers in other fields, and bolstering education programs in this field.
- **University Innovation Ecosystems** – Repurposed \$10 million of seed funding to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems at all of Connecticut’s colleges and universities, public and private.
- **Connecticut 500 Project** – The main goals are to create a net increase of 500,000 private sector jobs over the next 25 years; increase the state’s population by 5,000 new residents; create 500 new startup businesses; increase by 500 the annual number of students graduating from state colleges and universities; maintain Connecticut’s top five ranking with respect to productivity, higher education and per capita income.

WORKING TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN AN INTERNET WORLD

We’re also protecting children’s online privacy at school by:

- Securing student data used by web-based companies and consultants that do business with our schools.
- Requiring notification of parents in the case of a data breach.
- Prohibiting companies from using student data for advertising, unless explicitly allowed in their contract.

IMPROVING CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

Taking care of our older citizens is a priority. We passed legislation to make sure patients are notified of their rights and available services when nursing homes or long-term care facilities close or reduce the number of beds. We also required nursing homes to allow residents being discharged to pick a caregiver to help them with their discharge plan. Other legislation allows for elderly or disabled tenants of state-assisted housing to pay security deposits in installments.

FAULTY CONCRETE FOUNDATIONS

Defective foundations are plaguing homeowners in north-central and eastern Connecticut. Replacement costs are far higher than most homeowners can afford. The state is currently conducting an investigation to determine who and what are responsible. While waiting for more definitive information we passed legislation:

- That will require towns to provide homeowners with documentation on the source of concrete used in their home’s foundation kept on file by the local building official for at least 50 years.
- A home with a foundation built with defective concrete may be reassessed at the owner’s request.
- After completing their investigation, the Attorney General and Consumer Protection commissioner must report their findings to the Planning and Development Committee.
- Homeowners claiming faulty or failing concrete foundations will have their records kept confidential for at least seven years.



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Representative Rojas calling in an amendment on the House Floor



Honoring Elena Tipton of East Hartford, CT's First Kid Governor



Representative Rojas managing the flow of legislative business on the House Floor