



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JASON ROJAS

Dear Neighbor,

The 2019 legislative session was as demanding and productive as I have seen during my time as your representative. We worked to pass bipartisan legislation that improves the lives of working families, encourages economic growth, and makes critical investments in the future of our children, as well as our state.

We passed a two-year budget that struck a balance between the spending and revenue side of the budget. We invested in critically needed workforce development programs to ensure we have a pipeline of employees meeting the needs of some of our major employers like Pratt and Whitney and Electric Boat as well as hundreds of smaller manufacturers who make up the supply chain. We funded vital programs like Meals on Wheels, and protected the Medicare Savings Program as it stands. We've expanded access to Medicaid by raising the income limit to 160% of the Federal Poverty Level.

We are exploring the feasibility of a debt-free community college program. Student loan debt has a detrimental impact on our overall economy and we need to identify ways to relieve families from accumulating significant amounts of debt. The state will pick up all fee costs for the first 72 credit hours after scholarships, grants, other aid awards are applied.

It was a productive session but we still have work to do. Please don't hesitate to reach out to my office if I can ever be of help to you or your family, or if you have questions about anything mentioned in this newsletter. Please keep in touch.

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JASON ROJAS
PROUDLY SERVING EAST HARTFORD & MANCHESTER



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2019

Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Capitol: 800-842-8267

www.housedems.ct.gov/Rojas

Jason.Rojas@cga.ct.gov



www.facebook.com/StateRepJason.Rojas



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PROUDLY SERVING EAST HARTFORD & MANCHESTER

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Connecticut actually has many high-paying jobs open, but the complaint we hear most often from businesses is that our state's workforce is not adequately prepared to take on 21st century jobs. So, this year, we've taken the following actions in order to help our residents succeed in today's industries:

- Increased funding for the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative
- Increased funding for the Jobs Funnel Program
- Allocated funding for a new Green Jobs Pipeline
- Passed a law which requires schools to teach computer science, and improves opportunities for teacher training in this subject.



It is always a pleasure to meet with you all at our Office Hours events in Manchester (left) and East Hartford (right).

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

As our federal government continues to provide uncertainty on health insurance protections, we passed a new law that will expand health insurance coverage for pre-existing conditions. Passed unanimously, this legislation protects Connecticut residents against any changes to federal law. Prior to the Affordable Care Act, if someone had a pre-existing or chronic condition, insurance companies could refuse to insure them – impacting fifty million people. As a result, hospital emergency rooms and Medicaid were forced to absorb these costs, resulting in higher prices for everyone. Going forward, Connecticut residents are guaranteed coverage for pre-existing conditions.

THE VALUE OF OUR BUDGET

The two-year budget we passed in June will have great benefits for Connecticut businesses and residents:

FOR BUSINESSES:

- We repealed the Business Entity tax starting next year. This will help small businesses and encourage start-ups.
- We expanded the Angel Investor tax credit to small businesses, minority and women-owned businesses, and more industries.
- We created a new tax credit for craft beer breweries to help grow this booming industry.
- We began to phase out the capital stock tax which is a burden to start-up companies that we are working to attract to CT.

FOR RESIDENTS:

- We increased funding for local education and maintained other local aid programs which help to mitigate increases in burdensome property taxes on our homes and businesses.
- The phase-in of the income tax exemption for Social Security and pension income continues as planned, helping our seniors retire comfortably here in Connecticut.
- We rejected many of the governor's proposed sales tax expansions on items such as groceries, non-prescription drugs, and legal, accounting, and veterinary services.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

PROCURING OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY

We have cleared the path for offshore wind energy generation in order to lead in green energy technology. Connecticut will procure up to 2,000 megawatts of offshore wind power. This will help achieve our energy consumption goal of 40% renewable energy by 2030. The law includes provisions to minimize impacts on the environment and fisheries, and the construction of the off-shore array will create a positive economic impact and good-paying jobs.

BAN ON STORAGE OF FRACKING WASTE

In 2014, we passed legislation banning the practice of hydraulic fracking, which is a process that is used to more efficiently extract natural gas from the ground. The process involves injecting a mixture of water and chemical additives into a well at extremely high pressure to more easily break through bedrock and gain access to gas fields. The process produces highly contaminated waste that affects drinking water. This year's legislation ensures that waste is not sent to CT for storage or reuse.



Goodwin College's Advanced Manufacturing Mobile Training Lab came to visit the Capitol!

SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES

We passed legislation that provides for the creation of a Paid Family and Medical Leave program that will allow workers to take a leave of absence from work to care for themselves or a loved one while providing a level of financial security. Funded by employee contributions, Paid Family and Medical Leave insurance will provide up to 12 weeks of leave per year. This will provide financial support to new parents caring for an infant, those caring for an aging parent, or those who find themselves in an unanticipated medical emergency. The program is similar to programs in eight other states including New York, Rhode Island, New Jersey and Massachusetts.