

Big News in College Affordability

Student loan debt is an issue that impacts many Connecticut families. Sixty-four percent of college graduates in our state have student loan debt. This year, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to create a Student Loan Bill of Rights, which establishes an Office of the Student Loan Ombudsman. This office will regulate student loan servicers, compile data on borrower complaints, develop a financial literacy education course for students, and will help student borrowers and their parents navigate the loan process.

In addition, the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) took historic steps toward increasing college affordability by announcing that it will offer its lowest fixed interest rate yet at 4.95%, down from its current rate of 6.75%. This rate is also significantly lower than the upcoming Federal PLUS loan rate of 6.84%.

Community Youth Organizations Receive Funding

I was thrilled to present Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders and the McGivney Center with an appropriation to further enhance the phenomenal work they do with our kids. I will continue supporting organizations that work to get kids off the streets and into a positive environment.

The McGivney Community Center provides youths with an educational “safe haven” from the dangers of the streets by providing young people with After-School Evening Programs, and Summer Camp. The Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders provides youths with diverse sports, educational and community awareness programs that foster physical, intellectual and social development, while instilling pride and helping them build character and self-esteem.



McGivney Community Center



Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders

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CHRISTOPHER ROSARIO

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Dear Friend,

Thank you for your support. It has been an honor to represent you in the General Assembly. There have been many intensely debated issues this legislative session and it has been a privilege to represent the people of Bridgeport in each of those discussions.

Connecticut’s economy continues to recover and looking back at the 2015 legislative session I am proud of the steps the legislature took to grow our state’s economy. We have continued to make important investments in Connecticut’s Small Business Express Program, which has succeeded in helping to grow our small business community. The property tax burden has also remained a primary concern for many small businesses, and thankfully we worked to increase municipal aid in order to ease property taxes.

We stood up for our seniors by passing many more laws to protect them from potential abuse. We have expanded the definition of neglect to include elderly people who do not live alone but are mistreated by a caretaker and now require the Department of Social Services to notify a nursing home resident’s designee within 24 hours if abuse is suspected.

We have also made historic investments in our transportation system and increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding for many cities and towns. These investments are critical to growing our economy as businesses will not come to Connecticut if their employees cannot get to work in a safe and timely manner, and if we do not have an educated workforce ready to fill 21st century jobs.

I hope you find this information to be of use and please do not hesitate to call my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher Rosario



BRIDGEPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2017 STATE AID

Education Cost Sharing	\$182,266,724
Priority School Districts	\$6,963,751
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$3,012,598
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$7,962,794
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$6,196,581
School Transportation	\$1,452,541
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$2,413,992
Town Aid Roads	\$1,383,106
Adult Education	\$2,179,158
DECD Tax Abatement and MRSA Payments	\$14,026,063
Total State Funds to Bridgeport	\$227,857,308

THE BORINQUENEERS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

I introduced legislation to designate a portion of Route 127 the “65th U.S. Infantry Regiment, ‘The Borinqueneers’ Memorial Highway.” The Borinqueneers were a Puerto Rican Army Regiment who served during World War One, World War Two, and the Korean War. The designated section of the highway will extend from Route 127, East Main Street, in Bridgeport, from the intersection of Route 130 traveling in a northerly direction to the intersection of Route 1. Last year, the 65th infantry was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by the Obama administration. To learn more about the Borinqueneers visit www.borinqueneers.org.



Rep. Rosario, Rep. Santiago and U.S. Sen. Blumenthal proudly pose with surviving Borinqueneers at the highway memorial service held August 29, 2015.

SAVINGS IN CAR TAXES

Bridgeport tax payers can expect to save hundreds of dollars in the coming years as a result of a statewide mill rate cap of 32 mills in 2016, and 29.36 mills in 2017. (The mill rate is currently 42.2) This same law will also ensure that Bridgeport does not lose any revenue due to the change in the amount of car taxes collected by pledging 0.50% of the annual State sales tax to the towns in our State.



HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES

This year we allocated more funds for the highly successful Small Business Express Program. We are also requiring the Department of Economic and Community Development to dedicate funds to develop a program for construction projects for minority business enterprises. These measures will create jobs and improve economic opportunities for Connecticut families.

BRIDGEPORT BARNUM TRAIN STATION

Work will soon get underway for a second train station on Barnum Avenue. I worked with my colleagues in Hartford to approve \$7.4 million and the Connecticut Department of Transportation has recently applied for an additional \$11.1 million in federal funds. This station will increase options for commuters and will serve as a catalyst for business activity and commerce in the area. This is another step forward in the effort to revitalize our great City of Bridgeport.

A SECOND CHANCE SOCIETY

Connecticut’s drug policies have swelled our budgets and filled our prisons with nonviolent drug offenders who struggle to reintegrate into society upon release. The Second Chance Society will ensure public safety, save money, and help end the culture of mass incarceration by lowering sentencing for nonviolent offenses. The Second Chance Society will give ex-offenders more opportunities to get back into the workforce – and will also save millions in taxpayer dollars.