

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS



- ◆ Allocates an additional \$47 million in state health care, ranging from expansion of the HUSKY health insurance program to financial assistance for insurance premiums.
- ◆ Provides \$39 million to nursing homes for a 2.9% rate increase for next fiscal year and a 3% increase for the non-profits.
- ◆ Increases the Educational Cost Sharing grant by \$442 million over the next two years.
- ◆ Expands funding for distributed generation (technologies such as micro-turbines and fuel cells) and renewable forms of energy.
- ◆ Creates a Division of Autism Services under the newly named state Department of Developmental Services.
- ◆ Sets aside \$136 million of this year's nearly \$1 billion surplus for the state's Rainy Day Fund.
- ◆ Exempts vehicles that get greater than 40 miles per gallon from the state's sales tax from January of 2008 to July 2010.
- ◆ Provides \$94 million in fiscal year 2008 and \$121 million in fiscal year 2009 to increase reimbursement rates to doctors, hospitals, clinics, dentists and ophthalmologists that treat patients covered by Medicaid.
- ◆ Sets aside \$27.2 million over two years for grants to students attending public colleges, and \$16.2 million over two years for students attending private colleges.
- ◆ Expands the state's tax credit program for the film industry. This time, it provides tax credits for capital projects, such as new studio space for film and digital media.
- ◆ Fully funds all 270 clients of the Department of Developmental Services who will graduate from high school and need supportive adult services.
- ◆ Expands after-school programs by over \$2 million in new funding over the next two years.
- ◆ Provides over \$100 million in railway operations and \$110 million in bus operations.

2007 Legislative Bulletin



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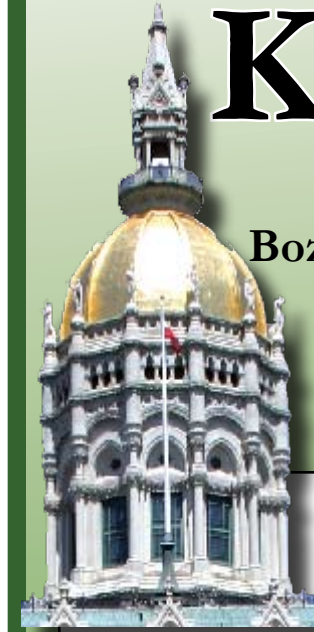
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State Representative
KEVIN RYAN

139th District Serving
Bozrah-Franklin-Lebanon-Montville

Session 2007



Dear Friends:

Thank you for taking the time to read my 2007 end-of-session newsletter. I appreciate the opportunity to represent your interests in the state legislature.

This year, House Democrats worked hard to move Connecticut forward with various issues which affect the residents of our state. Such matters of concern include: property tax relief, health care, municipal aid, energy, and support for education. As Chair of the Labor and Public Employees Committee and member of the Appropriations and Public Health Committees, I had the chance to work on legislation in many of these areas. I was also able to have some success in regard to support for programs which directly serve the residents of Bozrah, Franklin, Lebanon and Montville. I have highlighted some of these achievements for your information.

Please feel free to contact me at home, 848-0790, or at my Capitol office, 1-800-842-8267, with any comments or questions. You may also e-mail me at Kevin.Ryan@cga.ct.gov.

Thank you again for allowing me to be your legislator in Hartford.

Best wishes,

Kevin Ryan
Kevin Ryan



MODERNIZING ECS AND PROVIDING PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Reforming the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula was the crucial initiative to provide a fairer funding mechanism for public schools and relief to local taxpayers. For the first time in years, the ECS foundation was increased from \$5,891 to \$9,687 per student, thus increasing the ECS grant to all towns. In addition to the foundation increase, the minimum grant was raised from 6% to 9% of the foundation for the majority of districts and to 13% for the twenty school districts. To further increase the state's share of education funding, the guaranteed wealth level (GWL) was increased from 1.55 to 1.75 times the median town wealth. (Public Act 07-3)

EMINENT DOMAIN

Eminent domain reform was primarily achieved in Public Act 07-141, with some minor technical revisions in Public Act 07-207. Public Act 07-141 reformed the eminent domain process by prohibiting the taking of property for economic development and tightened the process by which property can be taken for redevelopment. All redevelopment plans are now subject to greater transparency, including a public hearing, and must be approved through the municipalities' legislative body by a two-thirds vote. Takings that are approved are then subject to a ten-year deadline and, if the project

is not completed in time, the plan must go through the approval process again. If properties are not used as a part of the plan, or if the timetable for the plan expires, the former owner is given the first opportunity to purchase the property back. Compensation for properties taken by eminent domain is calculated by two independent appraisals and is equal to 125% of the value. Property owners are protected by the Superior Court, which can prohibit a taking if statutory procedures are not followed.

Public Act 07-207 defines "deteriorated" and "deteriorating" to areas in a development plan where at least twenty percent of the buildings contain one or more deficiencies or environmental deficiencies. It also provides for another layer of protection for property owners who do not feel there was just compensation by allowing the Property Rights Ombudsman to interject. The Property Rights Ombudsman will undertake a feasibility study to determine the value and impact of "goodwill," which refers to relocation assistance and potential loss of business due to relocation. Public Act 07-207 states that whenever there is a taking or compensation based on Federal monies or funds, state regulations do not apply and it falls under the cognizance of Federal law.

RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL RETARDATION

In an effort to modernize their name to match their mission and good work, the General Assembly officially renamed the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). The commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will determine when to update items such as stationery, signs and business cards. (Public Act 07-73)



ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

When it comes to comprehensive energy policy, there were major accomplishments this session. This important legislation requires that electric companies implement a net metering system which will credit customers for power they produce from renewable resources and employs real-time pricing, which gives customers control over their bill if they are willing to take advantage of reduced pricing during off-peak hours. In addition, the following will now be available:

- Rebates on replacement energy-efficient air conditioners
- A sales tax exemption and optional property tax exemption on hybrid or other fuel-efficient cars
- Permanent sales tax exemptions on:
 - fluorescent light bulbs
 - programmable thermostats
 - energy efficient windows and doors
 - energy efficient water heaters, furnaces, and boilers.

(Public Act 07-242)



CREATING A BIODIESEL INDUSTRY IN CONNECTICUT

House Democrats supported legislation that establishes a biodiesel industry in Connecticut. The legislation clearly defines a uniform quality standard for the industry and provides grants for production and construction within the state. Furthermore, to help the industry grow within Connecticut, Public Act 07-4 establishes testing and research requirements for the Agricultural Experiment Station to ensure that the product produced and sold in Connecticut is uniform and reliable. Additionally, Public Act 07-4 directs the state to study the use of biodiesel for heating purposes in all state operated buildings and facilities under the custody and control the state. Public Act 07-4 implements a well-rounded plan for Connecticut's biodiesel industry by tying in all aspects of the industry, communal research and agricultural needs.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS

By law, an employee has the right to request a hearing if workers' compensation benefits have been reduced or discontinued. This bill extends, from 10 to 15 days, the period during which an employee can request a hearing after receiving notice of a workers' compensation benefit reduction or discontinuation, requires that certain additional information be included in the form (known as a "36"), and increases, from \$500 to \$1,000, the maximum penalty for an employer's or insurer's undue delay of a compensation payment due to such party's fault or neglect. The compensation commissioner hearing the claim can assess the penalty to be paid to the claimant for each such case of delay.

In addition to the existing notification requirements, including stating the employee's name and employer, the bill requires the notice to identify: (1) the employee's attorney or other representative; (2) the insurer; (3) the injury, its nature, and the date it occurred; (4) the city or town in which the injury occurred; and (5) medical documentation that establishes the basis for discontinuing or reducing benefits which identifies the employee's attending physician.

Notice forms must also include the following statement: "If you object to the reduction or discontinuation of benefits as stated in this notice, YOU MUST REQUEST A HEARING NOT LATER THAN 15 DAYS after your receipt of this notice, or this notice will automatically be approved." (Public Act 07-80)

CONNECTICUT'S SMART GROWTH INITIATIVE

To get a big job done right, it helps to have everyone pulling in the same direction. Connecticut's smart growth initiative aims to do just that. We want to have all of our economic, transportation, environmental, and growth goals in line with each other. We want local, regional, and state officials working together to achieve those goals. We want municipalities working together to save money and lower property taxes.

The Responsible Growth Task Force will improve communication between agencies and between towns. It will develop recommendations for future state investments, land use laws, and the transfer of development rights.

The Department of Economic and Community Development will create an Economic Strategy Plan (ESP) for the state. The ESP will establish a vision for where the state will be in 5-20 years with clear, measurable goals set every 5 years. The plan must be consistent with the state conservation, development, transportation, and long-term housing plans. Any regional plans must be consistent with the ESP. Input from the public, area businesses, regional planning groups and local officials must also be considered when constructing the plan.

This law will also help municipalities save money by encouraging regional shared services. The Regional Performance Incentive Program offers grants to proposals for a joint provision of a service that is currently provided by an individual municipality. The proposals must include a service which increases municipalities' purchasing power, or provides a cost savings which lowers property taxes. For additional tax relief, the Office of Policy and Management will study and recommend regional tax-based revenue sharing programs, and the creation of regional asset districts. (Public Act 07-239)

OFFICE OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

The US Naval submarine base in Connecticut is of great importance to the safety of our nation and the economic strength of southeastern Connecticut. The recent threat of the federal Base Realignment and Closure list has led the state to establish an Office of Military Affairs (OMA).

The executive director of the OMA will coordinate state and local efforts to prevent the closing or downsizing of Sub Base New London and all other in-state military facilities. Ten million dollars shall also be used for grants by the Department of Economic and Community Development to improve the infrastructure at the Sub Base. The director will also work to review and recommend state policies to grow the defense and homeland security related industries. In addition, the OMA will promote and coordinate efforts to enhance the quality of life for military personnel and military families. (Public Act 07-205)

CONNECTICUT CENTER FOR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Technology is an integral part of today's world of industry and commerce. To further integrate technology into Connecticut's business environment, the legislature now requires that the Connecticut Center of Advanced Technology (CCAT) will provide its services to smaller and medium sized businesses. This will allow the businesses to adopt the latest digital technology and cost-cutting production techniques. These services were previously only available to small and medium sized businesses that were in danger of losing business to larger defense firms, but are now available to all small and medium sized businesses. (Public Act 07-4)