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Dear Neighbor,

From jobs to education to improved response to natural disasters, the legislature helped citizens across our state in many ways in 2012.

It started last October when we passed comprehensive, bipartisan jobs legislation that invested hundreds of millions of dollars in small businesses, gave firms hiring incentives, aligned education programs with jobs-in-demand, encouraged entrepreneurship and innovation, and eliminated red-tape for growing companies.

This spring, we balanced a budget by keeping our funding promise to cities and towns without raising taxes. Historic changes were made to our educational system so our children can succeed. We made it easier for people to exercise voting rights, and demanded that utility companies respond better when storms and crises hit. We repealed a death penalty law that wasn't working, and further protected victims of domestic violence.

Along the way, we helped children with special needs by improving Individualized Education Plans and created a study on workforce development, training and employment of young adults with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

I am sorry to say this will be my last newsletter to the residents of Franklin and Lebanon due to redistricting. It has been an honor and pleasure to represent these fine citizens for the last twenty years in the General Assembly.

I hope this report is informative. I'm happy to answer any questions about these issues or any others facing our state or your family. Together we can create a better future for our families.

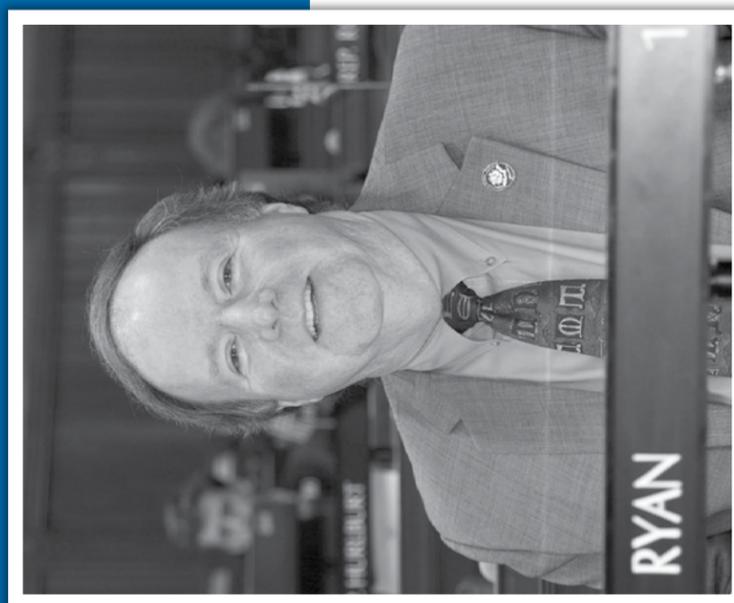
Sincerely,



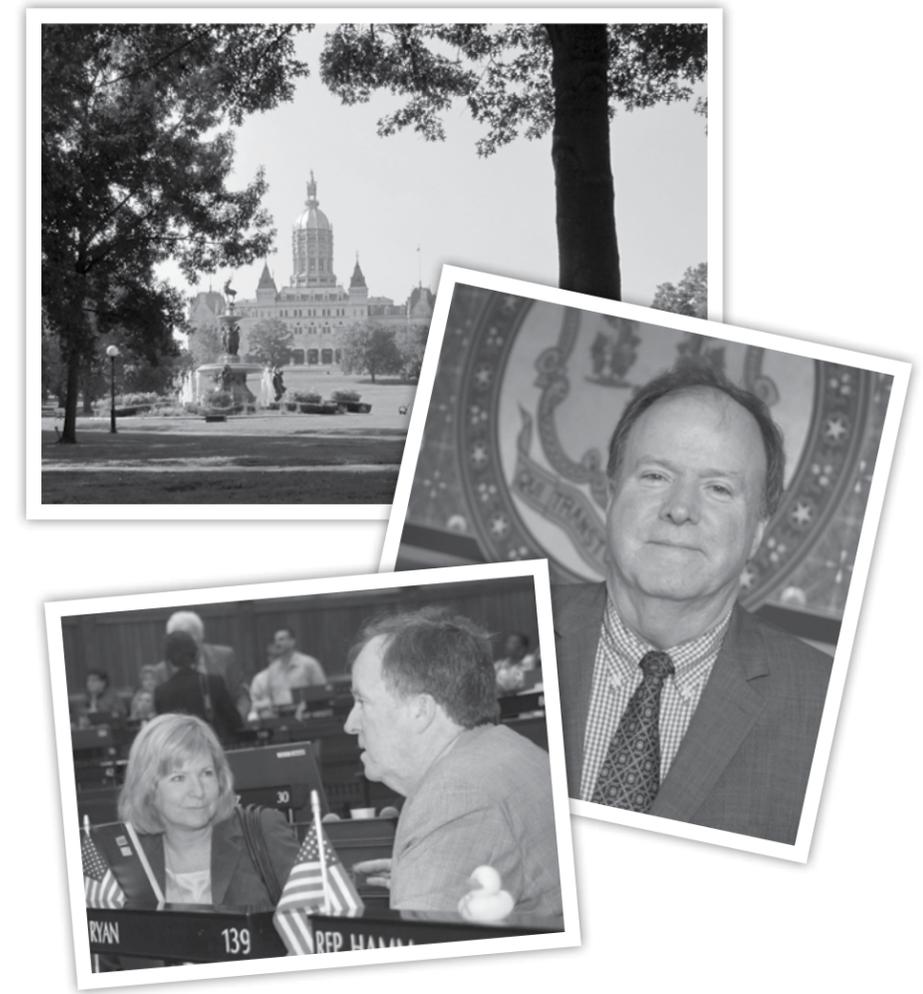
State Representative

**KEVIN RYAN**

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## CAPITOL UPDATE 2012

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# State Representative **KEVIN RYAN**

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## Jobs Are Priority #1

We created new job opportunities for young people by funding the Youth Employment Summer Jobs program. We also supported adult evening education programs, as well as the Small Business Express program and a Connecticut Made initiative to promote products from local businesses.

Additionally, high level job opportunities will result from economic development funding for the Jackson Labs project that builds on our decision to become a world leader in bioscience and biotechnology.

We recognize the challenges facing cities and towns and secured funding for municipalities, relieving pressure on local property taxes. Loosening budgets can support local projects and job growth.

We created jobs through brownfield cleanup, which allows swifter conversion of contaminated and long-abandoned properties to productive sites for economic development, open space and other public uses. This session, we directed the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to perform an in-depth analysis of the state's brownfield remediation and development programs and recommend changes to those programs.

## 2012 Budget Is Historic

The 2012 session of the General Assembly was "a truly historic session," and brought exciting changes to education, elections, utility storm response, and ending the last vestiges of the state's Puritan Blue Laws.

One of the hallmarks of 2012 was the passage of a fiscal year 2013 budget adjustment bill that did not raise additional taxes.

A year ago, we dealt with a shortfall in excess of \$3 billion – 15 percent of our total budget. This year, the House passed a budget adjustment that keeps appropriations under the state's spending cap and continues our investments in education and job growth.

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## Storm Response

In the aftermath of the October Nor'easter and Tropical Storm Irene that left much of the state without power, the legislature passed sweeping reforms to better prepare for future severe storms and avoid wide-spread and lengthy loss of utility service, where:

- Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response
- Noncompliance could result in penalties of up to 2.5 percent of an electric or gas company's annual distribution revenue, approximately \$25 million in the case of Connecticut Light & Power

A new law protects homeowners by prohibiting insurers from applying hurricane deductibles if a hurricane is downgraded to a tropical storm before it strikes Connecticut. This bill responds to complaints from consumers who were charged large hurricane deductibles for property damage caused by Tropical Storm Irene, after it was downgraded from a hurricane before entering the state in August 2011. Under the new law, homeowners and businesses are also protected from price gouging by vendors overcharging for goods and services during unusual weather events.

## Reducing Domestic And Sexual Violence

We have strengthened the state's laws to better protect victims and hold abusers accountable. We gave police officers the tools they need to better identify and respond to domestic violence.

We also improved access to and enforcement of protective and restraining orders to improve victim safety.

And a new law gives students better tools to stay safe on campus. This law protects students by requiring colleges and universities to adopt and disclose policies on sexual assault.

## "Caylee's Law"

This new law sets criminal penalties for the failure to report the disappearance of a child. The law is in response to the circumstances surrounding the death of Florida toddler Caylee Anthony, and applies to any parent, guardian or person who has custody or supervision of the child.

## Improved Hospice Care

With just two licensed hospices in the state, this new law will permit more hospices to follow federal standards, giving smaller hospice facilities the opportunity to provide high quality services that allow patients to stay closer to family and friends. This bill will help our state to ensure that residents have access to health care services across the full continuum of care.

## Veterans' Issues

Honoring the present and past sacrifices of our veterans is one of my highest priorities. It is shocking to see an increase in thefts and vandalism of veteran memorials. We increased penalties for desecrating veteran's memorials beyond the monetary value of what was vandalized.

So many of our service men and women return home and face a variety of challenges, not the least of which are legal issues and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. A federally funded pilot program for veterans dealing with these issues is helpful but limited, so we expanded the program to more locations throughout the state.

Additionally, in order to reduce the psychological trauma a parent feels when they leave a small child for an extended period of time, we protected parents' permanent custody orders in the event of deployment. We provided an opportunity for the military parent to create temporary custody orders that remain in effect only as long as they are away on deployment and for as much contact as possible between children and the parent who is absent while on military duty.

## Price Gouging And Pain At The Pump

Skyrocketing gasoline prices are a result of global factors such as growing demand from expanding economies like China, turmoil in the Middle East and oil market speculators. Even though gas prices have slid recently, thanks to the use of shale domestically, the legislature acted in a bipartisan manner to be a part of the solution. We capped the state petroleum gross receipts tax (GRT) on motor fuels and enacted new price gouging laws to protect consumers from oil companies and gasoline dealers that try to exploit abnormal market conditions for profit.

## Education Reform

Our education initiative will provide new support to help turn around underperforming schools. The education reform package has long-term implications for our children and for the state's economic well-being. The better we prepare children for the 21st Century workforce, the stronger we'll make Connecticut's economy. The bill:

- Includes more funding for school-based health centers and family resource centers.
- Recognizes the critical importance of early childhood education by underwriting 1,000 school readiness slots for preschoolers and funding initiatives to improve early reading success.
- Creates the Commissioner's Network, to provide the intensive supports and interventions needed to turn around 25 of the most chronically low-performing schools.
- Gives the state commissioner of education the needed authority to develop or modify plans with teachers and parents at "turnaround" schools.