

# BUDGET REPORT

## BALANCED, NO NEW TAXES

*"I remain committed to working toward a leaner and more efficient government, while ensuring the protection of our most vulnerable citizens and keeping essential services properly funded. I am pleased to report that this budget protects community services and creates sustainable, long-term economic growth." - Kevin*

Connecticut did what many other states struggled to do this year: We crafted a balanced budget that protects working families, gives more support to our cities and towns and does not raise taxes. This budget also takes the additional step of protecting us from future budget shortfalls by depositing the \$43.4 million surplus into our Rainy Day Fund. By spending responsibly now and investing in our future, we provide for a more financially stable state and economy.



### INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Cities and towns will see an additional \$80 million in funding for education and tax relief. For our most vulnerable populations, we also provided \$6.5 million in rental relief for seniors, \$23 million in additional funding to strengthen mental health services and increased access to services for victims of rape and sexual assault.

### INVESTING IN CONNECTICUT

Our budget makes strong investments in the state itself. Our state parks and waterways will benefit from increased funding and a new program designed to combat aquatic invasive species. This budget invests in transportation infrastructure with highway expansion, bus and rail line development, and the establishment of a Connecticut Port Authority.



## STATE REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN RYAN

PROUDLY SERVING BOZRAH, MONTVILLE AND NORWICH

# CAPITOL UPDATE 2014

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HARTFORD, CT  
Permit No. 3937



## STATE REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN RYAN

DEPUTY SPEAKER | THE 139TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



Dear Neighbor,

The 2014 legislative session ended recently and I want to update you about what I have been up to in Hartford. This year was a short, three-month session, but I am proud of the work that we got done in such a short period of time.

My colleagues and I were concerned about the perceived lack of response to sexual assaults on the University of Connecticut's campus, and I was honored to co-sponsor a bill that mandates reporting of sexual assaults on campus. This new law also makes sure that students who report a sexual assault are immediately notified of their rights and that the response by the university is handled by law enforcement who have been specifically trained to deal with these crimes.

In an effort to continue to help Connecticut's struggling economy, I was pleased to support a minimum wage increase, which will rise gradually to \$10.10 on Jan. 1, 2017. Working parents simply cannot afford to support their families at the current minimum wage, and deserve a livable wage. We also passed legislation this session creating a new Connecticut Port Authority, utilizing our three deep-water ports of Bridgeport, New Haven and New London, and bringing jobs to our state while removing traffic from our highways.

I hope you find the information in this newsletter helpful. And please don't hesitate to reach out to my office, if I can ever be of help to you or your family!

Sincerely,  
A handwritten signature of Kevin Ryan in black ink.



# CAPITOL UPDATE 2014

## INVESTING IN BUSINESSES AND WORKERS

**MANUFACTURING REINVESTMENT ACCOUNT PROGRAM** - This program is designed to help small manufacturers grow their businesses and train their workforces. With this unique bank account, businesses can deposit up to \$100,000 annually over five years and defer tax payments.

**INCREASING JOB OPPORTUNITIES** - We’ve created the Veteran’s Opportunity Fund, a pilot program that will allow our veterans to re-enter the workforce. We also streamlined licensing so that Connecticut veterans can now apply their military training toward occupational licenses and apprenticeships, or college credits can be awarded for specialty training. The long-term unemployed will receive assistance in the form of job programs, financial coaching and an eight week subsidized work experience for our youth ages 14-21.

**RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE** - Income inequality in this country is the worst it has been since the 1920s, and this disparity is especially evident in Connecticut. People who earn minimum wage are not just teenagers but bread-winners struggling to put food on the table and provide a better life for their families. This session, Connecticut became the first state in the country to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour by 2017.



## A STATE PORT AUTHORITY

We created a Port Authority to oversee Connecticut’s three deep water seaports in Bridgeport, New Haven and New London. The authority’s mission includes marketing to domestic and foreign shippers, seeking private investments and pursuing state and federal funding for dredging and infrastructure improvements to increase cargo capacity. Our ports are underutilized commercial hubs that represent an untapped resource for new economic growth.

## STOLEN VALOR

This year we passed legislation that protects the integrity of the uniforms of our service men and women and the decorations that they wear. It is now a crime to lie about receiving a military medal or other Congressional decoration for financial gain. It is also a crime to wear a uniform with the intent to commit fraud.

## STATE BONDING

**MAKING OUR SCHOOLS SAFER** - We authorized \$22 million for another round of school security improvements. We also allowed our technical, private and charter schools to access these funds.

**PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT** - Open space preservation has been an important initiative for me. We added \$20 million in authorized funds for this effort.



## SEXUAL ASSAULT ON CAMPUS

One in five women on college campuses experiences sexual assault, and much of this violence goes unreported. The young women who have come forward to tell their stories inspired legislation that overhauls how colleges and universities respond and work to prevent sexual assault. There must be a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual violence on campus. Both students and parents should expect a safe learning environment at college. This year we also launched a plan for state agencies and local sexual assault crisis centers to create a statewide sexual abuse and assault awareness program for regional and local school boards.

## HOUSING

With the collaboration of different departments, new legislation will strengthen our current supportive housing in the state for our most vulnerable populations. Now the Department of Developmental Services and Department of Veterans Affairs will work to prioritize and strengthen housing initiatives.

## ENSURING QUALITY CARE AT OUR HOSPITALS

Increasingly, hospitals have been buying-up doctors’ private practices, leading to potentially higher fees for patients. This year we will require physicians to notify their patients in advance when they raise their facility fees. Now you will have more time to clear coverage with your insurance company or plan to visit a different doctor. Another law will provide more safeguards for the public when hospitals acquire physician’s practices. The Office of Health Care Access, the Department of Public Health and the Attorney General will provide oversight when hospitals make acquisitions, change access to care or make major staffing changes.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**PROTECTING ELECTRICITY CUSTOMERS** – A new law prevents energy suppliers from offering short-term “teaser” contracts with low rates, then switching to higher variable rates within weeks. Termination fees are now capped at \$50 and customers can switch back to the standard offer rate within 72 hours. The law also requires more transparent electricity bills and an end to deceptive sales.

**STRENGTHENING THE DO NOT CALL LIST** – Some companies continue to make unwanted calls. We increased penalties by nearly double and added text messages to the registry.

**STOPPING “ROBO” CALLS** – This year we doubled the fines for unsolicited pre-recorded calls when you want to hang up and they don’t properly disconnect. If you have a complaint concerning these calls, you can contact PURA at **1-800-382-4586**.

**RUNNING BAMBOO** – This invasive plant has increasingly been a problem because of its rapid and unmanageable growth. A new law prohibits people from growing the plant within 40 feet of an abutting property.