

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

KEVIN RYAN

PROUDLY SERVING THE 139TH HOUSE DISTRICT | BOZRAH / MONTVILLE / NORWICH

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Connecticut has a new budget that will put us on the right fiscal path. The budget represents a true bipartisan agreement. Because Bozrah, Montville and Norwich are my first priority, I believe my favorable vote on the budget was in the best interest of our communities.

The below highlights illustrate how we will benefit from this bipartisan, compromise agreement:

- No increase to the income tax or sales tax;
- New provisions allow hospitals to receive increased funding from Washington;
- The \$200 property tax credit for seniors and residents with dependents remains intact;
- Much-needed relief from mandates on cities and towns;
- Increases Education Cost Sharing funds in the second year of the budget;
- Funding is restored for higher education;
- Firefighters receive funding for treating job-related cancer.

Our senior citizens have contributed much to our communities so it’s only fair to help them out in their golden years with some tax relief. In 2019, we will begin exempting pensions and Social Security income from the state income tax. I believe it’s a reasonable gesture on our part that also brings Connecticut in line with most other states.

I want to thank all of you who reached out to me during this budget process and look forward to hearing from you about other issues as well.

Sincerely,



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2017



STRENGTHENING OUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

This new law enables the Department of Labor to better match employers with skilled employees and training. It also creates a fund to provide training for in-demand jobs in growth industries, a “soft skills” program to help employees develop their interpersonal skills, and an Early College Opportunity Program to better link high school students with community colleges and employers. The bill also establishes a working group to coordinate existing business support services and requires the department to report on the success of existing job training programs. *HB 5590, PA 17-207*

CT BIOSCIENCE INDUSTRY

The state’s bioscience industry is getting a boost. New legislation requires Connecticut Innovations to establish criteria to evaluate how our investments in the industry translate to economic growth. We also created a working group to ensure students are getting the right training that will prepare them for careers in bioscience. *SB 959, SA 17-20*

MICROBIOME–BASED MEDICINES

This law establishes a working group charged with making recommendations to establish Connecticut as a national leader in the development of new microbiome-based medicine, products and services. The microbiome consists of the combined genetic material of microorganisms in a particular environment. The human microbiome can be considered a counterpart to the human genome. *SB 1056, SA 17-16*

SUPPORT FOR MANUFACTURERS

The Manufacturing Innovation Fund supports the growth, innovation and progress of Connecticut’s advanced manufacturing sector by encouraging collaboration with universities, assistance with business development and technical needs, job training, educational programs, and matching funds to leverage federal grants. I’m proud that our new budget commits additional dollars to this effort to grow good jobs in Connecticut. *HB 7195, PA 14-98*

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SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS TAX BREAK

We are one of only 13 states that taxes social security income. This was an unfair burden on our seniors and I am proud to have sponsored and helped pass this new policy that will begin exempting social security income and pensions from the state income tax. *Emergency Certified Bill 1502, PA 17-2*

COMPUTER EXTORTIONS

“Ransomware” is a new type of cybercrime where a computer virus demands money in order to restore your computer or files. We have responded by making this a new offense subject to up to three years in prison and /or a \$3,500 fine. *HB 7304, PA 17-223*

MORE OPIOID REGULATION

This year in Connecticut, more people will fall victim to drug overdoses than from car accidents and gun violence combined. This session, Connecticut took action and passed legislation to combat drug abuse and addiction. The legislation reduces the maximum opioid drug prescription for minors from a 7 day to a 5 day supply, requires health insurers to cover medically necessary detox treatment, requires medical providers to discuss opioid risks with patients, and eases restrictions on destroying unused medications. The Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) has a toll-free number connecting residents seeking treatment and services for an opioid addiction to local walk-in assessment centers. Residents will now be able to call 1-800-563-4086, 24 hours a day, to connect them or a loved one to a walk-in assessment center. *HB 7052, PA 17-131*



PREGNANT WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Women’s full participation in the workforce is essential in a successful economy. This law strengthens current protections for pregnant and nursing women under the state’s anti-discrimination law.

No longer will an employer be able to deny employment opportunities because of pregnancy, or retaliate when reasonable accommodations are requested. The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities will develop training as a form of outreach concerning their responsibilities in these matters, while also notifying their employees about these rights. These protections will help ensure a women’s financial security and are good for families and the economy. *HB 6668, PA 17-118*

PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Connecticut is a leader in the effort to end domestic violence. This new legislation expands existing laws on strangulation and stalking; identifies social media as a means of stalking; increases the penalty for committing a family violence crime while on probation; and requires a pre-sentence investigation of anyone convicted of a family violence felony. *HB 7299, PA 17-31*

FAIRNESS IN PHARMACY

The cost of prescription drugs can be a financial burden, especially for those on a fixed income. While cheaper generic medications are often available to the consumer, existing rules in some contracts between pharmacies and health insurers require a co-pay, even when a drug is cheaper than the co-pay. The difference is then submitted to the insurer. In some instances, pharmacists are not allowed to suggest less expensive alternative medications. This legislation allows the pharmacist to discuss less expensive alternatives with the patient and strengthens the notice requirements around the facility fees charged by some health providers. *SB 445, PA 17-241*