

ENSURING ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES

Everyone must be treated fairly under the law and ensuring reliable access to legal services is a keystone to that fundamental right. That's why the legislature ensured funding for legal services for the poor. Access to reliable counsel for criminal defendants has not been a problem, but the same has not been true in civil court. A newly established task force will examine this issue and report its findings to the General Assembly later this year.



ESTABLISHING A FIREFIGHTER CANCER RELIEF PROGRAM AND OTHER BENEFITS FOR FIREFIGHTERS

It is important that we recognize and take care of firefighters who put their lives on the line for us. This legislation establishes a relief fund for firefighters who are battling work-related cancer. Other legislation allows municipal property tax relief for retired volunteer firefighters, fire police officers and EMTs who volunteered at least 25 years of service.



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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for giving me the privilege to represent you in the General Assembly. It is an honor to serve as your legislator in Hartford as I work with many of you to make our state the best it can be.

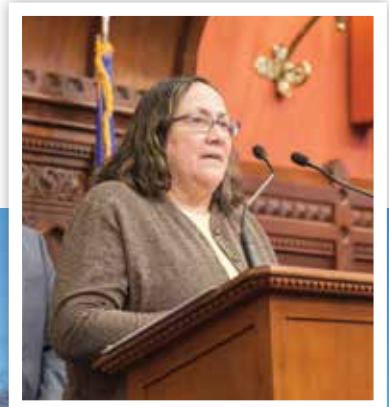
This year's legislative session was dominated by the state budget. There were no easy solutions and sometimes hard decisions had to be made, but in the end we approved a budget that is balanced, without state tax or fee increases, without borrowing, and without dipping into the Rainy Day Fund. I am proud that House Democrats led the way in passing significant legislation to help protect and improve the quality of life for Connecticut families.

Improving our education, taking care of our seniors, and encouraging financial security for everyone were featured elements of some of the major bills approved by the legislature this year.

Keeping Connecticut a great place to live, work, and raise a family is our ongoing responsibility. Though the 2016 legislative session presented one of the toughest budget challenges in decades, we succeeded to help move our state forward.

Sincerely,

Hilda E. Santiago



SUPPORTING OUR SENIORS

Taking care of our older citizens is a priority. We passed legislation to make sure patients are notified of their rights and available services when nursing homes or long-term care facilities close or reduce the number of beds. We also required nursing homes to allow residents being discharged to pick a caregiver to help them with their discharge plan. Other legislation allows for elderly or disabled tenants of state-assisted housing to pay security deposits in installments.



CLEAN, RELIABLE ENERGY

We are making a great deal of progress in promoting clean, reliable energy. Several laws provide incentives in the form of credits for excess electricity generated through clean sources such as solar and wind. These monetary incentives will help to expand the use of clean, renewable energy while keeping our environment clean.



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STANDING UP FOR VETERANS

We stand by our veterans. I am proud to report that we passed new laws that enhance areas of job attainment, entrepreneurship, and quality of life issues for veterans, and approved a resolution that urges the nation's leaders to provide VA benefits for Blue Water Navy Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange in the Vietnam War.

Other laws:

- Give a price preference of up to 15% for veteran-owned businesses bidding on state contracts.
- Broaden the scope of the law that bars discriminatory practices in our state's armed forces.
- Require the Labor Commissioner to establish a clearinghouse to help highly-trained veterans and armed forces members find jobs that match their unique skill sets; a database will be created to match them with available jobs.



SUPPORTING CONNECTICUT'S GROWING MANUFACTURING SECTOR

We are working to make Connecticut the area leader in high-tech manufacturing jobs with an educated workforce that will meet the growing demand for the advanced, computer based, and technical positions of the future. One of the measures passed establishes an Entrepreneurs Learner's Permit Program that will allow new businesses, particularly information services, biotechnology and green technology, to be reimbursed for fees associated with state filing, permitting and licenses.



TACKLING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

In recent years, Connecticut, like other New England states, has seen a heartbreaking increase in fatal opioid overdoses. Earlier this year we passed groundbreaking legislation to combat this crisis. This lifesaving law will allow any licensed healthcare professional to administer drugs that reverse opioid overdoses, require municipalities to equip their first responders with the opioid reversal drug Narcan, and cap first-time opioid prescriptions at 7 days.



Rep. Santiago and Rep. Altobello recognizing Ms. Rhudean S. Raye's work and advocacy on her 90th birthday

