

PROTECTING FUNDING FOR EDUCATION

In the past few years, the Governor has made midyear cuts to municipal aid, including to the Education Cost Sharing Grant, which is the state's primary source for local school funding. In order to offer our town's greater predictability and more certainty when budgets are adopted, the legislature approved a measure that would prohibit the Governor from making midyear cuts to these vital FY19 education dollars.

MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT

This law codifies a lot of the good work that the State Department of Education (SDE) and the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force have done over the last few years, as well as implements some new policies aimed at a thriving and diverse teacher workforce in our state. SDE will work to develop new alternative routes to certification for paraprofessionals, charter school teachers and veterans. Additionally, SDE will work with vendors to allow certain teachers to retake their licensure test for free if they do not successfully pass the first time.



Recognizing The Arts and Crafts Association of Meriden at Gallery 53 for their 110th Anniversary.

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

HILDA E. SANTIAGO

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE HILDA E. SANTIAGO

PROUDLY SERVING MERIDEN

Dear Neighbor,

As you recall, last year we passed the State of Connecticut's biennial budget through bipartisan efforts, and this year we followed suit by making agreed upon edits to the existing budget through bipartisan efforts as well. This budget funds transportation infrastructure, restores cuts to education, and restores funding for the Medicare Savings Plan, HUSKY A, and Renters Rebate program – all with no income, sales or other state tax increases. It also maintains the "Rainy Day" Fund reserves at the highest level in over a decade.

We worked on policies that support small businesses, workforce development and making our state a place where we can proudly raise our families. I am committed to fighting for you to build a bright future for Connecticut and our Meriden community.

I hope you find the enclosed information helpful. Please don't hesitate to reach out to my office if I can be of service to you or your family. It is my pleasure and honor to serve as your state representative.

Sincerely,

Hilda E. Santiago



Speaking as part of the Panel Discussion on Opioids at the Meriden Public Library.



Testifying in support of CT allocating money to help those who have come to CT from Puerto Rico because of Hurricane Maria.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. In an effort to provide some tax relief and help small businesses to put resources into job creation, we exempted from property taxes equipment that is worth less than \$250 and has been owned by the business for more than 10 years.

In response to concerns that the state Department of Environmental and Energy Protection is taking too long to approve commercial permit applications, we passed legislation that requires DEEP to meet with businesses that request it for a “pre-application” meeting. Hopefully this process will help ensure that businesses are more successful in receiving the necessary permits in a more timely fashion.

MANUFACTURING

Continuing our efforts to encourage students to consider careers in manufacturing, we are working to develop mobile manufacturing training labs that will visit middle and high schools to educate students about advanced manufacturing. This continues our work to invest in our community colleges and technical high schools, and our belief that technical education and career training can lead students to family-supporting jobs.

FIGHTING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

In the ongoing fight against opioid abuse, the legislature approved a number of initiatives aimed at curbing use and improving our state and local responses and interventions. The new law prohibits prescribers from writing prescriptions for immediate family members and promotes increased use of overdose-reversing treatments like Narcan.

REDUCING PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Recognizing that prescription drug prices are the number one driver of rising healthcare costs, we passed legislation to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable by increasing transparency and requiring them to explain large price increases for drugs that have a substantial cost to the state. Additionally, insurance companies must now submit information about which drugs are most frequently prescribed and which are provided at the greatest cost. By collecting more data and holding drug companies accountable, we can get closer to lowering drug costs for Connecticut residents.

SAFE AND HEALTHY HOME ASSISTANCE

Lead abatement remains a serious issue to all residents in the state, but is most dangerous to our state’s children. There are also other toxins that children may be exposed to every day at home. Homeowners may now access funding to address the abatement of not only lead, but other environmental hazards including mold, allergens, asthma irritants, carbon monoxide, pesticides and radon.

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Leading the Pledge of Allegiance in the Chamber before session begins.



Speaking at Latino Advocacy Day.



At the Borinqueneers Monument Ceremony.



Discussing the 2017 Budget at a North Meriden Neighborhood Association Meeting.

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INVESTING IN MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES

Women still earn less than men and this inequity is perpetuated by the practice of asking for salary history during the hiring process, ensuring that women who were underpaid at their first job continue to be underpaid. This session we strengthened our pay equity laws by preventing employers from asking about wage history.

We also continued to work with the business community on earned family leave. Every working person in Connecticut should be allowed paid time off when they or a loved one gets sick. In addition, I supported a proposal to raise the minimum wage, so no one who works full time lives in poverty. Unfortunately, neither of these proposals had sufficient support to become law this session. These policies are essential and I will keep working on them.

VETERANS

Veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or a traumatic brain injury, or are the victims of military sexual trauma, deserve support as they recover and reintegrate into civilian life. However, because these conditions pose unique challenges, some receive a less than honorable discharge from the military, making them ineligible for services. We successfully passed legislation this session to allow these veterans access to the state services they need and earned.

When members of the armed forces receive orders to come to Connecticut, and their spouse is a certified teacher in another state, it can be difficult for the spouse to start over as a teacher here in Connecticut. To address this issue, we created a “military spouse teacher permit” that allows the spouses to more easily work as a teacher in our state.

TRANSPORTATION BEST PRACTICES

My office heard the concern and issues raised by senior citizens, veterans and people with disabilities regarding their transportation needs. A task force will study these transportation issues and make recommendations for future legislation and programs.

ELECTRONIC PROOF OF AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

As a matter of convenience, Connecticut residents will now be able to use an electronic proof of their automobile insurance when a police officer requests it during a traffic stop or accident. Drivers can still provide a paper copy as they always have, but as most of us now use smart phones and other digital devices, it makes sense to allow drivers to prove they are covered, simply by showing an officer proof on their phone or tablet.

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