

Education

IMPROVING COLLEGE ACCESSIBILITY

In an effort to improve students' ability to transfer within and among Connecticut's public institutions of higher education to pursue higher degrees, the General Assembly passed Public Act 07-7. It asks the Department of Higher Education to review the current status and content of the transfer and articulation agreements between the community colleges, the state universities and the University of Connecticut, in order to allow students to easily transfer credits earned at public state colleges and universities.

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT FUND

I am happy the legislature took action to address the unfunded liability in Connecticut's Teachers' Retirement Fund. With a state liability of more than \$6.9 billion, an immediate addition of \$300 million from state surplus over the next two years will be added to the Teachers' Retirement Fund. To strengthen the financial footing of the Fund and to save taxpayers money we approved a comprehensive plan allowing for \$2 billion in pension obligation bonds to be sold. These bonds will be payable over 25 years at current interest rates (approximately 5.6%), less than what the state is currently paying on the unfunded liability (8.5%). A savings will be realized through lowering debt service payments and investing the proceeds on the pension obligation bonds sale in the Teachers' Retirement Fund.



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"I'm proud to represent the 60th House District of Windsor & Windsor Locks."

Legislative Office Building, Room 3004
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol Phone: (860) 240-8531
E-Mail: peggy.sayers@cga.ct.gov
Web: www.housedems.ct.gov/sayers

FROM THE DESK OF
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
PEGGY SAYERS

Dear Neighbors,

Enclosed is a summary of some of the laws passed this year in the 2007 legislative session.

Another year has passed and our state has been hard at work crafting necessary legislation to improve the education, health care and services the people of Connecticut deserve. In this newsletter, I would like to share some of our accomplishments that will benefit the people of the State and all of us here in Windsor and Windsor Locks.

If you should have additional questions on any of the information in my legislative update, please contact me at my Hartford office. As always, thank you for allowing me to represent you in Hartford.

Sincerely,



TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THE 2007 LEGISLATIVE SUMMARIES, fill out this form indicating your preference and mail the request to me, e-mail or call my office. My contact information is on the mailing address panel.

- 2007 Major Acts
- Senior Laws
- Business Laws
- Laws Affecting Veterans and Armed Forces
- Education Laws

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____



State Representative
Peggy Sayers
Chairperson, Public Health Committee

Community News

Visit Rep. Sayers @...
www.housedems.ct.gov/sayers

Or

View Rep. Sayers on "Views"...

Every Monday @ 8:00 pm on cable channel 15



Veterans' News

- ◆ National Guard members with 20 years of service may now be buried in state veterans' cemeteries.
- ◆ New protections against wearing unauthorized military medals or fraudulently leading others to believe that an individual received military valor awards were enacted.
- ◆ The legislature has created a service bonus for National Guard members called to active duty and more than doubled the service bonus for National Guardsmen serving in a combat zone.
- ◆ We honored our fallen heroes by enacting legislation to protect funerals from disruptions by protestors.
- ◆ Servicemen and women called to active duty receive a grace period for renewal of professional licenses.
- ◆ The Department of Motor Vehicles will now be able to offer a "Gold Star Family" license plate for families of fallen soldiers.



Healthy Kids Initiative

I am happy that we were able to make several improvements to our current health care system in an effort to expand access to quality, affordable health care. These improvements include:

- ✓ Expanding HUSKY to give access to approximately 10,000 more residents.
- ✓ Prevention and chronic disease management.
- ✓ Electronic medical records - which will improve the quality of health care and save patients money.
- ✓ Establishing a broad outreach program to reach all eligible participants.
- ✓ Expanding HUSKY A coverage for pregnant women and requiring automatic enrollment of uninsured newborns.
- ✓ Increasing rates under Medicaid to allow health care providers to see more patients.
- ✓ Increasing funding to the School-Based Health Clinics.
- ✓ Making a state commitment to public health data collection and an online license renewal system, allowing health care professionals to expedite the renewal process.

Good News

The state will reimburse municipalities and state agencies for one-half the cost of the Firefighter I certification program. Firefighters who are paid personnel must be certified as Firefighter I and II, which are their entry level criteria. Volunteer personnel must be certified as Firefighter I prior to being able to enter a building which is on fire.

CONSUMERS' PRIVACY IN MORTGAGE APPLICATIONS

When consumers apply for loans, they should have the expectation that their private information remains private. Instead, information generated by credit reporting agencies during the loan process is often used by other mortgage lenders to solicit consumers later. This will prohibit deceptive practices and the misuse of private financing by lenders in loan solicitations.

Capitol News Briefs

JESSICA'S LAW

"Jessica's Law" is designed to give prosecutors and police the tools necessary to send child sex predators to prison for a long time. This legislation will create a new crime of "aggravated sexual assault of a minor" for adults who commit a sex offense against a child under the age of 13 and will carry a mandatory minimum prison term of 25 years for a first offense and 50 years for a second offense.

MEGAN'S LAW

Under the legislation, sexual predators are required to register e-mail, instant message addresses, and other Internet communication identifiers. It also toughens the penalties for sex offenders by requiring mandatory minimum sentences for certain offenses, and makes it easier for a child to submit testimony against an accused sex offender.

Good News

Many Connecticut residents have been victimized by unlicensed contractors. The legislature took action to require that contractors engaged in certain construction activity be licensed.

The Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection now has authority to enforce licensing, certification and registration laws. This will help to stop unlicensed contractors from operating in our state.

Seniors

- **SENIOR DRIVER DISCOUNT**
 - Insurance discount for drivers over 60 who complete an approved accident-prevention course.
- **HEMOCARE OPTION PROGRAM**
 - Enables more seniors to stay at home by making tax-exempt accounts available for home care savings, and allows seniors to hire their own personal care assistant rather than having to go through an agency.
- **HOSPICE CARE**
 - Ensures a higher quality of care by requiring that hospice programs provide 24 hour services and be licensed through the Department of Public Health and certified by Medicare.
- **NURSING HOMES - PROTECTING OUR SENIORS**
 - Prevents nursing homes from closing or reducing the number of beds available until a public hearing has been held and the request approved by the Department of Social Services.

Health Care

ADMINISTRATION OF FLU AND PNEUMONIA VACCINES

Nurses employed by licensed home health care or homemaker-home health agencies can now provide flu and pneumonia vaccines to patients at home without obtaining a physician's order for each shot. Trained nurses have been running flu clinics outside the home for years, and this new law makes it easier for these professionals to keep us healthy.

UNFOUNDED DENIALS OF COVERAGE

The length of time an insurance company can look back into an individual's medical history is now only two years as a result of legislation approved by the General Assembly. Individuals holding or applying for all types of health insurance policies are assured that a denial of a claim or the rescinding of a policy must be approved by the Insurance Commissioner.