

CAPITOL UPDATE 2012

Price Gouging & Pain at the Pump

Skyrocketing gasoline prices are a result of global factors such as growing demand from expanding economies such as China, turmoil in the Middle East and oil market speculators. Faced with the reality of a global dilemma, the legislature acted in a bipartisan manner to be a part of the solution, by capping the state petroleum gross receipts tax (GRT) on motor fuels and enacting new price gouging laws to protect consumers from oil companies and gasoline dealers that try to exploit abnormal market conditions for profit.

Education Reform

Thousands of children in under performing schools have renewed hope that their schooling will lead to more productive lives. The education reform package has long-term implications for our children and for the state's economic well-being. The better we prepare children for the 21st Century workforce, the stronger we'll make Connecticut's economy. The bill:

- Includes more funding for school-based health centers and family resource centers.
- Recognizes the critical importance of early childhood education by underwriting 1,000 school readiness slots for preschoolers and funding initiatives to improve early reading success.
- Includes the Commissioner's Network, which provides the intensive supports and interventions needed to turn around 25 of the most chronically low-performing schools.
- Gives the state commissioner of education the needed authority to develop or modify plans with teachers and parents at "turnaround" schools, while respecting collective bargaining rights.
- Reforms the teacher tenure system by increasing the frequency of teacher evaluations and linking tenure to evaluations.



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Dear Neighbor:

From jobs to education, to improved response to natural disasters, the legislature helped residents across our state in many ways.

Last October, we passed comprehensive, bipartisan jobs legislation that invested hundreds of millions of dollars in small businesses, gave firms hiring incentives, and aligned education programs with jobs that are in demand. It also encouraged entrepreneurship, innovation and eliminated red tape.

This spring we kept our funding promise to cities and towns including increased education funding to Windsor and Windsor Locks. Historic changes were made to our educational system so our children can succeed.

We made it easier for people to exercise voting rights, and demanded that utility companies respond better when storms hit. We passed additional legislation to protect women who are victims of domestic violence and helped children with special needs by improving Individualized Education Programs. Children with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities need better training and employment, so we created a study on workforce development to determine the best methods to provide these services.

As Deputy Majority Leader, I worked on several bills important to consumers, which include: relief at the gas pump, helping to keep kids off drugs, a better real estate property disclosure form and methods to increase medical treatment with technology.

I hope this report is informative. I'm happy to answer any questions about these issues or any others facing our state. Together we can work to create a better future for our friends and families.

Sincerely,



State Representative **PEGGY SAYERS**

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Sunday Sales

We eliminated one of the last vestiges of the state's Blue Laws, allowing package and grocery stores to sell alcohol on Sundays from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. It also allows them to sell on Memorial, Independence and Labor Days, and on Mondays following any Independence, Christmas or New Year's Days that fall on a Sunday.



"Caylee's Law"

We set criminal penalties for the failure to report the disappearance of a child. The law is in response to the circumstances surrounding the death of Florida toddler Caylee Anthony, and applies to any parent, guardian or person who has custody or supervision of the child.

Reducing Domestic Violence

This legislation strengthens the state's laws to better protect victims and hold abusers accountable. We gave police officers the tools they need to better identify and respond to domestic violence. We also improved access to and enforcement of protective and restraining orders to improve victim safety.



Election Day Voter Registration

Election Day Voter Registration was passed to make it easier for Connecticut residents to vote with an eye on increasing voter participation. The bill allows eligible Connecticut residents to register to vote and cast a ballot on Election Day. It establishes Election Day registration procedures and eliminates the use of presidential ballots since they will now be redundant. Connecticut residents will also be able to go online and use their driver's license number to log into a secure website and register to vote.

Desecrating Veteran Memorials

We increased penalties for desecrating veterans' memorials. Honoring the present and past sacrifices of our veterans is one of my highest priorities.



Hurricane Deductibles

We are protecting homeowners by prohibiting insurers from applying hurricane deductibles if a hurricane is downgraded to a tropical storm before it strikes. That was the case in August 2011 when Hurricane Irene was downgraded shortly before it entered the state, but many homeowners still incurred a large financial penalty as some insurance companies invoked special hurricane deductibles. Under the new law, homeowners and businesses are also protected from price gouging by vendors overcharging for goods and services during unusual weather events.

Tropical Storm Irene and the October Nor'easter

Our Storm Response legislation helps insure Connecticut residents will not have to endure the hardships of last October's Nor'easter and Tropical Storm Irene with sweeping reforms to better prepare for future events and avoid wide-spread and lengthy loss of utility service. Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response with corresponding penalties of up to 2.5 percent of an electric or gas company's annual distribution revenue, which could amount to millions of dollars in fines.

Seniors

Protecting the quality of life for our senior citizens is an important responsibility. This year we focused on healthcare and grandparents' rights.

GRANDPARENTS' RIGHTS - This new law enhances the rights of grandparents seeking visitation rights by putting extra weight on evidence showing a parent-like relationship exists and that a denial of visitation rights could cause harm to the child.

HOSPICE CARE - With just two licensed hospices in the state, this new law will give smaller hospice facilities the opportunity to provide high quality services that allow patients to stay closer to family and friends.

PRESERVING MEDICARE ELIGIBILITY - This legislation ensured thousands of seniors and people with disabilities could continue to use the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) to help pay for their Medicare co-pays and deductibles by raising the income limit for MSP.

Sewage Spill Alerts

Sewage Spill Alert legislation recognizes that sewage spills can impact our health and property as well as our waterways and beaches. The new law will inform the public whenever a sewage spill occurs by requiring the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to post information on sewage spills on the agency's website beginning in July, 2014.

Racial Profiling

Too many individuals in our communities continue to suffer from bias based on their appearance. We strengthened an existing law aimed at stopping police from profiling motorists based on race during traffic stops.

