



Dear Neighbors,

Thank you once again for the confidence you have shown me, by electing me to represent your interests in Hartford. This session I have had the opportunity to serve the legislature, and you, as the House Chair of the Select Committee on Aging. It has been an interesting experience to serve not only as a leader in the caucus but now as a chair of a committee. Some key issues I addressed in this committee was monitoring assisted living facilities and making sure that ConnPACE continues to be a supportive program for our elderly residents.

Again, I enjoy serving you. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Serra  
State Representative, 33rd District

## Stay Informed...

TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION on any of the following issues, please fill out this form and mail it to me, e-mail or call my office. Make sure to give your name and mailing address and indicate which issues you're interested in. My contact information is on the mailing address panel.

- Seniors
- Business
- Land Use
- Environment
- Crime
- Education
- Children
- Municipalities

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm proud  
to represent the  
33rd State  
House District

Middletown

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### AID FOR THE 33rd HOUSE DISTRICT

A very important part of my job representing the 33rd House District is ensuring Middletown receives its fair share of state funding. I am pleased to report the following grants and reimbursements from the state:

|                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Total Education Grants             | \$18,531,172 |
| Total Town Aid Road Fund (TAR)     | \$ 303,632   |
| Mashantucket Pequot/Mohegan Grants | \$ 1,991,229 |
| Local Capital Improvements (LoCIP) | \$ 337,637   |
| Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)   | \$ 9,396,236 |

**Totals \$30,559,906**

This funding is  
an increase of  
**\$2,589,634** over  
last year's total.



### DORMANCY FEES ON INACTIVE DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS

I introduced legislation that stops banks and financial institutions from imposing a fee on dormant deposit accounts with no notification. These are accounts that have had no activity for three or more years. With no notification many account holders have been charged a fee without their knowledge. The legislature this session passed PA 07-2, which requires that all banks send a notice to the account holder's last known address. This must be done within 45 days of determining that the account will be going inactive. To ensure that the depositor understands that a fee will now be assessed, the notice shall be printed in capital letters stating that the account is now considered to be dormant. This will stop fees from being accessed to your accounts without your knowledge.



### Senior Driving Insurance Discount

As of October 1st, drivers who are age 60 years and up will be eligible for an automobile insurance policy premium discount. They will need to successfully complete an approved, Department of Motor Vehicles accident prevention course. Current law covers drivers aged 62 and up, so this change will provide a greater opportunity for many more to save money and drive safe. For more information contact your AAA office or the AARP, currently approved to be providers of this course.

## 2007 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

### Teachers Pensions

I am proud to report that this session my colleagues and I took steps to shore up the finances of the Connecticut's Teachers' Retirement Fund (TRF) and ultimately save taxpayers an estimated \$2.8 billion over 25 years. There has been a history of short-changing on the state's contribution to the Fund and, as a result, the TRF's unfunded liability has grown to an astonishing \$6.9 billion. This legislation authorizes the sale of \$2 billion in pension obligation bonds (POBs), payable over the next 25 years at current interest rates (about 5.6%). The debt from the POB sales will cost less than the rate the state is currently being charged (8.5%) on unfunded liability. The transaction is similar to refinancing a mortgage at a more favorable interest rate. Over the life of the bonds, the state will be committed to making annual payments into the fund equal to 100% of what the actuaries for the fund say is required. Had the state funded it at 100% of the recommended contribution over the past 13 years, the Fund would have accrued an additional \$2.5 billion in additional investment income.

I am pleased that this legislation will finally bring the state's unfunded liability under control. This plan will put the TRF on the road to fiscal health, while saving taxpayers billions. It will allow the state to meet its obligation to our educators by ensuring that teachers receive the pensions they have counted on and deserve. Finally, a stronger TRF will ensure that Connecticut will continue to attract and retain highly qualified teachers who can provide an excellent education to our students.

### Assisted Living



Greater protection to assisted living residents will now be provided by having such facilities submit to new regulations. These facilities will need to provide each resident with a written service plan, arrange for the provision of ancillary medical services (physical and dental services, home health hospice care), and maintain written reports on the scope of services provided. Finally, they will not control or manage the financial affairs or personal property of any resident.

All residents will also receive a written bill of rights and responsibilities that prescribes at least the following: to live in a clean, safe and habitable private room and be treated with consideration, respect and due recognition of personal dignity; to have their communications remain private; to have the freedom to participate in community services; and to retain the use of one's own personal property.

I strongly believe in promoting these facilities, as they allow our elderly a greater sense of self-sufficiency while at the same time providing them with a safe managed residential community in which to live.



State Representative Joseph C. Serra 33rd DISTRICT

### Newsbriefs

#### GIFT CERTIFICATES

Gift certificates have become the "rage" of shoppers who want to give a gift that allows someone to choose something they really need or want. The question then becomes how long these gift certificates are good for. I want to remind you that we voted to make expiration dates a thing of the past on gift certificates. This bill has protected the consumer from losing the value of their purchase.



#### PROTECTING YOUR IDENTITY

In order to better secure your identity, the Department of Public Health is now requiring all new employees to submit to a state and national criminal background check prior to starting a job in the State Vital Records Office. The security of the Vital Records Office is essential because these employees have access not only to confidential birth records, but also to the supplies that create birth certificates. This makes criminal background checks necessary because if these materials fell into the wrong hands, false identities could be created by using your personal information. This action should further secure your information!



#### OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING

When you need to hire a contractor the first thing you need to do is ask if they are licensed by the State of Connecticut. If they are they will have a license number, which will allow you to check on them with the Department of Consumer Protection. Too many times Connecticut residents have been victimized by unlicensed contractors! I am happy to report that a bill that I submitted this session has passed and it tightens up licensing laws. The Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection now has the ability to enforce licensing, certification and registration laws, thus helping to put a stop to unlicensed contractors operating in our state.



### Firefighters!

#### FIREFIGHTER I TRAINING

The Connecticut General Assembly, realizing the high cost of training our paid and volunteer firefighters, will be reimbursing municipalities and state agencies for one-half the cost of the Firefighter I certification program.

#### CREATING AN INTRASTATE MUTUAL AID SYSTEM

While emergency management and homeland security are responsibilities shared by all levels of government, the 'first responders' are usually local employees, officials, and volunteers. This bill gives these front line, first responders an additional tool to help them respond and recover from an emergency more efficiently and effectively. No community possesses all of the resources needed to adequately respond to and manage a large-scale emergency by itself. The bill as proposed will be beneficial in disaster situations because it includes all municipalities, allowing towns anywhere in the state to help one another, not just neighboring towns. It enacts and commits municipalities to the terms of the Intrastate Mutual Aid Compact. The compact provides a legal framework for towns to request and provide mutual aid when any member town declares a local civil preparedness emergency. Any town may withdraw and a town's obligation to provide aid under the compact is subject to certain conditions. In the event of a disaster, this bill will hopefully prove to be a great asset in responding quickly and efficiently.

### FALSE ALARM!

The legislature is cracking down on the serious offense of misusing the E-911 system. As of July 1, 2007, individuals convicted of misusing the E-911 emergency system will be given a class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to six months, or both. "Misuse" is defined as calling in a false alarm or purposefully reporting false information. This new law extends beyond land-line telephones to mobile devices. A monthly fee to fund the E-911 program will be charged to those who subscribe to companies that offer voice over internet protocol (VOIP), which enables a router to transmit telephone calls and faxes over the Internet, or companies providing pre-paid phone services.