



## Strengthening Connecticut Schools

The difference in the achievement levels among Connecticut schools is one of the highest in the nation. We took steps to help turn around low-achieving schools, increase our chances for federal education dollars, improve our vocational high schools and help students with autism.

*The legislation:*

- » Strengthens the state's application for federal Race to the Top education funds
- » Develops new programs to help turn around low-achieving schools
- » Requires public hearings before school closures and increases parent involvement
- » Ensures adequate staff and supplies
- » Makes sure students with autism get quality services through their special education individualized education plans (IEP)
- » Improves vocational schools by adding manufacturing and vocational education experience to the state Board of Education criteria

State Representative  
**JOSEPH SERRA**

sign up for email updates:  
[www.housedems.ct.gov/Serra](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/Serra)

## Saluting Our Veterans

This session we were able to honor our veterans by passing the following legislation:

- » Veterans in nursing homes can now use the VA as their pharmacy, saving money for veterans and taxpayers
- » Honorably discharged retired veterans with 30 years or more of service can now apply for retirement promotions and move up one grade in rank
- » Active duty service members out of state will get an extension for 30 days to renew their expired driver's licenses after their return to Connecticut
- » March 30th is now designated as the official Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Commemoration Day
- » Veterans can now use their military service experience and training as academic credit for certain technical certificates and licenses

[www.housedems.ct.gov/Serra](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/Serra)

State Representative

# Joseph Serra

Proudly Serving Middletown | 33<sup>rd</sup> District

STATE REPRESENTATIVE of the CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Legislative Office Building  
Room 4021  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
Capitol: 860.240.8585  
Home: 860.347.0119  
[www.housedems.ct.gov/Serra](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/Serra)

STATE REPRESENTATIVE of the CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY



CAPITOL  
OFFICE  
2010

State Representative

# Joseph Serra

Proudly Serving Middletown | 33<sup>rd</sup> District



# Joseph Serra

Proudly Serving Middletown | 33<sup>rd</sup> District



If you need additional assistance or have questions, please contact me:

**State Representative Joseph Serra**

Capitol Phone 860.240.8585

District Phone 860.347.0119

[www.housedems.ct.gov/Serra](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/Serra)

### Motorcycle Safety

New motorcycle riders will now need to take a safety-training course before getting their licenses. Once the rider is licensed, the course can also help reduce insurance costs.

### Credit for Fishing & Hunting Licenses

Sports enthusiasts who bought their licenses early this year and paid a higher price will be eligible for a credit that will be applied to the next license, permit, or tag purchase. The DEP will reserve the credit and apply it to purchases made after October 1, 2010.

### Good News for Seniors

As the Chair of the Aging Committee, I am pleased to report on the following legislation:

#### Reducing Costs for Homecare Services

Seniors using the CT Homecare Program for Elders will soon see a reduction in their monthly costs for critical in-home services, such as meal deliveries and personal care assistance. The budget reduces the percentage seniors pay for these services from 15% to 6% -- saving the average client nearly \$100 each month.

#### Supporting Services for Alzheimer's Patients

Last year's budget protected the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, which provides small grants to family members caring for people with Alzheimer's to fund personal care, home health and adult day care services. Governor Rell closed the program in 2009, but working with advocates, the legislature was able to re-open the program in May, allowing Connecticut families to receive these important services.

#### Improving the Senior Driver Discount Program

New legislation encourages seniors to keep their driving skills sharp by making it easier to qualify for safe driver discounts. People age 60 and older will now be able to complete a shorter, 4-hour driving program to be eligible for a two-year discount of 5% or more on their automobile insurance.

#### Protecting Seniors from the Medicaid Spend-Down

New legislation will help seniors protect their assets when their spouse needs to enter a nursing home. Under current law, the spouse remaining at home must spend-down half of his or her assets in order to allow the ill spouse to qualify for Medicaid coverage. This year, we increased the asset cap, so that the couple can keep assets up to \$110,000 and still qualify the ill spouse for Medicaid.



## A BALANCED BUDGET *for* CONNECTICUT

### - On Time and On Target

Partnering with Governor Rell, we balanced the state's budget - on time and without any tax increases. The budget contains no cuts in municipal aid funds and a \$60 average decrease in electric bills for many residents.

This year's budget bill included \$163 million in additional spending cuts across a host of state agencies and a reduction of \$300 million from a previous borrowing plan.

*We erased a \$10 billion deficit, balancing the budget on time and on target.*

The spending cuts are deep, but necessary. Thankfully, we protected the services critically important to Middletown, including:

- » \$10,293,920 in Town aid funding for Middletown
- » \$18,075,848 in Education funding for Middletown
- » Funding for programs that assist seniors and the disabled
- » Maintained funding for hospitals, schools, libraries, and courthouses

*We also provided a helping hand, through:*

- » Guaranteeing an average 60% reduction to a fee on your electric bill
- » \$500 individual property tax credit to help offset local property taxes
- » Funding for programs that help prevent mortgage foreclosure

*Additional good news for state residents this summer:*

- » We reduced last year's increase on state park fees and fishing/hunting licenses

### Town Aid for Middletown

Fiscal Year 2010-2011	
Total Education Grants	\$18,075,848
Town Aid Road Fund Grant	\$304,908
Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP)	\$322,483
Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$7,279,560
Pequot/Mohegan Aid	\$1,235,743
School Transportation	\$1,151,226
<b>Total State Funds</b>	<b>\$28,369,768</b>

### Safer Sports Student Athletes & Concussions

Head injuries in school sports are often hard to diagnose and have turned tragic.

To avoid serious long-term injuries we enacted new protections:

- » Student athletes who sustain head injuries will need medical clearance before re-joining athletic activity
- » Athletic coaches will now be trained to recognize and respond to concussions
- » Anyone with a coach's permit issued by the State Board of Education will need to complete the course by the start of their sports season next school year
- » The state school board can revoke a permit if any requirements are not followed

### Keep Your Eyes on the Road

As incidents of distracted driving continue and cell phone technology advances, we updated our laws to keep our roads safe.

- » The cell phone ban is now extended to texting
- » Fines for using a cell phone while driving are increased

### Giving Towns A Voice in Placements of Sex Offenders

New restrictions limit where state sex offender facilities can be located. Prior to construction, state agencies must now consider the proximity to schools, roads, daycare centers, and have at least five potential locations to choose from.

### Creating Jobs Number One Priority

Working with the Governor, we passed a significant new jobs bill that will help put Connecticut on the road to economic recovery with:

- » Up to \$500,000 in loans and lines of credit for small businesses and nonprofits
- » Student loan reimbursement for careers in new and emerging fields
- » Personal income tax credits for investments in new technology businesses
- » Sales tax exemptions for machinery, supplies and fuel in renewable energy industries
- » Tax credits for small businesses of up to \$200 per month per new employee
- » Up to \$150,000 in pre-seed financing and technical services to businesses developing innovative concepts
- » Streamlining of the business permitting process
- » Changes to the film tax credit program that will create more jobs in Connecticut

### Social Services Maximizing Federal Dollars

To increase the amount of federal funding that comes to Connecticut to provide programs for those in need; we passed a bill that will match federal money with private sector funding. Millions of federal dollars under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Contingency Fund (TANF) will be available to social service non-profits who also receive private dollars. The money will be disbursed through the state's Office of Policy and Management.

