



Rep. Serra at a State Capitol bill signing with Gov. Dannel P. Malloy

Highway Rest Stops Saved

Safety was the top concern that scrapped plans to mothball the state's non-commercial interstate highway rest areas.

The state Department of Transportation was scheduled to close the two rest stops on I-84 in Willington on July 1 and the other rest areas in Danbury, Middletown, North Stonington, Southington and Wallingford in 2012. Because truckers have mandated rest periods and even non-commercial drivers need to stop on long trips, the planned closings were cancelled.

Prostate Cancer Treatments

Current law required certain individual and group health plans to cover laboratory and diagnostic tests to detect prostate cancer in men. A new law expands coverage to include treatment if it is "medically necessary" (guidelines by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network and the American Cancer Society).

Photo Identification of Drivers Age 65 or Older

DMV will no longer be able to waive the requirement of a photo for people age 65 or older. Federal law requires state-issued driver's licenses and ID cards include a photo of the card holder.

Health Insurance Coverage for Bone Marrow Testing

Bone marrow transplants are effective treatments for many life threatening diseases, including Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Leukemia and other cancers. A blood test is used to screen potential donors for a bone marrow match increasing the number of people tested and added to the donor list, we can increase the potential for patients to find a bone marrow donor match and decreasing the number of patients on the wait list. Finding a match sooner and completing a transplant also decreases the amount of time patients are on the waiting list before a transplant, reducing the cost of medical treatment.

The cost to the potential donor of undergoing bone marrow testing is a significant barrier to expanding participation in bone marrow donation. This bill will require certain health insurance policies to cover testing to determine compatibility for bone marrow transplants. The bill requires a policy to cover testing at a certified and accredited facility and cover people who sign up for the National Marrow Donor Program when being tested.

www.housedems.ct.gov/Serra

State Representative

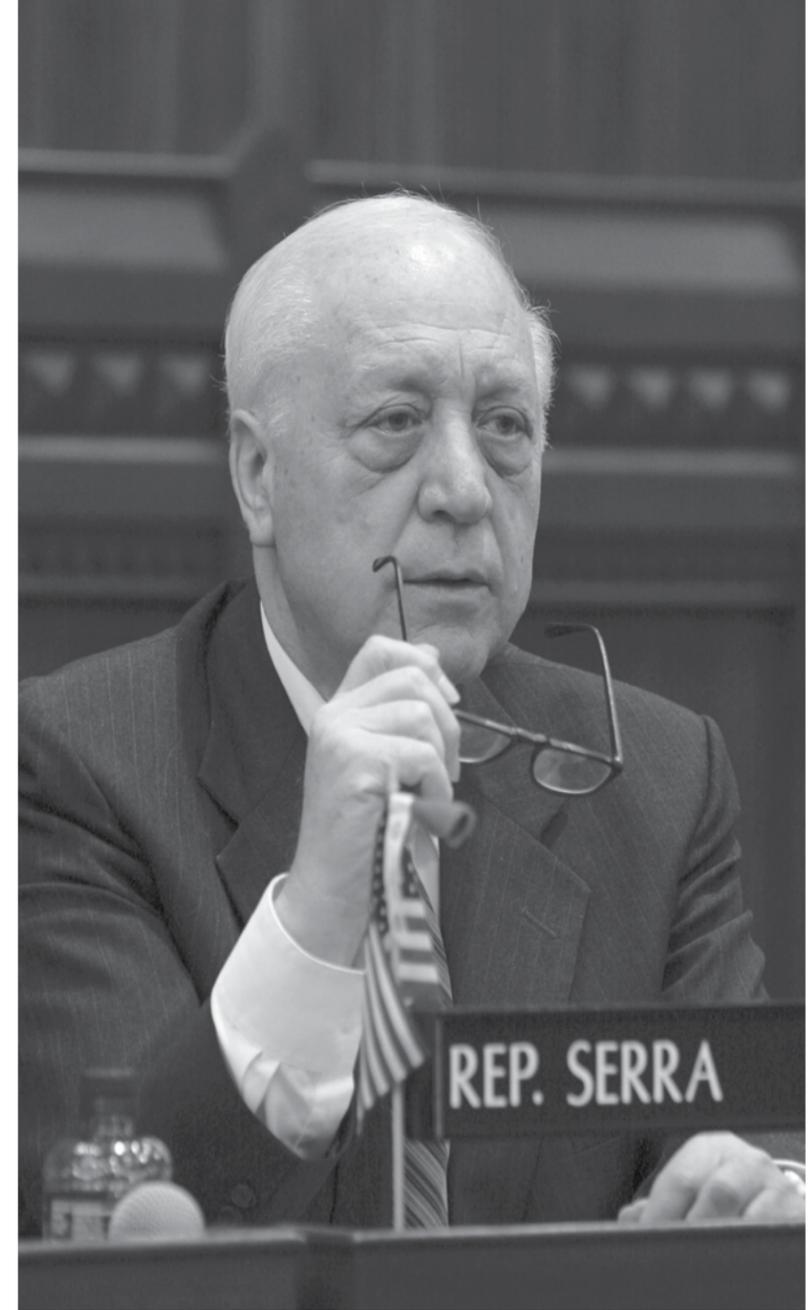
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Development Incentives

Governor Malloy has signed the “First Five” legislation that provides incentives for up to five business development projects that commit to creating at least 200 new jobs each. We will also continue to work with Governor Malloy to prioritize bonding for infrastructure improvement projects that will create jobs.

Jobs Through Health Care Savings

Last year’s bill permitting municipalities to purchase prescription drug coverage through the state plan was both successful and cost effective. To provide people access to quality, affordable health care plan coverage, I supported legislation that extends opportunities for savings to cities, towns and non-profits. The state could save tens of millions of dollars, municipalities can potentially relieve pressure on local property taxes.

Paid Sick Leave

This year, the legislature passed the first in the nation employee paid sick leave bill to let employees earn time off without fear of losing pay or their job. The bill includes exemptions for manufacturers and certain non-profit organizations. This landmark bill will help prevent the spread of disease at restaurants, daycare centers and within the workplace for both employees and the public.

Job Applicants Take Note of Credit Checks

Effective October 1, 2011 you cannot be forced to consent to a credit inquiry as a condition of employment, and you can file a complaint with the labor commissioner if required to do so.

Connecticut Airport Authority

The Connecticut Airport Authority is a new quasi-public authority created to operate and develop Bradley International and the state’s five smaller airports (in Killingly, Groton, Hartford, Oxford and Windham). The bill will allow these airports to become better economic engines for the regions they serve, both in Connecticut and for New England. The bill creates a new 11-member board composed of public and private sector representatives to replace the existing Bradley Board of Directors.

The authority’s members would be appointed by the governor and legislative leaders. The panel would also include the commissioners of the state Departments of Transportation and Economic and Community Development, as well as the State Treasurer. The authority’s private-sector appointees are business leaders with expertise in financial planning, budgeting, marketing, master or strategic planning or transportation management. Unlike the existing oversight board, a largely advisory panel that guided the state Department of Transportation in the administration of Bradley, the new authority will be empowered to hire staff, retain consultants, procure goods and services and enter into contracts, issue bonds, borrow funds, and apply for federal and state assistance.



Rep. Serra with grandchildren

Carbon Monoxide Detectors In All Public Schools

We are all aware of the dangers associated with carbon monoxide, but there were no regulations to protect our children and our teachers during the school day. This bill requires the installation of carbon monoxide detectors in our schools by January 1, 2012. This safety precaution is long overdue!

Reporting Child and Animal Abuse

Research has shown there is a strong connection between animal abuse, child abuse and domestic violence. Connecticut has passed a landmark bill that will require the cross reporting of child abuse and animal cruelty. Animal control officers and Department of Children and Family employees must now report to the state Department of Agriculture Commissioner when an animal is suspected of being either;

- harmed
- neglected
- treated with cruelty

Safer Batting Cages

This bill requires any person under the age of 18 to wear protective headgear (a helmet) before entering, and while using, a commercial batting cage. According to manufacturers, pitching machines have the capability of pitching from 70-100 mph and, without a helmet, anyone in a batting cage is at risk for serious injury including concussions, blindness, facial fractures, permanent brain injury, and more.

School Breakfast

The legislature has increased the eligibility for the school breakfast program by expanding the program. Students learn best with proper nutrition and that starts with breakfast.

Care 4 Kids

The Department of Social Services (DSS) must now post a notice on its website and provide written notice to program participants and providers when it makes any changes to the Care4Kids program (the state’s subsidized child care program).

Protecting Children Against Bullying

We expanded Connecticut’s anti-bullying law to include bullying, harassment and intimidation using the Internet or mobile phones, commonly known as cyber bullying. The law requires all public school employees to annually be trained on how to deal with these situations, prohibits retaliation against those who report bullying, and makes school principals responsible for investigating and addressing bullying incidents.

Educating our Children

This year, we have taken a number of steps to ensure that all children have access to a quality education and opportunities for academic excellence, through:

- New efforts to close the achievement gap
- Tools for underperforming schools
- Streamlining the process to get qualified teachers in charter schools
- New Early Childhood Education Cabinet

We also have markedly increased the educational requirements for teachers and early childhood educators in state-funded programs. By 2015, 50 percent of the teaching staff must have a degree in early childhood education, childhood development or a related field, or they must have a teaching certificate with an endorsement in early childhood or special education. By 2020, all teaching staff must have one of those degrees.

Meeting Children’s Special Needs

This bill clarifies the responsibility of school districts to promptly pursue consent for evaluations whenever it is suspected that a child requires special education or related services. Once the consent is granted, the evaluation must be completed within 60 days (with some exceptions) according to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Qualifying Substitute Teachers

The Commissioner of Education has been given the power to issue waivers to local school districts to employ substitute teachers who do not hold bachelor’s degrees, but otherwise are qualified to work as substitute teachers.

Expanding Early Childhood Education

This bill creates a coordinated system of early care, education and child development. It requires collaboration with local and regional early childhood councils to implement the system at the local level. To accomplish this transition, the State Department of Education’s Office of Early Childhood Planning, Outreach, and Coordination is eliminated and the Early Childhood Education Cabinet is expanded to include members of the departments of Education, Social Services, Higher Education, Public Health, Developmental Services, Children and Families, and Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Expanding Educational Opportunities

Students who have been expelled from school face challenges in continuing their education during the expulsion period. Those students who opt to attend adult education classes during this time have been forced to withdraw from the regular school system, leaving them no incentive to return to the classroom. This bill allows expelled students to enroll in an adult education program as an alternative educational opportunity without having to officially withdraw from the regular school system, protecting their access to the opportunities afforded by a traditional education.

