



### HOMEMAKER COMPANION AGENCIES

I was asked to ensure that individuals working for Homemaker Companion Agencies have a comprehensive background check. Legislation was passed this session to protect some of our most vulnerable residents. The new law requires that homemaker companion agencies notify clients in writing that a comprehensive background check was performed before sending an employee to a client's residence for the first time. The legislation also adds additional consumer protections to agency contracts, including specifying payment obligations and when contracts between the agency and the client are enforceable and can be cancelled.

### PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

To protect patient's drug coverage we will now require that health insurance companies cover prescriptions filled in a synchronized manner as long as the patient, their doctor and their pharmacist approve these medication plans.

### WINTER HEATING ASSISTANCE

The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) has started early intake for winter heating assistance, with applications available through Community Action Agencies. Energy assistance includes oil, gas, electric, propane, wood, coal and kerosene heat. For more information call 2-1-1.

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE Joseph C. Serra PROUDLY SERVING MIDDLETOWN | 33RD DISTRICT

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# CAPITOL UPDATE 2013

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## ISSUE BRIEFS

### LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

We have demonstrated our commitment to giving seniors a choice in their long term care and support services by passing legislation that requires the Commission on Aging to establish and facilitate partnerships with municipal leaders, planning and zoning boards and social services organizations to encourage collaborative efforts for long-term care planning.

### CO-PAYMENTS FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY

Co-payments for physical therapy have risen in recent years creating a deterrent for patients seeking these essential services. Physical therapy may require multiple visits per week over the course of several weeks or months in order for the patient to regain strength and mobility and avoid chronic injuries and future health costs. This new law limits co-pays for visits to in-network physical therapists to \$30 per visit.

### ALZHEIMER'S TASK FORCE

According to the Alzheimer's Association, there are over 70,000 Connecticut residents with Alzheimer's or related dementia and this number is expected to grow, posing important challenges for both families and our long-term care infrastructure. In response, the Public Health Committee passed legislation convening an Alzheimer's Task Force to create a comprehensive, strategic plan for strengthening services and support for patients and their loved ones. I will serve on this committee as the Co-chair. The task force will bring together state agencies, health care professionals, service providers, and caregivers to make recommendations on how best to prepare for the needs of this population.

## Let's Keep In Touch

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# Connecticut's Economy

### REMOVING THE ENERGY AUCTION

After hearing from so many of you regarding the proposed energy auction, which would have sold off standard offer customers, I became a leader in the fight to remove it from the budget. Connecticut energy costs are already too high, and this one-time revenue gain would have pushed those costs even higher.

### JOB GROWTH

Both the House and the Senate unanimously supported the passage of a bill to encourage Connecticut manufacturers to recruit, hire, and train apprentices, that will better prepare Connecticut's workforce for manufacturing jobs in the future. This legislation increases the hourly tax credit per apprentice and, as part of a coordinated approach with the state's public schools, colleges, and private sector companies, will ensure a well-trained, experienced workforce here in Connecticut.

### SMALL BUSINESS EXPRESS PROGRAM

We increased our investment in the Small Business Express program, which provides loans and matching grants to businesses with 100 or fewer employees. Funds were moved from the Manufacturing Assistance Act program into the Small Business Express account so that more funds will be available for this very successful program that has helped many small businesses in the state to create jobs.

### STATE BUDGET

Despite the difficulties surrounding our biennial budget, I am proud to have not only maintained, but increased funding for the 33rd District. I have been committed to preserving the safety net our communities depend on while keeping property taxes down and I was able to accomplish both of these goals.

This 2013-2014 budget passed by the General Assembly includes:

- Major investment in science and technology at the University of Connecticut;
- Funding for the landmark public education reforms passed in 2012;
- Continues funding for Economic Development programs;
- Funding for our cities and towns.

## VETERANS

### VIETNAM VETERANS DIPLOMAS

This law allows boards of education to issue an honorary diploma to any veteran who did not complete high school due to service in the armed forces during the Vietnam era.

### MILITARY LEAVE

To ensure that our state armed forces receive the same employment protections afforded to employees who are U.S. Armed Forces Reservists or National Guard members, we passed legislation to provide more uniform workplace protections for our servicemen and servicewomen.

### VETERAN RESOURCES

We have streamlined access to programs and assistance for our veterans by requiring cities and towns that do not have a veterans' service contact to appoint a municipal employee who will act as an ombudsman to guide veterans to the appropriate resources.

### VETERANS RELIEF FUND

This will provide grants to help families pay for essential household goods or services by expanding the group of eligible grant recipients who are unable to pay for certain expenses due to their military service.



Rep. Joe Serra speaking to visiting school children

### SCHOOL SAFETY

Parents need peace of mind knowing that their children are safe in their schools. Many districts have armed school resource officers and others have security guards. This law requires that an armed guard working in a school must meet certain requirements. If they are not a police officer, they must be a retired police officer or state trooper who was in good standing at the time of their retirement. They must also complete firearms training from the Police Officer Standards and Training Council on school security. This law ensures that if an armed guard in a school is not a current police officer they are receiving the same training on school security and firearms as active on duty police officers.