

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JOSEPH C. SERRA

PROUDLY SERVING THE 33RD DISTRICT | MIDDLETOWN

Dear Neighbor:

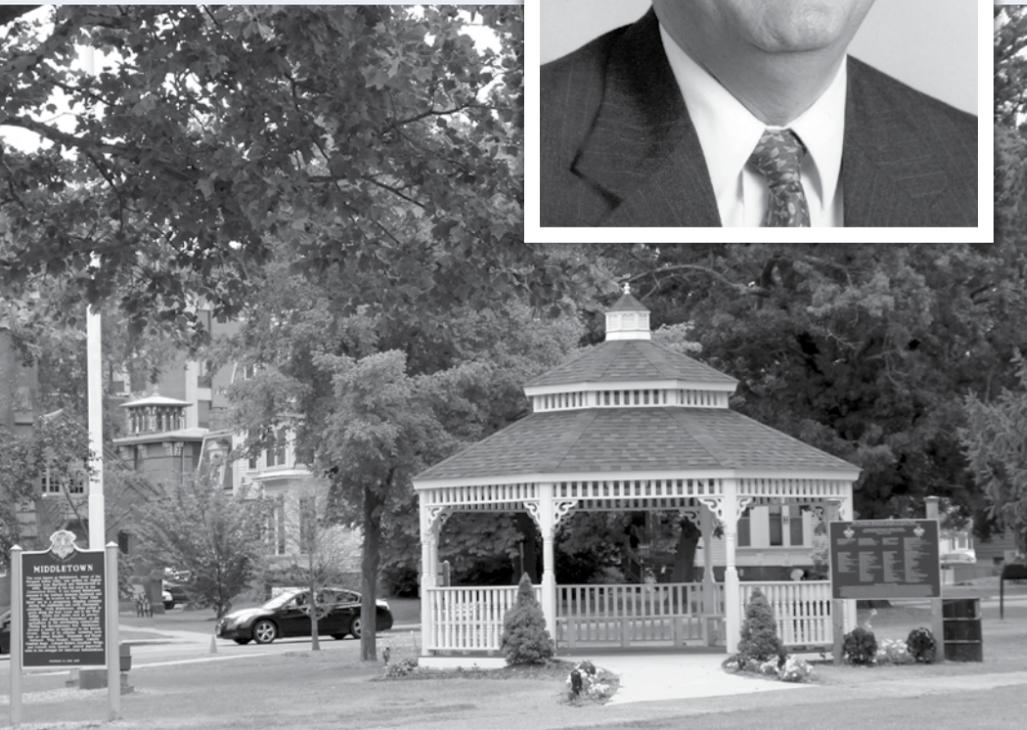
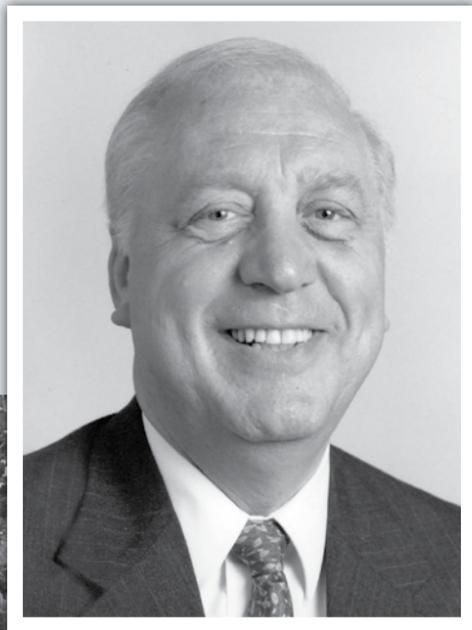
The 2014 legislative session ended recently and I wanted to update you on some of the issues we discussed. This year was a short three-month session and I am proud of the work we accomplished within this short time span.

We adopted a balanced budget with no new taxes, worked in a bipartisan manner to increase funding for education, enabled more children to attend pre-school, and we made additional investments in job creation programs such as STEP-UP, which encourages employers to hire veterans and the unemployed.

If you have any questions regarding any issues, do not hesitate to contact me.

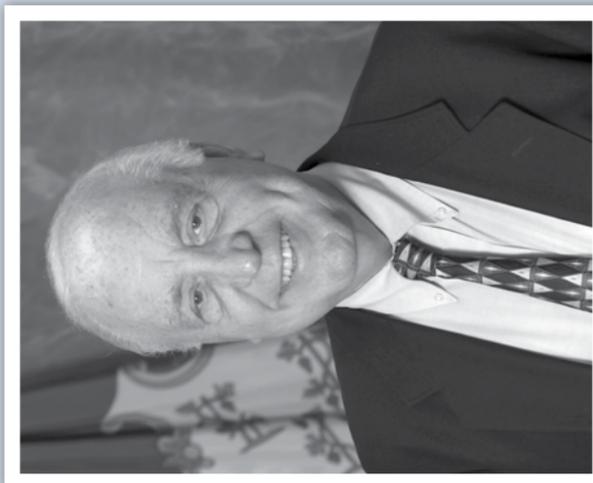


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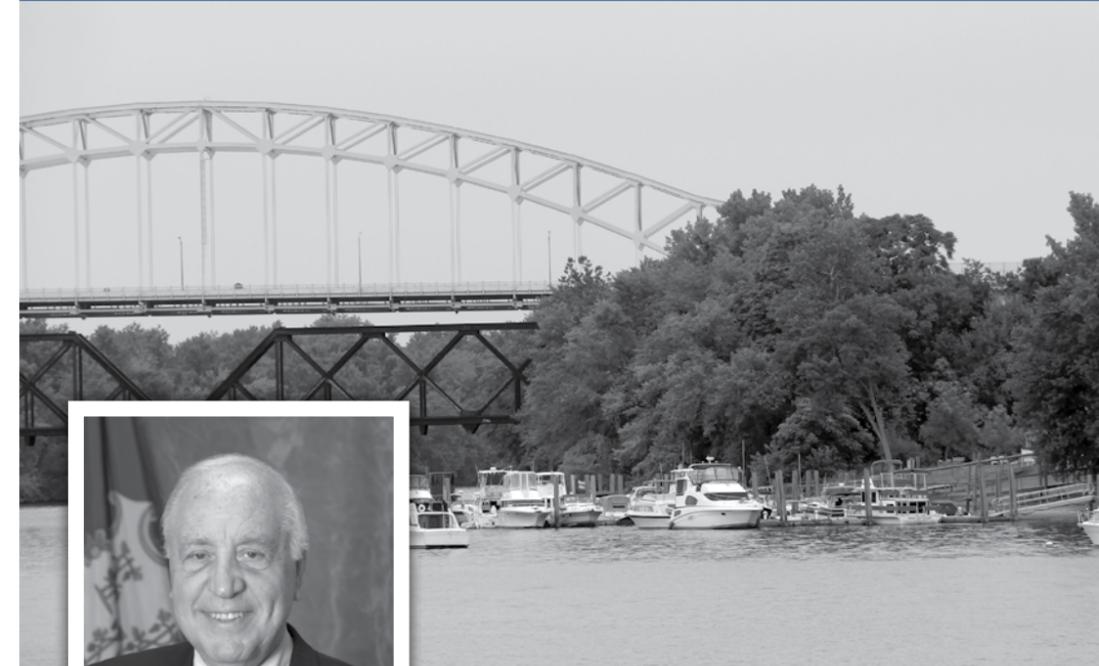
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CHARTER OAK PASS

The Charter Oak Pass provides access to the State Parks and Forests and is available free to Connecticut residents, 65 years of age or older. The pass is accepted at all day use areas where a parking fee applies. Presenting it allows free access for the entering vehicle and passengers. The pass holder does not have to be the vehicle driver. Free admittance is also provided for the Charter Oak pass holder when visiting Gillette Castle, Dinosaur State Park or Fort Trumbull State Park, or fishing at the Quinebaug Valley Hatchery. All other visitors, however, will be required to pay the appropriate fee. A Charter Oak Pass may be obtained in person at the following locations (Proof of age and residency required): DEEP State Parks Division, 79 Elm Street, Hartford Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm (860) 424-3200 or Dinosaur State Park, West Street, Rocky Hill 9:00 am - 4:30 pm (closed Mondays) (860) 529-5816.

SENIOR ISSUES

As the Co-Chair of the Aging Committee, I am extremely proud to report on the following issues:

HELPING SENIORS STAY IN THEIR HOMES

This year we created a \$6 million grant program for home modifications and other assisting technology that will allow people to remain in their homes longer. This program is open to seniors and individuals with disabilities who are at risk of being unable to live independently without the modifications.

SENIORS ON THE QMB PROGRAM

Currently seniors in the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program are prohibited from purchasing any of the Medicare supplemental insurance policies. We passed a law this year that allows seniors on the QMB Program to qualify to purchase Medicare Supplement Policies.

RENTERS' REBATE

This year we re-opened the Renters' Rebate program to eligible seniors and individuals with permanent disabilities to receive partial reimbursements related to rental payments.

LIFE INSURANCE PREMIUM PAYMENTS

Many seniors rely on a relative to pay their premiums in a timely manner, so we passed a pro-consumer law that will give policyholders the opportunity to have someone else notified if their policy is in danger of lapsing due to nonpayment.

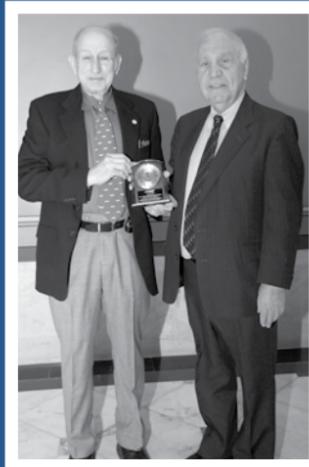
VETERAN'S ISSUES

STOLEN VALOR

It's a crime to lie about receiving a military medal or other Congressional decoration with the intent to fraudulently obtain money, property or other tangible benefits. It is also a crime to wear a military uniform with the intent to commit fraud. Violators can receive a fine between \$500 and \$1,000, up to six months imprisonment, or both.

SECURITY DEPOSIT GUARANTEES

The Veteran's Housing Program allows the Commissioner of Housing to prioritize our state's veterans applications. An enrollee in the program may receive a security deposit equal to two months' rent.



Bob Rodman, AARP Advocacy Volunteer, presents Rep. Joe Serra with the Legislative Leadership Award

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GASOLINE STATIONS

- Many gas stations offer a discount to their customers who pay for their gasoline with cash. However, even though many people consider their debit card to be the same as cash, many gas stations treat them as credit cards and do not give the discount, which is not always clear from the wording at the pump. It is now required that gas stations provide a clear notice at the pump on whether debit card transactions are treated as cash or credit. Gas stations will also be required to place a notice on each self-service pump informing handicapped drivers on how to contact or notify the station attendant for refueling assistance.

PRE-K

- The newly established office of Early Childhood will develop a plan to improve access to preschool programs and achieve universal pre-K in Connecticut. In the meantime, we have increased school readiness reimbursements and added 1,020 new preschool slots.

VO-TECH SCHOOLS

- In order to increase the number of students enrolled in agriculture, science, and technology programs, the legislature increased tuition payments that the state will pay to vo-tech schools who offer these programs by \$500 per student.

ADULT EDUCATION

- Students who dropped out of college before earning a bachelor's degree will be eligible to take three free courses at a CT State College or Community College.

CHET BABY SCHOLARS

- This program will provide a one-time incentive of \$100 to families of CT children who open a Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET) 529 savings account by the child's first birthday, or within the first year of adoption.

MIDDLETOWN FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 STATE AID

Education Cost Sharing	\$19,648,776
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$2,570,975
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$4,154,834
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$1,254,785
School Transportation	\$677,741
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$319,254
Town Aid Roads	\$602,120
Adult Education	\$1,414,077
DECD Tax Abatement and MRSA Payments	\$1,868,907
Total State Funds to Middletown	\$32,511,469



MUNICIPALITIES

Many municipal leaders have testified before the legislature that state mandates have become a considerable burden on their budgets and for taxpayers. Some mandates not only cost towns significant revenue, they also take a substantial amount of time. The state legislature listened and removed some mandates that municipalities found to be non-essential.

Municipalities will now only have to report their delinquent taxes to the Department of Motor Vehicles once each month instead of being required to do so in the first two weeks of the months.

The state was also able to make valuable investments and provide additional funding to our municipalities **without raising taxes**. Cities and towns will see an additional \$80 million in funding for education costs, and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT).