

AGING

PATIENT-DESIGNATED CAREGIVERS

Some patients end up returning to the hospital soon after discharge because they had not been instructed properly on their follow-up care or were unable to follow instructions. The CARE, (Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable) Act, requires a hospital to document a caregiver in the patient's discharge plan, designated by the patient. They must attempt to notify the caregiver of the patient's discharge, and to instruct the caregiver on any post-discharge tasks with which the patient will need assistance.

(PA 15-32) Effective Date: October 1, 2015

HOSPITAL TRAINING AND PROCEDURES FOR PATIENTS WITH SUSPECTED DEMENTIA

Connecticut has seen an increase in the number of individuals being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. One of the recommendations from the Alzheimer's Task Force was to provide training for those hospital staff members who provide direct care to patients on how to identify the symptoms of dementia. This will help staff members know what to look for and how to better treat patients with dementia.

(PA 15-129) Effective Date: July 1, 2015

PROTECTING ELDERLY CONSUMERS FROM EXPLOITATION AND ADOPTING THE CONNECTICUT UNIFORM POWER OF ATTORNEY ACT

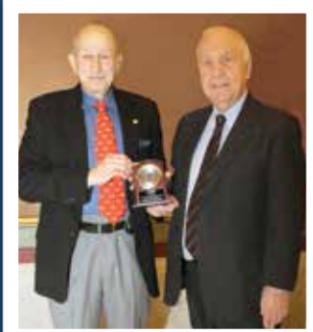
We have taken steps to protect our seniors from abuse and from being taken advantage of financially. This law adds a number of protections, including:

- EMTs are added to the list of mandated reporters of elder abuse.
- Certain financial agents must receive training on elderly fraud, exploitation, and financial abuse.
- Someone convicted of 1st or 2nd degree larceny or 1st degree abuse of an elderly or disabled person is prohibited from inheriting, receiving insurance benefits, or receiving certain property.

(PA 15-236) Effective Date: October 1, 2015



Discussing issues with visitors at the Legislative Office Building



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Dear Friend,

Thank you again for entrusting me with your vote. I am highlighting some of the issues we addressed this past session which I hope you will find helpful and informative. I currently serve as the Co-Chair of the Aging Committee, as well as a member of the Judiciary and Transportation Committees.

If I can ever be of service to you, please do not hesitate to call my assistant, Dawn Niles, at 860-240-0082, who will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,



Joseph C. Serra

CHILDHOOD LITERACY

The formative grades of K-3 are a critical time for students to learn how to read, and is also a time when interventions are most effective. A task force of the General Assembly found that one of the main reasons for our state's achievement gap is a lack of early childhood literacy programs. This year we required the State Department of Education to hire a Director of Reading Initiatives who is charged with implementing a statewide reading plan and coordinate the state's various reading initiatives.

PA 15-137 Effective Date: July 1, 2015

INVASIONS OF PRIVACY

The ease with which we can share images on the internet can result in far-reaching consequences for victims of voyeurism. This year we bolstered privacy protections for victims of voyeurism, what is commonly known as "revenge porn." We expanded the crime of voyeurism to cover trespassing and "up skirting" – when a victim's private area is photographed while clothed and without consent. We also required that investigation of these crimes must protect voyeurism victims' names, addresses and identifying information from being made public. Finally, recognizing that victims of "revenge porn" suffer reputational and psychological harm when their intimate images are distributed without their consent, we designated a new crime: "unlawful dissemination of an intimate image," a Class A misdemeanor.

PA 15-213 Effective Date: October 1, 2015

MIDDLETOWN FISCAL YEAR 2017 AID

Education Cost Sharing	\$19,861,550
Non-Public School Transportation	\$121,417
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$2,573,487
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$4,087,232
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$1,253,270
School Transportation	\$497,311
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$313,567
Town Aid Roads	\$597,667
Adult Education	\$1,316,885
DECD Tax Abatement and MRSA Payments	\$4,103,071
Total State Funds to Middletown	\$34,725,457

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Student loan debt is an issue that impacts many Connecticut families. Sixty-four percent of college graduates in our state have student loan debt. This year, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to create a Student Loan Bill of Rights, which establishes an Office of the Student Loan Ombudsman. This office will regulate student loan servicers, compile data on borrower complaints, develop a financial literacy education course for students, and will help student borrowers and their parents navigate the loan process.

In addition, the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) took historic steps toward increasing college affordability by announcing that it will offer its lowest fixed interest rate yet at 4.95%, down from its current rate of 6.75%. This rate is also significantly lower than the upcoming Federal PLUS loan rate of 6.84%. *PA 15-162 Effective Date: July 1, 2016 except for the Ombudsman position which is effective October 1, 2015*

SCHOOL BUDGETS

Since the state first implemented a Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR), school enrollment numbers have steadily declined. The rigid requirement that towns spend the same amount (or more) on education as they did the year before was creating a disincentive for towns to deliver education efficiently and collaboratively. This year we offered flexibility to towns with low rates of poverty that are experiencing declining enrollment. These towns can now set an education budget down to 3% below their MBR. The top 10% of our state's highest performing districts are now exempt from MBR; all other schools that are not in an Alliance District will be allowed to go down to 1.5% below their MBR.

PA 15-99 Effective Date: July 1, 2015

VETERANS

INCREASING SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VETERANS ON STATE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service (OASIS) helps members of the Armed Services receive grants and scholarships to purchase necessary school supplies when enrolling in educational programs. A new law asks for a study of how our colleges could implement the best services and practices into the OASIS program.

Special Act 15-1 Effective Date: Upon Passage

ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT WOMEN VETERANS' PROGRAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs will now be required to conduct benefits and services outreach for female veterans, and offer recommendations to the legislature on what types of service initiatives would be best for female veterans. It is critically important that we protect those who protect us and this legislation is a good way to honor these brave women.

PA 15-8 Effective Date: October 1, 2015

CREATING THE VETERANS TO AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

A new law establishes the Veterans to Agriculture Program, which will give a tax credit to veterans that have a gross income from agricultural production of over \$2,500. The program is facilitated by the Department of Agriculture and UConn, and will provide additional training and educational opportunities.

PA 15-117 Effective Date: Upon Passage

REGULATING THE USE OF SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT IN OUR SCHOOLS

It is critical to have a plan in place to ensure students' safety and to provide clear guidelines for school personnel when a student's behavior may warrant restraint. Key provisions of this law include prohibiting teachers, administrators, and other public school employees from using life-threatening or prone physical restraints on students. School employees may only place a student in seclusion to prevent immediate or imminent injury to the student or others, and are prohibited from using physical restraint or seclusion for the sole purposes of punishing the student, because it is convenient, or instead of a less restrictive alternative. The school board must also notify a parent immediately or at least within 24 hours of their child being secluded or restrained.

PA 15-141 Effective Date: July 1, 2015

REDUCING HEALTH CARE COSTS TO OUR CITIES AND TOWNS

Allowing municipal employees and retirees to join state employee health plans will considerably reduce healthcare costs for towns and cities around our state. The coverage costs are reduced because employees from participating towns would join a shared risk pool with state employees and other participating towns. The State Comptroller will be required to offer this coverage to towns and cities and to undertake certain actions to ensure that coverage is maintained.

PA 15-93 Effective Date: October 1, 2015