



Dear Neighbor,

Enclosed are summaries of bills passed regarding the interests of women in our state.

With bipartisan support, my colleagues and I worked together to deliver legislation that enhances the lives of women in terms of economic security, health, safety and gender equality. If you would like to read more about matters concerning women, go online and visit the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women's website at www.ctpcsw.com.

As I continue to work to improve our quality of life, please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions you may have relating to state issues.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Serra
State Representative

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOSEPH C. SERRA
REPRESENTING MIDDLETOWN | 33RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JOSEPH C. SERRA
PROUDLY SERVING MIDDLETOWN



WOMEN'S ISSUE

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4021
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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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PAY EQUITY AND FAIRNESS

Introduced by Governor Dannel P. Malloy, this bill passed with bipartisan support in both chambers (votes tallied for the House were 104-40 and for the Senate 29-7). This bill is a solid first step in addressing the lack of transparency in the workplace concerning wages. It means employers can no longer prevent employees from voluntarily discussing their own wages, or retaliating against anyone who does. This is critical, because one cannot fight gender-based pay discrimination if salaries cannot be compared.

THE PROCESSING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT EVIDENCE COLLECTION KITS

The bill is aimed at expediting the handling of critical evidence in sexual assault cases and will set up strict timelines during which police must retrieve rape evidence kits from hospitals and bring them to the state's forensic lab for testing. This will ensure that key DNA samples will be available to prosecutors in rape cases.

THE DEFINITION OF THE TERM "DOMESTIC WORKER"

For too long, people who work as caregivers in private homes have been unable to invoke labor protections under the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). Because of this new law, nearly 40,000 such workers have now gained the right to file a complaint with CHRO if they believe they've been discriminated against or exploited. The bill passed by a large margin of votes in the Senate (33-3) and in the House (130-14).

STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A governor's bill, this initiative says that a minor engaged in the sex trade is presumed to be a victim of trafficking rather than a prostitute. This protection now means that rather than enter into the criminal justice system, an underage sex worker will be connected with appropriate services for victims of sexual violence.

INVASION OF PRIVACY

This bill strengthens the state's laws against voyeurism and outlaws the sharing of intimate images without the subject's consent. This bill passed both chambers unanimously.

THE CONNECTICUT WOMEN VETERANS' PROGRAM

Longstanding programs for veterans were developed without the unique needs of women veterans in mind, and this bill acknowledges the need for information and services tailored for female vets. Both chambers voted unanimously to pass this bill.

PROTECTING INTERNS FROM WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

This bill received unanimous bipartisan support in both the Senate and the House. Unpaid interns, by virtue of their very status, as well as the power differential between an intern and a supervisor, are in particularly vulnerable positions with regard to sexual harassment. Previously, unpaid interns did not fall within the definition of "employee," and had no recourse in cases of sexual harassment. This bill will give these workers a voice.

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