



Majority Leader Sharkey discussing issues with Speaker Chris Donovan at the State Capitol.

Property Taxes – Holding The Line

Mayor Jackson, the Legislative Council and our Board of Education deserve much credit for carefully managing the Town's budget and keeping our property taxes stable. The General Assembly played a role in that too.

At the beginning of 2011, the state was facing a \$3.5 billion deficit in a roughly \$19 billion budget. To bring the budget into balance, most folks expected that Connecticut would follow what our surrounding states were doing – cutting municipal aid and education funding and balancing the state budget off the backs of cities and towns.

Instead, in June the legislature passed a balanced budget by increasing taxes on higher incomes, cutting spending and garnering concessions from state labor unions. Not a penny was cut from municipal aid and education, and towns and cities were spared from having to raise property taxes to fill the gap.

Sometimes, the best thing elected leaders accomplish in office is what they prevent from happening. With the size of the state deficit this year, preventing a huge mill rate increase in Hamden was my greatest achievement of the 2011 session.

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Rep. Brendan Sharkey
Legislative Office Building, Room 4106
Hartford, CT 06106

www.housedems.ct.gov/Sharkey

House Majority Leader

Brendan Sharkey

Proudly Serving Hamden | 88th District

HOUSE DEMOCRATS of CONNECTICUT

Legislative Office Building
Room 4106
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Capitol Phone 800.842.8267

Home Phone 203.281.4647

www.housedems.ct.gov/Sharkey



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Let's face it – 2011 has been a challenging year.

Mother Nature has certainly taken her toll on all of us. From record snowstorms, to a hurricane, and more record snow, we're all feeling a bit battered and beaten as the year comes to a close.

And as we all struggle to cope with a record economic downturn, our challenges in Hartford have mirrored those from nature. We began the year with a record \$3.5 billion deficit – the largest deficit of any state on a percentage basis. We faced a declining job market, an unemployment rate over 9 percent and an economy that had been stagnant for several years.

But just as we all came through the natural storms of 2011, I'm proud to say that the General Assembly, in cooperation with our new governor, took on the economic storms facing us, addressed them, and moved on to tackle the next.

By the end of June, the General Assembly passed a responsible, balanced budget without gimmicks or one-time fixes. As Hamden residents know from their stable property tax bills, the state budget was not balanced off the backs of our cities and towns by cutting municipal aid and education funding. Now, with half of the fiscal year behind us, the state budget remains in balance while our neighboring states are scrambling to close deficits and raise new taxes mid-year.

We then turned our attention to job creation and economic development. During a special session in October, we passed a bipartisan jobs bill that is already producing results, as well as a bond authorization that brings a world-renowned bio-science company to our state and makes Connecticut, in collaboration with UConn, Yale and other in-state institutions, the new epicenter for bio-science research and development.

Looking back, I can confidently say that in 2011 - my first year as the House Majority Leader – your state legislature faced the storms threatening our state and came out leaner, stronger and ready for the next challenge. As your state representative, I look forward to continuing that fight into 2012 and beyond.

CAPITOL REPORT 2011
HOUSE DEMOCRATS of CONNECTICUT

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State Representative Brendan Sharkey

If you need additional assistance or have questions, please contact me:

Capitol Phone 800.842.8267
Home Phone 203.281.4647
www.housedems.ct.gov/Sharkey

CAPITOL REPORT 2011

Creating Jobs

The legislature is tackling one of its biggest challenges – finding ways to encourage job growth in the face of a slow economic recovery. With fewer resources for spurring business expansion and creating jobs, we are implementing new measures where cities, towns and businesses can turn savings into jobs as well as creative new ways to attract business development.

This year I'm proud to have promoted job growth with:

- » Expansion of the UConn Health Center
- » Creation of a UConn Tech Park that will spur job creation
- » Initiatives to position Connecticut as the preeminent scientific research state in the country
- » Encouragement for large companies to add jobs under the "First Five" program
- » Efforts to save our vo-tech schools that teach the skills that put people to work
- » Financial incentives for small businesses to hire new employees



Rep. Sharkey talks on the floor of the House

A Balanced Budget

Working cooperatively with Governor Dannel Malloy, we crafted an historic budget to address the financial crisis brought on by the worst recession since the Great Depression. Our budget will stabilize the state's finances, streamline state government, and create jobs.

The 2012-2013 budget passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Malloy:

- » Balances the budget without borrowing for operating expenses
- » Streamlines government by consolidating state agencies
- » Maximizes the use of federal funds
- » Increases the millionaire's tax
- » Fairly distributes the income tax burden

Unlike our neighboring states, the budget remains in balance today thanks to the difficult decisions we made in June.

Helping Seniors

The legislature focused on improving the quality of life for our senior citizens by:

- » Allowing people to enroll in the ConnPACE plan if they are not eligible for Medicare
- » Rejecting the Governor's proposal to significantly raise cost-sharing in the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders
- » Expanding the state's Money Follows the Person program
- » Establishing Nursing Home Grievance Committees at each facility

In addition, grandparent's rights will be the subject of a special study aimed at enhancing their ability to seek visitation rights.

I am proud to support these and other services for our senior citizens.

WATCH VIDEOS ONLINE



A New Direction for Connecticut

Rep. Sharkey addresses the Chamber from his seat on the House floor, addressing the need for a responsible budget.



Protecting Planned Parenthood From Cuts

Rep. Sharkey speaks at a press conference in favor of continuing funding for Planned Parenthood.

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