



To The Residents of Hamden's 88th District:

The legislative "short session" that just ended proved to be busier than expected. Having successfully dealt with a recession-driven budget deficit last year, and after moving our state's economy forward in a special "Jobs Session" last fall, this year's three-month session was supposed to focus primarily on Governor Malloy's education reform initiative.

Though controversial at times, thanks to the leadership of the legislature and the administration, we did pass meaningful education reform that brings teachers, parents, and advocates from all sides together to improve our children's future and our state's competitiveness.

But we also took on historic challenges of a different sort. We finally brought our state into the 21st Century by allowing the sale of alcohol on Sundays. With the governor's signature and bipartisan support, we finally repealed the death penalty in Connecticut. We allowed the use of medicinal marijuana under very controlled circumstances for those suffering from grave illnesses. We passed strong, new protections for our seniors and victims of domestic violence, and we forced utility companies to be more responsible to their customers after major storms.

When we returned to a special session in June, we finished our work in passing new jobs legislation and implementing budget-related policies that protect our citizens without raising taxes on the state or local level.

As my two year term as Majority Leader of the state House of Representatives comes to a close, I want to take this moment to thank my constituents and all the voters in Hamden who have provided me with the extraordinary opportunity to serve you in Hartford. I only hope that you feel my efforts to represent you are worthy of the trust you've placed in me.

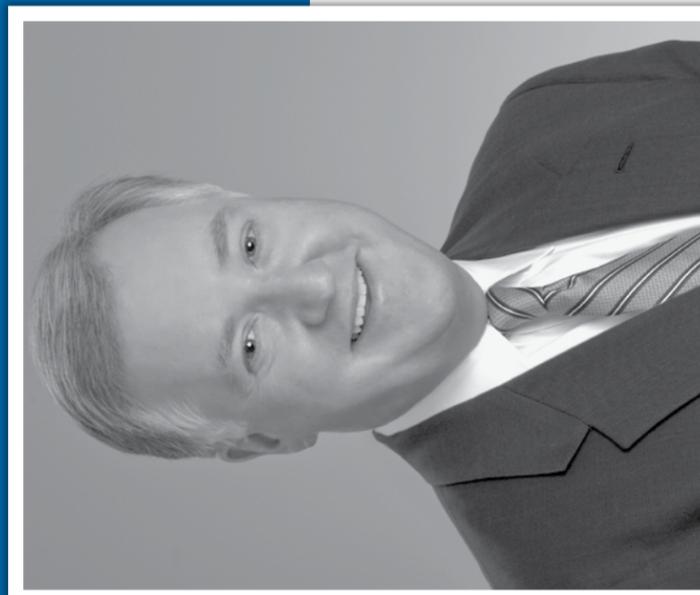
Thank you

Rep. J. Brendan Sharkey
88th District – Hamden
House Majority Leader

State Representative

J. Brendan Sharkey

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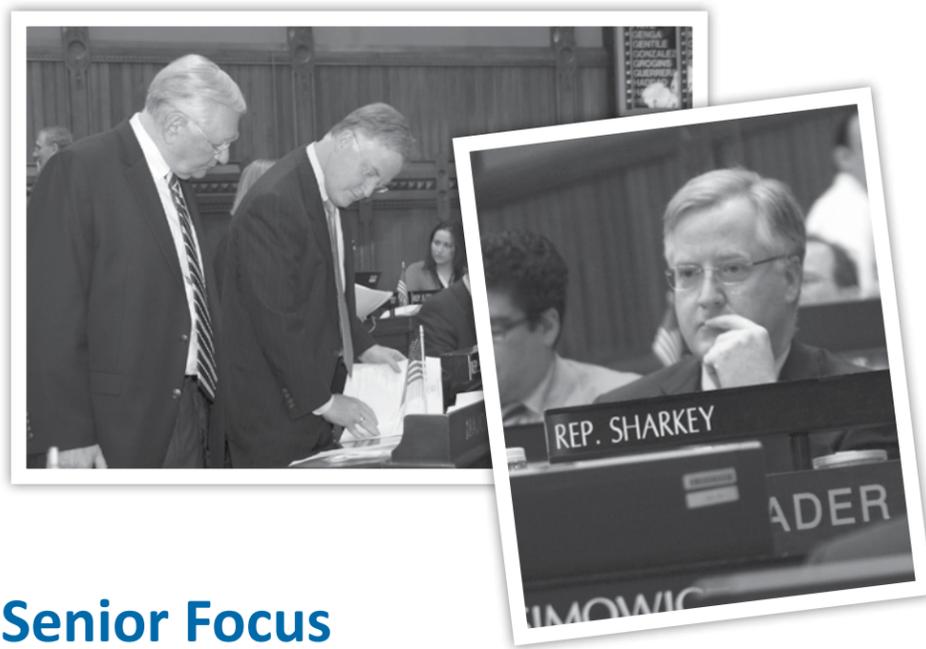
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State Representative

J. BRENDAN SHARKEY

Hamden | www.housedems.ct.gov/Sharkey



Senior Focus

Hospice Care

With just two licensed hospices in the state, this new law will permit hospices to follow federal standards, giving smaller hospice facilities the opportunity to provide high quality services that allow patients to stay closer to family and friends. This bill will help our state to ensure that residents have access to health care services across the full continuum of care.

Preserving Medicare Eligibility

This legislation allows thousands of seniors and people with disabilities to continue to use the Medicare Savings Program to help pay for their Medicare co-pays and deductibles. This is accomplished by raising the income limit to accommodate a 3.6 percent Social Security cost of living increase which took effect January 1. It would have been a tragic irony if a welcome increase in Social Security made some Connecticut residents ineligible for these Medicare benefits.

I am proud to support these and other initiatives for our seniors. After working throughout their lives and contributing to society, seniors deserve our respect and assistance to help them enjoy their later years.

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Jobs

We created new job opportunities for young people by funding the Youth Employment Summer Jobs program. We also supported adult evening education programs, as well as the Small Business Express program and a Connecticut Made initiative to promote products from local businesses. Additional, high level, high paying job opportunities will result from economic development funding for the Jackson Labs project that builds on our efforts to become a world leader in bioscience and biotechnology.

We recognize the challenges facing cities and towns and secured funding for municipalities, relieving pressure on local property taxes. Loosening budgets can support local projects and job growth.

- Expanded definition of small business to include those with 100 employees.
- Increased eligibility of businesses into Small Business Express Program.
- 24,435 unemployed individuals have found jobs since May session.

Storm Response and Power Outages

Following the aftermath of the October Nor'easter and Tropical Storm Irene much of the state was left without power for weeks. A full review into the utility companies' preparedness found there was room for improvement. The legislature passed sweeping reforms to better prepare for future severe storms and avoid wide-spread and lengthy loss of utility service that include:

- Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response.
- Noncompliance could result in penalties of up to 2.5 percent of an electric or gas company's annual distribution revenue, approximately \$25 million in the case of Connecticut Light & Power.

Sunday Sales

One of the last vestiges of the state's Blue Laws was eliminated allowing package and grocery stores to sell alcohol on Sundays from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. It also allows them to sell on Memorial, Independence and Labor Days, and on Mondays following any Independence, Christmas or New Year's Days that fall on a Sunday.

Education Reform

This year's historic education reform will provide new support to help turn around underperforming schools. The education package has long-term implications for our children and for the state's economic well-being. The better we prepare children for the 21st Century workforce, the stronger Connecticut's economy will be. The legislation:

- Includes more funding for school-based health centers and family resource centers.
- Recognizes the critical importance of early childhood education by underwriting 1,000 school readiness slots for preschoolers and funding initiatives to improve early reading success.
- Creates the Commissioner's Network, to provide the intensive supports and interventions needed to turn around 25 of the most chronically low-performing schools.
- Gives the state commissioner of education the needed authority to develop or modify plans with teachers and parents at "turn-around" schools.
- Includes Hamden to receive \$23,913,747 in Education Cost Sharing funds.

The Arts & Nonprofits

In addition to our schools, nonprofit organizations work to enrich our communities. In support of their positive work for the community, the General Assembly increased the funding for the Arts and State Historic Preservation programs, a vital tool in preserving and sustaining our art and cultural heritage through:

- \$8.5 million increase in nonprofit funding.
- First increase in four years.
- Hamden is just one of 57 cities and towns to receive a grant.

