



Dear Neighbors and Friends,

To be sure, 2013 has been difficult for all of us in Hamden. Just being the epicenter of the worst blizzard in our state's history proves we've had more than our share of challenges!

This year was also my first year as Speaker of the House. As soon as I took office, I was immediately thrust into the role of responding to the Sandy Hook tragedy. From the start, and despite the naysayers, I insisted on a bipartisan process that ultimately produced a bill to provide better security in our schools, more comprehensive treatment for the mentally ill, and the strongest gun safety measure in the country. I'm proud to say that both the content and the process of that legislation made Connecticut a model for the rest of the country.

After the national attention faded, however, we still faced the daunting task of closing a \$1 billion state budget deficit without raising taxes or cutting aid to education or our towns. We accomplished that, and a host of other difficult undertakings from lowering the cost of local government, to reducing energy costs, to responsible labeling of GMO's - all on time without the need for a special legislative session.

Yet my proudest accomplishments in 2013 were those that made Hamden a better place to live and grow. In addition to increasing state aid, I worked to ensure Hamden would receive a \$5 million grant to rehabilitate and convert the vacant Newhall Community Center into a new small business incubator. We also saw the completion of Josh's Jungle, a state-of-the-art all abilities playground at Town Center Park, a project funded with grants I helped to procure.

Throughout this difficult year, so many of you have stopped me in town to offer words of encouragement. Those kind gestures have meant the world to me, and with my thanks, I look forward to continuing my work for you.

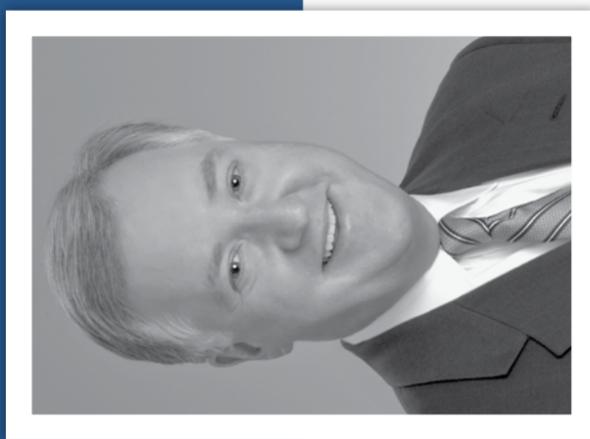
Thank you,

Brendan Sharkey
State Representative, Speaker of the House

STATE REPRESENTATIVE, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Brendan Sharkey

PROUDLY SERVING HAMDEN | 88TH DISTRICT



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PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN, HELPING OUR FAMILIES



STATE REPRESENTATIVE, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

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**FORMER NEWHALL COMMUNITY CENTER
 TO BECOME SMALL BUSINESS HUB**

A \$5 million state grant is coming to our town to help transform the former Newhall Community Center into a new small business “incubator.”

The project will create approximately 40 construction jobs and over 100 permanent jobs while providing about 40,000 sq. ft. for business incubator space by October, 2014. It is expected to host as many as 20 new small businesses at a time.

This is a solid investment in Hamden’s economy as well as the entire region. It will create new jobs and benefit local taxpayers by expanding our town’s property tax base.

INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN

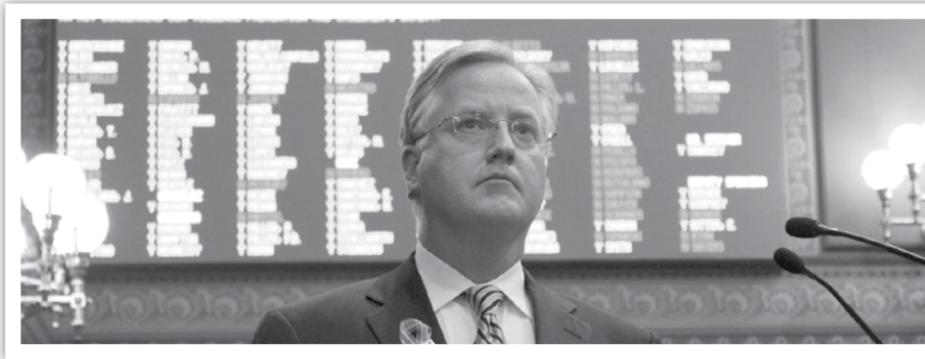
The Children’s Center of Hamden was awarded a state grant of \$87,025 earlier this year for a new power generator at their facility on Whitney Avenue.

The town also opened Josh’s Jungle all-abilities playground in Town Center Park this summer. Named for Josh Tramontano, the playground spans 7,000 square feet and was constructed entirely with recycled materials. It is a wonderful addition to the town and a testament to Josh’s inspiration and perseverance.



GMO LABELING FOR THE FOOD WE EAT

Concerns over the presence of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) in some of the foods we buy led to our passage of the first in the nation GMO labeling law. The labeling requirement will take effect when four other states, including at least one with a shared border with us, pass similar legislation. As a small state, this “trigger” is an important protection for Connecticut against a rise in food prices and will ensure access to food in the future. I am very proud of this new law as it is a significant victory in the fight to know what is in the food we eat and what we feed to our families.



Watching this year’s historic gun safety bill pass in April.

CONNECTICUT ADOPTS NATION’S TOUGHEST GUN SAFETY LAW

In the aftermath of the horrific tragedy at Sandy Hook last December, I worked closely with both Democrats and Republicans to pass the toughest and most comprehensive gun safety law in the nation. Our children and our neighborhoods are safer because of this law.

Key provisions include background checks for the purchase of all firearms or ammunition, an expanded assault weapons ban, a prohibition on high capacity magazines, and a first-in-the-nation dangerous weapon offender registry.

The law also begins to set higher security standards for school buildings and helps towns pay for security upgrades. In addition, access to mental health treatment and support for individuals and their families is being expanded and improved.

Public safety is a top priority of government and, despite what we have seen in Washington, Connecticut proved to the country that legislation aimed at reducing gun violence can be passed on a bipartisan basis.

MINIMUM WAGE BOOST GIVES FAMILIES A RAISE, HELPS ECONOMY

Mindful of the economic realities facing working families, we raised the minimum wage from the current \$8.25 to \$9.00, phased in over the next two years. This is a reasonable and overdue raise that will help tens of thousands of Connecticut families makes ends meet, and help jump-start our economy.

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GRANTS FOR HAMDEN

	FY 13	FY 14
Adult Education	\$238,131	\$249,282
Colleges & Hospitals PILOT	\$2,846,495	\$2,727,446
Education Cost Sharing	\$23,913,747	\$25,583,020
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$419,218	\$419,218
Public School Transportation	\$551,157	\$551,157
State Owned Property	\$898,697	\$898,925
Town Aid Road	\$335,878	\$671,756
Other Municipal Funding	\$1,940,450	\$1,358,295
Total	\$31,143,773	\$32,459,099

MORE HELPS TOWNS SAVE MONEY

I re-established the MORE (Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies) Commission this year in order to help towns find new ways to lower costs and reduce their overreliance on local property taxes to fund services.

By helping town government and boards of education save money through regional cooperation, MORE gives municipalities the tools to better meet their budget challenges and provides property tax relief to their residents.

NEIGHBOR’S IDEA LEADS TO TATTOO LICENSING LAW

Thanks to an idea from one of our Hamden neighbors, a new law requiring tattoo artists to be licensed by the state was passed by the legislature this year.

Myra Rochow, a commissioner with the Quinnipiack Valley Health District (QVHD), was reviewing state regulations and expressed her concern to me about the lack of any licensing for tattooing in Connecticut. Public health is one of the top responsibilities of government, and with the growing popularity of tattoos we need to ensure it is as safe as possible (41 states already require some type of tattoo licensing).

This law will help professionalize the industry and ensure the public that certain standards are being met. Many of the best ideas come from our constituents, and I thank Myra for wanting to get involved in a way that can help protect thousands of residents.