

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Travis Simms

PROUDLY SERVING NORWALK

Dear Neighbor,

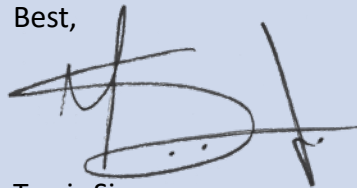
On March 8th, Connecticut had its first confirmed case of coronavirus. On March 9th, the Governor declared a state of Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergencies. And our lives have been radically changed ever since.

However, my commitment to you and your family has not changed. We will get through this period, and I know our state will be stronger on the other side.

This newsletter is intended to provide you with helpful information and resources, as well as an overview of some of the work my office has been doing during this time.

If you have any questions, concerns, or if I can be helpful to you in working with any state agency or understanding how any of our state laws or regulations can affect your work, our schools, or your opportunities, please call or email me anytime.

Best,



Travis Simms



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2020



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CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES

For the most up to date information please visit:
portal.ct.gov/coronavirus

The CDC, and Governor Lamont, are continuing to require individuals wear masks in public when you are unable to “social distance” more than 6 feet away from others.

If you are out of work, you have the right to file for unemployment insurance. Visit www.FileCTUI.com to file your claim or call: 860-263-6975, 203-455-2653, 860-263-6974 or 203-455-2650.

If you are a business owner, the Department of Economic and Community Development is developing and updating guidelines on safe ways to operate your business: business.ct.gov/Recovery. They have also opened a small business hotline: 860-500-2333.

If you notice a business not operating in a safe manner, call 2-1-1.

If you are having trouble paying your residential mortgage or rent, we have worked with banks and landlords to provide you additional time to put together payments. For more information on these programs, visit portal.ct.gov/coronavirus/information-for/homeowners-and-renters.

In addition, we have worked with the federal delegation and the Governor’s office to develop and fund a number of smaller assistance programs ranging from funding for artists to farmers, to helping our schools deal with unexpected expenditures. For more on these, please visit uwc.211ct.org/covid19resources.

I know that working with state agencies and our partners during this time can be complicated. Phone lines are crowded, applications may be confusing. My office is here to help. Call or email me anytime, and I promise I will get you help.



ADVOCATING FOR YOU DURING THIS TIME

This has been a remarkably challenging time for all of us. My office has worked with many of you to fix issues with your unemployment applications, help your business apply for financial aid and assist with the DMV to get your car registered. I know that it is during these challenging times when we need government help and services the most.

That’s why I have worked with my colleagues to advocate for all of you with the Governor and his administration. I am proud to say that because of our advocacy, we have expanded tele-medicine, brought additional COVID-19 testing sites to our community, expanded affordable childcare options for front-line workers, and delayed due dates for state income taxes and municipal property taxes. If there are more ways that we can make state government work better for you, please let me know.

THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION THAT WASN’T

When we began this year’s legislative session on February 5th, I expected to be working on many of the issues that you all have prioritized for me including reducing the cost of health insurance, making it easier to exercise your right to vote, and bringing back more support for our schools. As a member of the Transportation, Environment and Appropriations Committees, I was deeply involved in a variety of initiatives that would benefit our constituents. This work continues now, and will continue through any special session of the legislature this summer or fall, and into next year.

One of the few votes we took this year in the House of Representatives was for the bond act. I am proud to say that this legislation contained authorizations for state aid for our town:

	FY 20	FY 21
LOCIP (LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS)	\$646,255	\$646,255
TOWN AID ROAD	\$903,271	\$903,271
GRANTS FOR MUNICIPAL PROJECTS	\$187,132	\$187,132

In addition, the bill contained funds for workforce development, launching the Paid Family Medical Leave insurance program, and funding transportation improvements. It is now up to Governor Lamont and the Bond Commission to release these funds and I will hold them to that.

BLACK AND LATINO STUDIES

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, schools are required to teach African-American and Latino studies as a part of their curriculum. SERC has done a wonderful job of creating the model curriculum and it will be ready for this coming school year. This curriculum includes art, writing, math, physical education, science and social studies; including citizenship, geography, government and history. Teaching these subjects now is more important than ever. It’s critical that our students learn all of America’s history.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

While we continue to be guided by public health experts on the steps we need to take to safely “reopen”, we also have an opportunity to build a stronger and more robust state.

Already we are working to ensure hospitals and health care providers such as nursing homes have adequate stock of personal protective equipment. And we are working with farmers and food banks to protect and localize our food supply chain.

Your stories and experiences are important to helping us improve the quality of life for you. How well did the safety net work for you and your family? How can we do better? What services were not available that you really needed? I want to hear from you!

More than ever, it continues to be an honor and privilege to represent you.