

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**STEVE STAFSTROM**

PROUDLY SERVING THE 129TH HOUSE DISTRICT | BRIDGEPORT

Dear Neighbor,

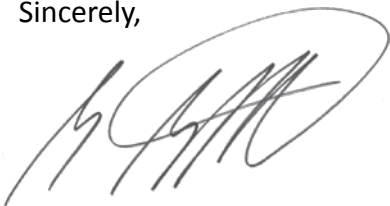
I want to thank you for the honor to represent you in the General Assembly. As I conclude my second legislative session, I am pleased to share with you updates regarding the progress we have made on addressing issues that matter most to the people of Bridgeport: property tax reform, job creation, access to education and our quality of life.

As you are likely aware, this session was marked by painful, difficult budget decisions that resulted in \$830 million in spending cuts, wage freezes, co-pay and premium increases, a pension cap for non-union hires, and an overall reduction in the size of state government. It is never easy to make cuts that will impact so many Connecticut families, but these cuts represent real and significant structural change that will put Connecticut's budget back on a sustainable path. I'm proud to say that we closed the deficit without raising taxes, borrowing, or tapping the rainy day fund. The cuts that we made, while very difficult, will save money this year, and in the future.

Although it was a tough budget year, I'm proud to say that the Bridgeport delegation stood together in fighting to protect state funding for property tax relief, and that Bridgeport will actually receive an estimated \$7 million more in state aid for fiscal year 2017 than we did in 2016. We also fought to protect the car tax cut that all Bridgeport families will begin to see reflected this year, and saved city taxpayers \$10 million over the next two years by restructuring pension obligations. And, we continued to invest in our schools and the growth of our local economy.

I hope you find the information in this newsletter helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or care to discuss any matter further.

Sincerely,



Steve Stafstrom

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## INVESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS

I am pleased to report that the state’s investment in education funding for Bridgeport remains at a high level. Bridgeport will be receiving \$181 million in state education funding this year, which is roughly 80% of our City’s school budget.

There is also good news for schools in our district who benefit directly from state school construction funding that I have and will continue to fight for. For example:

- Central High School: Construction is progressing nicely on the state’s \$67.6 million investment in rebuilding the school.
- New Longfellow Elementary School (to be renamed the Geraldine Claytor Magnet Academy): Construction of the \$50.8 million facility is nearing completion. I’m very excited to report that I was able to secure an additional \$1.5 million this year to buy new furniture, equipment and fixtures for the new school.
- Black Rock School: Construction is complete, and the additional funding I secured last year for the school is being used to create a green space on School Street.

I am also pleased to report the passage of legislation that will help Bridgeport create and fund a regional special education school. This funding will help Bridgeport schools improve special education programing and outcomes and ultimately, save valuable education resources. By working in a collaborative regional manner we can improve services and save tax dollars.

It’s critical that we continue to work to secure Bridgeport’s appropriate share of education and school construction funding in the future to ensure that all of our children receive the education they deserve and that we provide the facilities they need to achieve their goals.

## FIGHTING TO KEEP BRIDGEPORT AND CONNECTICUT ECONOMICALLY COMPETITIVE

It is no secret that Connecticut is dealing with the effect of decades of underfunding our debt obligations, underinvesting in transportation, and ignoring our cities as centers for job growth. As always, my number one priority remains confronting these challenges head on and helping to grow jobs in our city and state.

To ensure job growth and improve Connecticut’s business climate, this session we passed laws that will allow first-time business owners to receive reimbursement for the initial startup costs associated with their businesses, address the issue of a teacher shortage in the Connecticut Technical High Schools System and develop programs to introduce students and their parents to the high-tech careers available in manufacturing, an industry that is making a strong comeback in our State.

I’m also very proud to have championed passage of a comprehensive update to Connecticut’s limited liability company (LLC) statute. Many of our state’s hard working small and medium size business owners protect their families’ personal assets through use of a limited liability company. By enacting this much needed update to our decades old LLC statute, we can provide greater clarity and security for business owners so they can grow their businesses and create jobs.

We also passed “ban the box” legislation which postpones an employment candidate’s background check until after an interview (in most instances), to help make sure everyone has an opportunity to succeed without bias.

Locally, I am pleased to have worked with the Black Rock NRZ to modernize the zoning laws along the Fairfield Avenue commercial corridor to encourage livable, walkable and sustainable development.

I am very honored to have received the 2016 Bridgeport Regional Business Council Legislator of the Year Award, which recognized my work in this area.



*Receiving the AARP Legislative Achievement Award*

## IMPROVING OUR LEGAL SYSTEM

Through my work on the Judiciary Committee, we were able to enact several important pieces of legislation this year which improve our judicial system and the lives of those it touches. Successes include:

- Revisions to the Uniform Power of Attorney Act to help prevent abuse and financial fraud against our senior citizens.
- Increased funding and a more reliable revenue stream for legal aid services from a slight increase in court filing fees.
- Legislation to increase transparency and overhaul the process for bringing a legal claim involving the state.
- Implemented a statute clarifying the process to obtain access to the electronic records or an individual upon death.

## TACKLING CT’S OPIOID EPIDEMIC

In recent years, Connecticut, like other New England states, has seen a tragic increase in fatal opioid overdoses. Earlier this year, the legislature passed groundbreaking legislation to combat this crisis. This lifesaving law will allow any licensed healthcare professional to administer drugs that reverse opioid overdoses, require municipalities to equip their first responders with the opioid reversal drug, Narcan, and cap first-time opioid prescriptions at a seven-day supply.

## REMOVING FIREARMS FROM VOLATILE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SITUATIONS

Women in abusive relationships are five times more likely to be killed if their abuser has access to a firearm. Connecticut is taking great strides in protecting women and children from domestic violence by requiring a person to surrender firearms after being served with a temporary restraining order.

Separately, another new law was created to help prevent sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

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