

Dear Neighbor,

The 2017 legislative session was predominated by the need to pass a difficult, but balanced state budget that would address Connecticut’s fiscal challenges. Connecticut is faced with a new financial reality that is caused by decades of underfunding our debt obligations, underinvesting in transportation and ignoring our cities as economic drivers. While these issues will not be solved in a single year, we made steady progress during the 2017 session to correct these mistakes.

The \$41.3 billion two-year budget we adopted will help close a projected \$3.5 billion deficit over the next biennium by committing to significant structural reforms. We implemented constitutional spending and bonding caps, initiated measures to control volatility in our revenue projections and required legislative votes on future state labor contracts. We also made significant reforms to our state employee benefit agreements that will save taxpayers billions of dollars. These reforms will not only help Connecticut steady its financial footing, but it will help spur economic development and restore millions of dollars to municipalities, our schools and core state services.

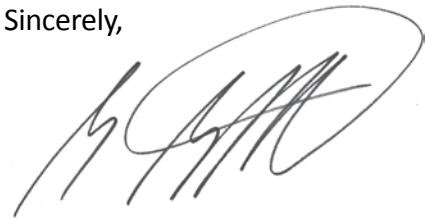
Importantly, the bipartisan state budget we adopted:

- Avoids the draconian cuts to Bridgeport and its schools proposed by the Republicans
- Reinstates funding to Housatonic Community College and other state and local independent colleges such as Fairfield and Sacred Heart universities and University of Bridgeport
- Invests in our tech schools and workforce development programs
- Protects many of the social service and youth services programs our residents rely on, including Care4Kids, StreetSafe Bridgeport and Project Longevity
- Does not increase sales or income taxes
- Creates a process for distressed municipalities to apply for increased funding and state assistance in restructuring debt

As vice chairman of the Judiciary Committee and a member of the Planning and Development Committee, we were also able to pass legislation that helps Bridgeport, improves our judicial system and protects some of our most vulnerable citizens. I am proud to share information about some of these new laws with you.

Thank you for the honor of serving the 129th district. As always, please feel free to contact me if I can ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

STEVE STAFSTROM

PROUDLY SERVING BRIDGEPORT



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PROGRESS ON ISSUES THAT MATTER MOST TO BRIDGEPORT

REDUCING THE CITY'S DEBT

This year, we passed legislation allowing the city to restructure a portion of its unfunded pension liabilities, saving Bridgeport taxpayers an estimated \$2.8 million per year – the rough equivalent of half a mill in taxes. This savings is achieved by borrowing at a lower interest rate, meaning the payoff schedule is not extended. Through this, taxpayers are estimated to save more than \$70 million over the term of the payoff period. *(Public Act 17-107)*

SAVING TAXPAYER DOLLARS

The city is also expected to achieve significant savings from legislation I helped write which will allow municipalities, like Bridgeport, with self-insured health plans to recover the cost of certain medical payments made to employees or their dependents in the event of a non-work related personal injury or wrongful death caused by a third-party. *(Public Act 17-165)*

INVESTING IN OUR YOUTH

This year, funding was secured and protected to advance construction projects at Central High School and the North Avenue Boys and Girls Club. We also preserved our youth services and avoided the severe cuts to Bridgeport schools that were proposed by the Republicans and the Governor's Executive Order by passing a \$41.3 billion biennium budget.

PROTECTING SENIORS

Our senior citizens will benefit from new laws regulating financial professionals who work with seniors (Public Act 17-22), holding conservators accountable *(Public Act 17-7)* and strengthening the power of attorney act. *(Public Act 17-91)*

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ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT

Legislation that paves the way for the construction of a thermal heating loop in downtown Bridgeport will not only reduce our carbon footprint, but will also directly add millions of dollars to our tax base and invite more residential and commercial development downtown through cheaper heating costs. This project stands to serve as a major catalyst for the renaissance of our downtown.

MAXIMIZING TOURISM

Bridgeport stands to benefit from legislation that will create a statewide entertainment council that will work to secure more concerts and events at Webster Bank Arena. Related legislation will also make it more attractive for boxing and mixed-martial arts events to come to Connecticut. These large-scale events will not only bring more visitors to Bridgeport and patrons to our shops and restaurants, but it will also help the city's bottom line. Last year, we passed legislation that allows the city to collect a 5 percent service fee on all tickets sold at each venue. *(Public Act 17-209)*

SAFETY AND TRANSPARENCY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

At a time of increased sensitivity surrounding relations between law enforcement and communities, I am proud to have worked to pass legislation that will allow Bridgeport to tap into a \$9 million reserve of state funding to purchase body and dashboard cameras for police cruisers. This legislation is intended to improve relations between law enforcement and communities by increasing transparency.



IMPROVING OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM

COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Public Act 17-32 strengthens Connecticut's human trafficking laws by increasing the penalty to a class A felony, and creates the felony crime of commercial sexual abuse of a minor for those who patronize or solicit minors who are trafficked for sex. It also requires the state to develop a tool for identifying victims of trafficking, provide training for professionals such as nurses, teachers and counselors, and establish a plan for diverting victims into community-based treatment programs.

STRENGTHENING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAWS

Connecticut has long been a leader in addressing intimate partner violence with strong policies that strengthen victim safety and increase offender accountability. With Public Act 17-31, we continue to update our laws by:

- Expanding existing laws on strangulation and stalking
- Acknowledging the use of social media as a modern means for stalking
- Increasing the penalty for committing a family violence crime while on probation
- Requiring a presentence investigation for anyone convicted of a family violence felony to take into account the circumstances of the offense and victim's attitude

CRACKING DOWN ON HATE CRIMES

Responding to recent acts of bigotry, Public Act 17-111 allows certain hate-crime offenders to be placed in community programs aimed at addressing their intolerance, and creates a statewide Hate Crimes Advisory Council. It also imposes minimum fines for certain hate crimes, including cross burning and desecration of property, and toughens the penalties for targeting and desecrating a house of worship.

SMART PRETRIAL JUSTICE REFORM

Under our current system of pretrial detention, low-risk offenders are routinely held in jail simply because they cannot afford bail. Under Public Act 17-145, a judge would be prohibited from setting bail for those charged with misdemeanors unless the judge determines that person poses an immediate threat to the public.