

The 2026 legislative session was a defining moment for Connecticut families. In a consequential three-month session, we focused on making our state more affordable, protecting our communities, and standing up for the values that matter most to working families across Bridgeport and Connecticut.

As the federal government drove up uncertainty and costs, we worked as Bridgeport’s legislative delegation to secure more than \$25 million in additional funding for the City—including \$15 million for Bridgeport Public Schools and \$10 million in city aid to address budget challenges. As Superintendent Dr. Royce Avery noted, this critical funding directly supports our students, schools, and families. We also passed measures to prevent local tax increases, reduce construction costs, and keep bus fares affordable, while continuing to invest in early childhood education, small businesses, public transportation, and health care.

As House Chair of the Judiciary Committee, I led efforts on some of our most significant legislation this session—from criminal justice reform and gun safety measures to hate crimes legislation and protections for incarcerated individuals. In response to rising violence and threats to democratic institutions at the federal level, we passed legislation to enhance security at polling places, prohibit law enforcement officers from concealing their identities with masks while on duty, and ban the sale of certain firearms that can be readily converted into illegal machine guns—keeping Connecticut safe, transparent, and accountable.

This newsletter highlights the legislation we passed and the key policy initiatives we advanced to build a stronger, safer, and more affordable Connecticut.

Respectfully,



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
STEVE STAFSTROM
PROUDLY SERVING BRIDGEPORT

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**CAPITOL
UPDATE 2026**

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**CAPITOL
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FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE
STEVE STAFSTROM
PROUDLY SERVING
BRIDGEPORT



GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Connecticut continues to lead on commonsense gun safety, and as Judiciary Committee Chair, I championed critical new protections again this session. I led the effort to ban the sale of convertible pistols—Glock-style firearms that can be modified with small “Glock switches” to fire more than 1,000 rounds per minute, effectively turning them into illegal machine guns. These dangerous weapons pose a serious threat to public safety. The law I advanced requires manufacturers to redesign these firearms so they cannot be converted.

REFORMED CONNECTICUT’S HATE CRIMES LAWS

With hate crime charges in Connecticut rising from 87 in 2021 to 130 in 2024, I took decisive action. As Judiciary Committee Chair, I led the effort to pass comprehensive hate crimes reform that consolidates all hate crime offenses—previously scattered across more than a dozen statutes created over 100 years—into a single, clear chapter of the state penal code. This sends a strong message: Connecticut takes hate crimes seriously.



FUNDING FOR BRIDGEPORT

This year we secured funding to close the Board of Education deficit to help our students get the education they deserve.

This year we secured:

\$25M DOLLARS

\$15M DOLLARS
for Education

\$10M DOLLARS
for Town Aid

PROTECTED OUR DEMOCRACY

I fought to ensure every eligible voter can cast their ballot with confidence. This session, I championed legislation that increases penalties for vote tampering and poll worker intimidation, expands independent post-election audits, and provides additional training for election officials. I also worked to empower the Attorney General to take swift action against election interference and modernize our recount procedures with updated vote-counting technology. These reforms keep our polling places safe and free from intimidation—protecting the fundamental right of every Connecticut resident to vote.

FOUGHT BACK AGAINST ABUSE BY ICE

Building on last year’s landmark data privacy protections, I led efforts to defend Connecticut residents from federal overreach. I advanced legislation that allows individuals to seek legal remedies when their constitutional rights are violated and empowers state officials to intervene on their behalf. I also worked to prohibit federal agents from concealing their identities while carrying out enforcement actions in our state, strengthened police training standards, prevented ICE officers dismissed for misconduct from joining local departments, and protected traffic camera data from immigration enforcement. These measures reinforce Connecticut’s commitment to protecting all residents.

