

# HOUSING

## SECURITY DEPOSITS OF SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN PUBLIC HOUSING

Municipal public housing authorities administer over 17,000 units of subsidized state public housing. Current law requires the authorities to pay an annual interest rate of 5.25% on the security deposits of senior citizens and individuals with disabilities residing in public housing. However, current average savings deposit interest rates are much lower, which results in a financial loss to the Public Housing Authorities. This bill will treat all residents of public housing security deposits the same, by requiring the public housing authorities to pay at least the average savings deposit interest rate paid by insured commercial banks as published in the Federal Reserve Board Bulletin in November of the prior year. The deposit index for calendar year 2012 is 0.16%.

*Effective Date: October 1, 2012*

## EQUAL TREATMENT OF RENTERS WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES

Current law prohibits landlords from evicting tenants who are elderly or have a physical disability and reside in a building with five or more units or a mobile manufactured home park because their lease expires or for other reasons, such as nonpayment of rent. However, the law fails to provide this equal protection to tenants with mental disabilities. In order to address this inequality the legislature passed a bill that extends the protection from eviction to tenants who either have mental disabilities or permanently reside with certain family members who do.

*Effective Date: October 1, 2012*

## PRIVATE RENTAL INVESTMENT MORTGAGE AND EQUITY PROGRAM

The Department of Community and Economic Development's (DECD) Private Rental Investment Mortgage and Equity Program (PRIME) subsidizes Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA)-financed multifamily housing projects to make them more affordable to low-income people. CHFA subsidizes construction of new projects or rehabilitation of existing ones; however, the current DECD program does not allow non-housing uses in the buildings such as health care or retail facilities. This bill streamlines the administrative process for future PRIME project approval and encourages mixed-use development by allowing stores, shops, and other retail units to be included in the housing development plan.

*Effective Date: July 1, 2012*



Dear Neighbor,

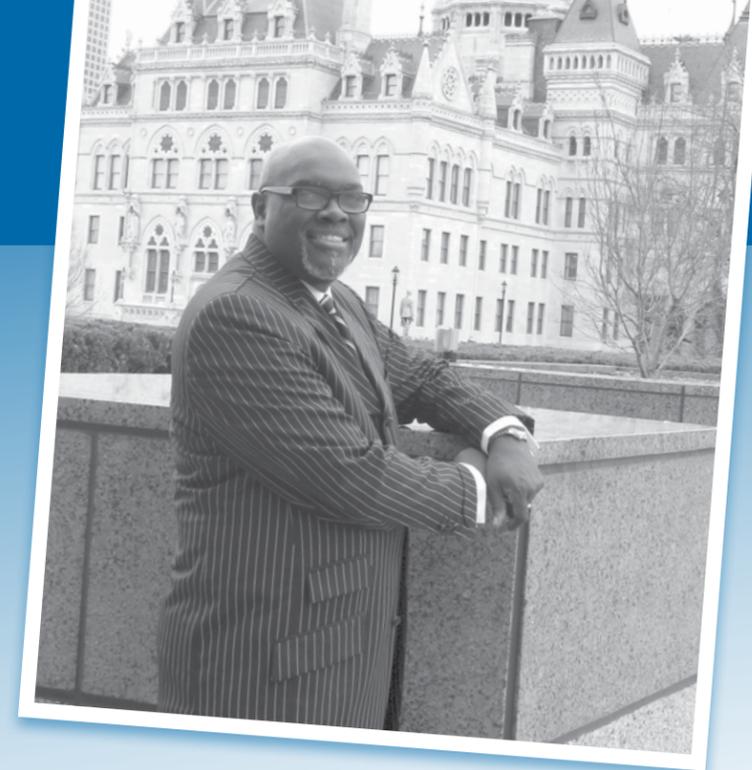
The 2012 legislative session was highlighted by historic achievements and produced legislation that will help citizens across the state. I have outlined some of the things we did in this newsletter.

From early childhood education to school funding and addressing the neediest schools, we passed historic changes to our educational system so all children can succeed.

We gave grandparents more visitation options with their grandchildren as well as sparing senior citizens increases in medical co-pays. A death penalty law that wasn't working was repealed and further protections for victims of domestic violence were put into place. We made it easier for people to exercise voting rights because without a vote you have no voice.

On a local note, Bridgeport received \$260,000 to address flooding and I will continue to work with colleagues for full funding to put an end to flooding in the general Hooker Road area.

I hope this report is informative. I'm happy to answer any questions about these issues or any others facing our state or your family. Together we can create a better future for our families.



State Representative

**CHARLIE L. STALLWORTH**

State Representative  
Charlie L. Stallworth  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
Capitol: 800-842-8267  
[www.housedems.ct.gov/Stallworth](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/Stallworth)

**Let's Keep In Touch In A Green Way**

Sign Up For Email Updates:  
[housedems.ct.gov/Stallworth](http://housedems.ct.gov/Stallworth)

Find Us On Facebook:  
[facebook.com/CTHouseDemocrats](https://facebook.com/CTHouseDemocrats)



**EXPANDING VOTING RIGHTS**

Connecticut’s voter turnout continues to fall in every election. In an effort to improve access to voting for CT citizens, it is necessary to make it a priority to modernize and revitalize our elections system. This act offers two major additions to the existing voting laws – Election Day Registration and Online Voter Registration. This act will not only streamline the existing process for registering to vote, it will improve the accuracy of voter records and save millions for the State.

Election Day Registration is a process that goes into effect July 2013 and will first be utilized in a municipal election. This process makes the use of Presidential ballots obsolete and requires citizens to go to a central location to Register to vote and allows them to vote in that same location. Election Day registration has been in place in states like Maine and Wisconsin since the 1970s with great success.

Online Voter Registration allows an individual to go online and use their Driver’s License number to log into the system. For this to work, the Secretary of State’s Office will use the state voter file in coordination with data from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Once the individual logs in, that person will be able to fill out all the same information that is currently found on a paper voter registration form. The only difference is that the information is then matched against the DMV database. If the information matches, the electronic signature from the DMV can be used to finalize the registration. This information and the signature are then sent electronically to the local Registrar of Voters to be accepted or rejected. In the absence of a driver’s license, the last four digits of your Social Security number will be matched with other state agencies data.

*Effective Dates: Election Day Registration, July 1, 2013; Online voter registration, January 1, 2014*

**VISITATION RIGHTS FOR GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER PERSONS**

This act codifies the recommendations of the Task Force to Study Grandparents’ Visitation Rights. The Grandparents Task Force addressed visitation rights for grandparents and others under the jurisdiction of Family Court, consistent with the principals established under case law. This act is a direct result of the Speaker’s Grandparents’ Task Force. This act eases the judicial requirements and application process for a grandparent looking to be granted visitation rights.

The applicant shall confirm that (1) a parent-like relationship exists between the child and the grandparent; and (2) denial of the visitation would cause real and significant harm to the grandchild. The court must hold a hearing and grant the request if it finds clear and convincing evidence that all the conditions have been met.

Factors for determining a parent like relationship:

- The length of time of the relationship;
- Length of time that the relationship has been disrupted;
- The specific parent-like activities of the grandparent seeking visitation;
- Whether grandparent seeking visitation has unreasonably undermined the authority and discretion of the custodial parent;
- Significant absence of the parent from the minor’s life;
- Death or physical separation of the minor’s parents;
- Fitness of the petitioner and the custodial parent.

*Effective Date: October 1, 2012*

**CHILDREN AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

This bill responds to concerns that in the past, representatives of the Department of Children and Families have not visited children in foster homes frequently enough or responded to special requests from foster families in a timely manner. This bill, which was supported by DCF, requires representatives of the agency to visit children at least every 60 days, so they can monitor the progress of vulnerable children in transition and ensure that the foster family is a good match for the child. The bill also requires that DCF respond to special requests, such as permission for a foster child to travel with the foster family, within five business days or they are deemed approved.

*Effective Date: October 1, 2012*



**EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION**

- Creates 1,000 new pre-K School Readiness seats, focused in high need, low performing communities.
- Creates a pilot program to enhance literacy for students in k-3rd grade. It also adds 5 schools to literacy intervention program with priority to network schools.

**ADDRESSING OUR NEEDEST SCHOOLS**

- Establishes the Commissioner’s Network, which provides intensive supports and interventions needed to turn around 25 of the most chronically low-performing schools in CT over the next 3 years.
- Grants the state commissioner of education the needed authority to develop or modify plans with teachers and parents at “turnaround” schools, while respecting collective bargaining rights.
- Requires at least 10 Family Resource Centers and at least 20 new or expanded School Based Health Centers to be located in education reform districts. It also increases funding for existing Family Resource Centers.

**SCHOOL FUNDING**

- Funding increases for vocational/technical and vocational/agricultural schools, charter and magnet schools, and a new kindergarten through 8th grade science initiative. Increase funding to state charters from \$9,400 to \$10,500 per pupil, with an increase of \$500 in both FY14 and FY15.
- Requires public schools to include a total of 20 minutes of physical exercise in each regular school day for students in grades K thru 5.
- No changes to the ECS formula. Allows ECS Task Force to complete its work. Requires charter school grants to be added to ECS grants and paid through towns where charter schools are located (as per budget bill).
- Requires a study of potential efficiencies for small districts (fewer than 1000 students).