

PLASTIC BAGS

CT finally followed Westport's lead by passing a ban on plastic bags, to commence in two years. There's a tax on plastic bags in the meantime. We fought off a last-minute attempt to have state law pre-empt local bag bans which might be stronger than the state's, so Westport's landmark ordinance can be strengthened further, if need be.

PROTECTING OUR DEMOCRACY

We took the first step toward allowing early voting by passing a resolution to amend the state constitution. This would allow for in-person voting leading up to Election Day for any state or municipal election or referendum. Voters should have the greatest opportunity to vote possible. This resolution passed by a majority of both the House and Senate, and if approved again in the 2021 legislative session it will appear as a question for voters to decide on the 2022 general election ballot. It is a great way to increase voter participation in our elections.

MAMMOGRAM COVERAGE

This legislation will require health insurance coverage of breast ultrasound screenings for any woman who is 40 years or older, has a recommendation from her doctor, has a personal history of breast disease through the biopsy of a benign tumor, or has a family or personal history of breast cancer. It also prohibits insurance from charging coinsurance, copayments, deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses for breast ultrasounds and mammograms.



Rep. Steinberg leads support of Connecticut's Plastic Bag Ban.



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JONATHAN STEINBERG

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CAPITOL UPDATE 2019



www.facebook.com/StateRepSteinberg

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Friends and Neighbors:

A whirlwind session is over with the prospects of a special session on the horizon to deal with bonding, tolls and economic development. How would I assess the session? A mixed bag, as usual!

We have a new governor who had to learn how steep the learning curve is for pursuing his agenda in Hartford. That applies as well to the bevy of new legislators who were thrust into one of the most hectic sessions in recent memory. There were many political "lessons learned," some the hard way.

As for the fiscal side of things, much of what might be called success was actually avoiding new taxes. The income tax wasn't raised, despite the calls by many Progressive legislators. We succeeded in fighting off the Governor on teacher pension sharing with municipalities – a major priority for me this session – but then worked with him to halt an attempt to impose a new Capital Gains surcharge. The so-called "Mansion Tax" couldn't be stopped, but it will only apply if you move out of state after selling your home for more than \$2.5 million, and the additional charge is only on the value above that amount. It could have been worse!

Many will laud the passage of a new Minimum Wage increase schedule and the creation of a broad Paid Family Leave program. I had issues with both bills, ultimately working with Moderate colleagues to forge some compromises on minimum wage, particularly assuring no indexing on restaurant worker tip credits – something restaurant owners really needed. We also succeeded in inserting a "recession trigger" clause – which was my idea -- requiring the Governor to consider recommendations to the Legislature to reconsider wage increases in the event of a recession. We were unable to achieve compromises on Paid Family Leave -- a great concept but problematic in terms of paying for itself and creating real staffing issues for small businesses. I couldn't vote for a program which I fear will end up insolvent.

We still need to do much more to promote businesses in the state and grow the economy through good-paying jobs. I hope the special session will focus on new pro-business programs. Striking the right balance between progressive values and fiscal pragmatism remains a challenge.

I expect that the "off season" will be a busy one. I intend to devote myself to preparing for next year's session, working with experts and stakeholders on a variety of issues which still must be addressed if our state is to return to its former vitality.

As always, feel free to reach out to me on any subject. Your voice really matters!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Steinberg'.

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Rep. Steinberg receiving the Legislator of the Year Award from the Emergency Medical Services Organization.

TOBACCO 21

Research shows that if you haven't started smoking by 21, you likely never will. We have made the sale of cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vape products illegal for those under 21. Nicotine creates addiction in teens, and 95% of adults who smoke started young. Nationwide, e-cigarette use, also known as "vaping," is on the rise among middle and high school students. This law seeks to keep nicotine out of the hands of minors.

This legislation:

- Requires valid ID proving they are 21 or older to purchase cigarettes / vaping products
- Requires dealers who sell e-cigs and related products online to obtain the signature of a person aged 21 or older at the shipping address prior to delivery and require the signer to show proof of age
- Increases penalties for tobacco and e-cig sales and purchases involving anyone under the legal age
- Bans smoking and vaping on the grounds of child care centers and schools
- Requires the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to conduct compliance checks on licensed dealers of tobacco products

MENTAL HEALTH PARITY

We unanimously passed the Mental Health Parity Act which gives people with mental health and substance use disorders the same access to care as those with cancer and heart disease. One in four Americans have or will be affected by a mental health or substance use disorder. It should be just as easy to receive treatment for depression or addiction as it is for heart disease or diabetes. This legislation ensures that all mental health and substance use issues are covered by insurance.

GREEN JOBS

We hope to create new and viable career opportunities, benefit the environment, and help protect our planet for generations to come.

This law will create a Green Jobs Career Ladder website for jobs in the green technology industry. Additionally, the measure will promote the construction of high performance green state buildings that have reduced emissions and conservative water resource management.

This legislation will:

- Extend renewable energy programs, including traditional net metering and the Green Bank's renewable solar investment program
- Expand the virtual net metering cap which will reduce energy costs for municipalities
- Require DOT to put together a land inventory on which lands are suitable for Class I energy resources. For example, solar energy on lands adjacent to state highways

STATE WATER PLAN

After two years of effort, I spearheaded a late push to ratify the draft of the State Water Plan, a comprehensive guiding document on how to make practical decisions on water usage and conservation. It's a real victory for the environment while acknowledging the many uses of water in our state.

FRACKING WASTE BAN

No fracking waste in Connecticut! This is a policy that ensures the pollutants generated by the hydraulic fracking of gas and oil do not enter our state.

This legislation will:

- Widen the state-wide fracking ban to apply to all gas and oil extraction activities, to also include the selling, acquiring, handling, applying and processing of fracking, natural gas, and oil waste.
- Makes the current moratorium permanent by banning the sale, offer, manufacture, distribution and use of de-icing, pre-wetting, or dust suppression products derived from fracking waste.

OFFSHORE WIND

Renewable Energy generated by wind is now part of Connecticut's future. This bill requires the state to procure up to 2,000 megawatts of offshore wind power, helping us achieve our long term energy goals. It will also have a positive economic impact and create good paying jobs. We've also assured that environmental impacts are minimized.

GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

ETHAN'S LAW

Ethan's Law, named after Ethan Song who tragically lost his life due to an improperly stored gun, requires the safe storage of all firearms in a home with children under 18.

KEEPING GUNS IN CARS LOCKED AWAY

Due to the increase in gun thefts from cars, we are now requiring drivers to keep guns locked away. Having an unsecured gun in plain sight increases the risk of theft, as well as gun injury and death. This law requires gun owners who wish to keep a firearm in their car, to store them either in the trunk, a locked glove box, or a locked safe. This will help prevent gun theft and further violent acts.

BANNING GHOST GUNS

We've made it illegal to build a gun without a serial number, build a plastic gun that isn't detectable by a metal detector, or have an unfinished firearm frame without a serial number.



At the annual Maker Faire in downtown Westport.