

# Helping Our Workers

Protecting and providing for Connecticut's workers is incredibly important to me and this year we passed a number of laws which benefit those who need it most.

## Increasing the Minimum Wage

This legislation increases the hourly minimum wage from \$7.65 an hour:



- To \$8.00 an hour beginning January 1, 2009
- To \$8.25 an hour beginning January 1, 2010

With the increased cost of living, our lowest paid workers deserve the modest increase this bill guarantees.

- Governor Rell vetoed this legislation when it arrived at her desk.
- We OVERTURNED the Governor's veto on June 23rd.

PA 08-92

## Minors in the Workplace

- Allows 15-year-olds to be employed as baggers, cashiers, or stock clerks in grocery or other retail businesses
- Allows them to work during school vacations, summers, and on Saturdays
- Allows 14-year-olds to work as caddies or in pro shops

PA 08-108



## Firefighters and Police Officers



- A firefighter or police officer who has a heart attack while on the job will automatically receive workers' compensation benefits due to the high physical stress of the job.

PA 08-61

## Contacting me:

If you have any questions regarding information about anything contained in this newsletter or would simply like to voice your concerns, please feel free to call me at: 240-8500.

*Peter*

2008 SESSION WRAP-UP: REP. PETER TERCYAK



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*State Representative*

# Peter Tercyak

*Proudly Representing New Britain*

## Important Legislation Regarding:

- Improved access to healthcare
- Criminal justice reform
- Help for our workers
- Protection for the environment



House Speaker James Amann, Rep. Peter Tercyak and visiting student Ian Quickmire Pettigrew, who was advocating for improved insurance coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorder Therapies. PA 08-132



## Protecting Our Children

Due to recent scares with lead found in children's toys, we passed several bills aimed at safeguarding our children from hazardous materials:



- Establishment of lead and asbestos limits in children's products
- Prohibition of the sale of products that exceed those established levels
- Requires the Department of Consumer Protection to post a list of banned children's products
- Ensures that toys previously taken off the market are not put on the market again

PA 08-106 & PA 08-122

### EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

New Britain's own Polish Saturday School became the inspiration for an education law of statewide importance. This law allows students enrolled in language



programs through non-profit cultural and language schools to receive up to four credits toward high school graduation for their studies if they pass an exam. I was proud to work with students, parents and teachers at the New Britain Polish Saturday School to get students the credit they deserve for these studies. PA 08-138

Rep. Peter Tercyak and Rep. Timothy O'Brien with students and teachers of the Polish Language School.

## Preserving the Environment

### SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES

Recognizing that polluting facilities are often concentrated in urban and low income areas, the legislature took steps to help these communities, including New Britain. The law requires applicants seeking approval for new or expanded polluting facilities in environmental justice communities to provide notification, submit a public participation plan, including holding an informal public meeting, and consult with municipal officials to arrange for an environmental benefit agreement to ease the facility's impact. PA 08-94



## Improving Health Care

### Connecticut Health Care Partnership: Good health care that costs less



Peter's good friend Majority Leader, Representative Christopher Donovan at the press conference depicting the savings available through the Health Care Partnership Program.

We worked very hard this session and passed this historic legislation with enormous benefits for all of Connecticut.

#### The bill allows:

- Municipalities, small businesses and non-profits to join the Connecticut State Employee Healthcare Plan.
- Increased bargaining power to help reduce and stabilize costs of healthcare.
- New Britain and other municipalities to use the savings from the plan to offset property tax increases.

Unfortunately, Governor Rell didn't acknowledge the benefits of this plan and chose to VETO HB 5536 on June 13th, 2008.

### Extended Health Care Benefits

So often parents are forced to remove children from their health care plans once they turn 18. This bill requires insurance companies to continue coverage for a qualifying child until the child:

- Turns 26;
- Becomes covered under a health plan through an employer; or
- Marries.

PA 08-147

### Insurance Coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorder Therapies



Coach Jim Calhoun and Rep. Tercyak at a press conference for Autism Spectrum services.

- Early therapy is increasingly beneficial for children with autism.
- Insurance companies are now required to cover speech, physical, and occupational therapies for those diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. PA 08-132

### Ensuring Access to Health Care Provider Information

- This act provides patients with information to help make well-informed decisions when choosing their health care providers.
- It requires Connecticut-licensed physicians, dentists, physical therapists, optometrists, and chiropractors to provide the Department of Public Health with detailed professional profiles to post online.
- Access to the online profiles are available at [www.physicians.dph.state.ct.us](http://www.physicians.dph.state.ct.us).

PA 08-109

## Criminal Justice Reform

Following the horrific home invasion and murder in New Britain, we passed landmark legislation this year to increase our safety and help prevent future crimes. Strengthening the 3-strikes law as suggested by state prosecutors was just one of the changes.



### Also included in the package:

- An increase in the mandatory minimum sentences for persistent dangerous felony offenders. (PA 08-51)
- Creation of a new crime of "home invasion" which will be considered a violent felony. (PA 08-51)
- Enabling probation officers to spend more energy and time with those criminals who pose the highest threat to the public. (PA 08-102)
- Requirement for registered sex offenders to notify the Department of Public Safety prior to filing an application for a name change. (PA 08-54)



Rep. Tercyak during the ceremony for Polish Day at the State Capitol honoring Mr. Stanley Pac's lifetime achievements serving New Britain, the State of Connecticut and Polish-Americans.

## Combating the Mortgage Crisis

Holding the mortgage lenders accountable for irresponsible lending practices as well as offering assistance to those who have been hurt by the housing market downturn continues to be a priority.

### Responsible Lending

- Provides financial assistance and mediation access to individuals and families whose homes are at risk of foreclosure
- Reforms the practices of lenders and mortgage brokers
- Ensures that nothing is done to negatively impact the continued availability of lending to prospective home buyers

PA 08-176

### Emergency Housing Assistance

- Increases an individual's ability to secure emergency housing quickly
- Allows access to emergency housing benefits to those in the process of home foreclosure
- Eligibility begins when the foreclosure judgment is filed, rather than when the process has been completed

PA 08-22

# Representative Peter Tercyak: 2008 Legislative Session Wrap-Up