



To my friends and neighbors:

I hope you and your families are doing well. Like all of you, Liz and I are doing our best to weather an economic downturn that has been hard on all of us. People in Stamford and New Canaan have been losing their jobs, homes and businesses are at risk, and the recovery has been slow and difficult.

People often ask me, what do you do in Hartford in times like this? For me, it's pretty straightforward. I keep my head down and fight for my district. The down economy has devastated the state budget, but I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish even in tough times. Since I joined the House of Representatives, we've been able to increase Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants to Stamford by 30%, and Stamford was the only municipality to see an increase in ECS funding this year. We passed a major bill to fight zone pricing and unfair gas prices and a comprehensive jobs bill that will create new jobs in the renewable energy sector and attract private investment capital to our state. I also helped draft another energy market reform bill—the second major bill in as many sessions—as we continue to rebuild our energy infrastructure, try to drive down electricity prices, and move Connecticut toward a sustainable energy future.

We are working hard to turn the corner, though we still face considerable economic challenges. But I believe in the fundamental strength and character of our community and the people of our state. Connecticut must reinvent itself, develop a vision for a new economy, and build a lasting and sustainable foundation for businesses and job growth. And I'll continue to work hard to get us there.




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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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HARD WORK AND PERSEVERANCE

2010 Report from the State Capitol



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THE JOBS BILL

Jumpstarting Our Economy and Creating New Jobs (PUBLIC ACT 10-75)

Connecticut has lost over 100,000 jobs in this economic downturn and we have not seen a net increase in jobs in our state for some time. With bi-partisan support, we enacted a historic economic development initiative that included the following:

- » Up to \$500,000 in loans and lines of credit for small businesses and nonprofits
- » Up to \$150,000 in financing and technical services to exciting new start-up businesses at the venture stage
- » Tax credits for small businesses of up to \$200 per month per new employee
- » Student loan reimbursement and training grants for education and careers in green technology, life sciences and health information technology
- » Angel investor tax credit (personal income tax credits for investments made in new and emerging technologies)
- » Sales tax exemptions for machinery, supplies, and fuel used in renewable energy industries
- » Reformed environmental rules that speed up the business permitting process and maintain environmental protections
- » Enhancements to the state's film tax credit program that will create more film production jobs in Connecticut

THE STATE BUDGET

Still Much Work to Do

The governor and our legislative leadership negotiated a balanced budget without raising taxes or cutting essential funding to municipalities.

I voted against this budget, however. There is no doubt that there are good things in this budget, worthy programs that should be preserved and important investments that need to be made. But the budget also calls for more borrowing, which I think further compounds the problem. We cannot continue to rely on federal stimulus funds that are soon to expire and other one-time revenue sources. We need a plan to address long-term structural deficits and the burdens of unfunded pension and health care liabilities.

I believe an opportunity was missed to overhaul the state's budget and budget writing process, to set priorities and develop a budget to serve our state's most critical needs. It is not easy to oppose the governor and the leaders of my own party. But I felt it was necessary to vote against this budget, and to do what I believe is right.

WRIGHT TECH SAVED

After a long fight, we were able to save Wright Tech from permanent closure. A vibrant Vo-Tech school in our region is vital to our long-term economic recovery and a key driver of sustained job growth in our region. We secured \$90 million for a complete overhaul of Wright Tech, including a new curriculum, new building and physical plant. A special Department of Education committee is planning for the reopening of the school as soon as possible.

WINNING THE FIGHT AGAINST UNFAIR GAS PRICES (PUBLIC ACT 10-87)

As you know, since my very first day in the legislature, I've focused on banning the zone pricing of gasoline that so unfairly targets Stamford and New Canaan. This session, we finally passed legislation that will give us an important tool in the fight against unfair and anti-competitive gasoline prices. The Attorney General now has new powers to investigate undue concentrations of power in the gasoline market and to fight anticompetitive practices like zone pricing. We are not done yet, but this was an important victory against Big Oil that we can build on next year.

INCREASES IN STATE EDUCATION FUNDING (ECS)

Since I have served in Hartford, Stamford and New Canaan have received substantial increases in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding. I am pleased to report that Stamford was the only municipality in the state to see an Education Cost Sharing (ECS) increase in the two-year budget. More needs to be done to secure our fair share of state education dollars, but we continue to make strong progress toward that goal.

REBUILDING SCHOOLS

We passed bills to turn around low-achieving schools, increase our chances for federal education dollars, improve our vocational technical high schools, and help students with autism. The bills:

- » Create new programs to help turn around low-achieving schools
- » Increase parent involvement in school governance through extensive structural changes
- » Strengthen the state's application for federal Race to the Top education funds
- » Provide for adequate staff and supplies
- » Ensure students with autism get quality services through individualized education plans (IEP)

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

To ensure that our children are protected on public school buses, I voted to:

- » Increase fines for bus companies that do not meet state safety inspection rules
- » Increase fines for negligent school bus operators
- » Provide incentives for school districts that require newly purchased buses to have seat belts

PROTECTING FAMILIES

Banning Cadmium from Children's Jewelry (PUBLIC ACT 10-113)

In recent years, Connecticut has become a national leader in banning toxic chemicals in children's products. In 2008, for instance, the General Assembly passed An Act Concerning Child Product Safety, which prohibited the manufacture, distribution, and sale of any children's product that contains a banned hazardous substance (Public Act 08-106). We have also banned the sale of plastic baby bottles, food containers and cups containing the harmful toxic chemical, Bisphenol A (BPA) (Public Act 09-103).

This legislative session, I was proud to co-sponsor a bill that phases out another harmful substance in children's toys. Cadmium is a toxic metal that has found its way into children's jewelry and other toys manufactured overseas. Prolonged exposure has been shown to lead to damage to the central nervous system and according to some studies, was shown to lower IQ even more so than lead.

It is completely unacceptable that we allow this metal in our children's toys and I am glad that we were able to do something about it.

MAJOR STEPS TO FIGHT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The legislature made the most sweeping reforms to our domestic violence laws in the past 25 years, empowering courts, law enforcement officers and victims with new tools that:

- » Improve the enforcement of protective orders
- » Provide GPS monitoring for high risk offenders
- » Expand the use of dedicated domestic violence court dockets
- » Help victims who need to end their housing rental agreements in order to protect their safety
- » Increase staffing at 24 hour emergency shelters

