



To my friends and neighbors:

From jobs to education to improved response to natural disasters, the legislature helped citizens across our state in many ways in 2012.

It started last October when we passed comprehensive, bipartisan jobs legislation that invested hundreds of millions of dollars in small businesses, gave firms hiring incentives, aligned education programs with jobs-in-demand, and eliminated red-tape for growing companies.

This spring, we balanced a budget while keeping our funding promise to cities and towns without raising taxes. Historic changes were made to our educational system so our children can succeed. We made it easier for people to exercise voting rights, and demanded that utility companies respond better when storms and crises hit.

In addition, as the Co-Chair of the Banking Committee I continued to lead the fight against home foreclosures by passing legislation that will help homeowners get the help they need.

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. Thank you for the opportunity and privilege to serve and represent you.



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REFORM AND RECOVERY

2012 Report from the State Capitol



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FIRST PRIORITY: JOBS

We continued the state's commitment to job growth and economic recovery with new legislation during special session that expands the Small Business Express Program, allowing an estimated 3,600 additional businesses to have access to state funding. The program allows small businesses to access much-needed funding for capital investments and hiring.

In addition, the bill:

- » Establishes the Unemployed Armed Forces Member STEP-UP (Subsidized Training and Employment Program) with grants to subsidize a business's cost of hiring unemployed veterans during their first 180 days (about six months) on the job.
- » Creates the "Connecticut Made" and "Connecticut Treasures" programs to promote products made in Connecticut and promote the state's cultural, educational and historic attractions.
- » Develops a plan to allow the state to give preferential incentives and economic development assistance to companies that will relocate jobs from overseas to Connecticut.

We created new job opportunities for young people by funding the Youth Employment Summer Jobs program. We also supported adult evening education programs, as well as the Small Business Express program and a Connecticut Made initiative to promote products from local businesses.

Additional, high level job opportunities will result from economic development funding for the Jackson Labs project that builds on our decision to become a world leader in bioscience and biotechnology.

EDUCATION REFORM

Our education initiative will provide new support to help turn around underperforming schools. The education reform package has long-term implications for our children and for the state's economic well-being. The better we prepare children for the 21st Century workforce, the stronger we'll make Connecticut's economy. The bill:

- » Includes more funding for school-based health centers and family resource centers.
- » Recognizes the critical importance of early childhood education by underwriting 1,000 school readiness slots for preschoolers and funding initiatives to improve early reading success.
- » Creates the Commissioner's Network, to provide the intensive supports and interventions needed to turn around 25 of the most chronically low-performing schools.
- » Works with teachers and administrators to strengthen our state's evaluation system to reflect our commitment to excellence.
- » Gives the state commissioner of education the needed authority to develop or modify plans with teachers and parents at "turnaround" schools.

REDUCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

We have made great progress in helping families affected by domestic violence in recent years, but the problem persists in our communities. Building on earlier successes, this year we strengthened the state's laws to better protect victims, hold abusers accountable, and give new tools to law enforcement. The 2012 bill provides police officers the tools they need to better identify and respond to domestic violence; requires courts to share protective and restraining orders with schools that victims attend; and extends length of restraining orders from six months to one year. With increasing numbers of people using texting as their primary way of communicating, the bill also charges the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications with conducting a study to determine the feasibility of developing a 911 texting system.

HELPING HOMEOWNERS

As a result of the 2008 financial crisis, our housing market is still recovering slowly and many homeowners remain regrettably in difficult financial situations. **As Co-Chair of the Banking Committee** I championed legislation critically needed to help struggling homeowners. The new law expands the Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (EMAP) to help even more people in financial distress make mortgage payments.

STORM RESPONSE AND POWER OUTAGES

In the aftermath of the October Nor'easter and Tropical Storm Irene that left much of the state without power, the legislature passed sweeping reforms to better prepare for future severe storms and avoid wide-spread and lengthy loss of utility service.

- » Utilities will be held to minimum performance standards for emergency preparation and response
- » Noncompliance could result in penalties of up to 2.5 percent of an electric or gas company's annual distribution revenue – up to \$25 million in penalties in the case of Connecticut Light & Power

PRICE GOUGING & PAIN AT THE PUMP

Skyrocketing gasoline prices are a result of global factors such as growing demand from expanding economies such as China, turmoil in the Middle East and oil market speculators. Faced with the reality of a global dilemma, the legislature acted in a bipartisan manner to be a part of the solution, by capping the state petroleum gross receipts tax (GRT) on motor fuels and enacting new price gouging laws to protect consumers from oil companies and gasoline dealers that try to exploit abnormal market conditions.



LEGISLATION HELPING SENIORS

HOSPICE CARE

With just two licensed hospices in the state, this new law will permit hospices to follow federal standards, giving smaller hospice facilities the opportunity to provide high quality services that allow patients to stay closer to family and friends. This bill will help our state ensure that residents have access to health care services across the full continuum of care.

PRESERVING MEDICARE ELIGIBILITY

This legislation ensured thousands of seniors and people with disabilities could continue to use the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) to help pay for their Medicare co-pays and deductibles by raising the income limit for MSP to accommodate a 3.6 percent Social Security cost of living increase (COLA) which took effect January 1. It would have been a tragic irony if a welcome increase in Social Security made some Connecticut residents ineligible for these Medicare benefits.