



To my friends and neighbors:

I have been spending most of my time this year focusing on two key priorities: doing all we can to drive job growth and restoring the strength of our housing market. We must continue to help Connecticut's businesses create more jobs and build on the more than 40,000 new jobs created in the last four years. We have seen improvement in our housing market in Stamford and Darien, and we have to sustain that new strength.

That's why I fought to pass a balanced budget that does not raise taxes. I also worked hard to defend Stamford and Darien from any funding cuts because I know that less state funding usually results in property tax increases at home.

Working in a bipartisan manner, we were also able to increase state aid for education (ECS) and enable many more children to attend preschool. We made additional investments in job creation programs such as STEP-UP, which encourages employers to hire veterans and the unemployed.

As the House chairman of the Banks Committee, I led the passage of new legislation to reform our business and corporation law, making our state more competitive with other states. This move will in the long term bring more jobs to Connecticut. I also worked closely with Realtors® to create an alternative to foreclosure that allows homeowners in distress to work with banks to sell their homes on the open market, thereby avoiding the stigma of a traditional foreclosure.

I hope this report is informative, and I'm happy to answer any questions you have about issues facing our state or your family. Thank you again for the privilege and honor of serving as your state representative.



  
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# FOCUSED ON JOB GROWTH AND THE HOUSING MARKET

## 2014 Report from the State Capitol

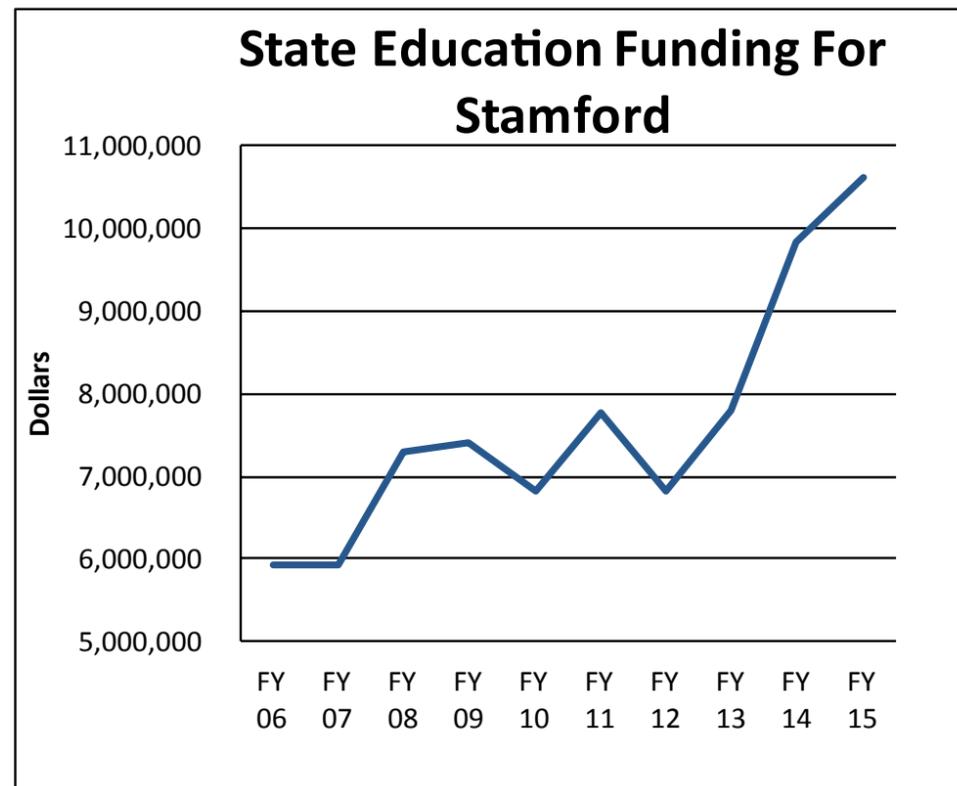


STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**William Tong**



## A BALANCED BUDGET, NO NEW TAXES

We adopted a balanced budget on time without any tax increases for the fiscal year 2015, which begins July 1. Despite not raising taxes and remaining under the spending cap, the state was still able to make many investments and provide additional funding to our municipalities. Stamford and Darien can expect a combined increase of over \$1.3 million in state aid for the upcoming fiscal year. In addition, since fiscal year 2006 Stamford has seen an impressive 78.9 percent increase in state education funding. By saving our municipalities money, we allow them to provide tax relief and make local capital investments.



## HELPING SENIORS MAKE THEIR HOMES SAFE AND COMFORTABLE

Most seniors would prefer to live in their own homes for as long as possible. We have taken steps to help make this happen. This year we created a \$6 million grant program for home modifications and assistive technology that will allow people to remain in their homes longer. The program is open to seniors and individuals with disabilities who are at risk of being unable to live independently without the modifications. PA 14-73 - HB 5227 - Effective Date: July 1, 2014

## MAKING CONNECTICUT NUMBER ONE FOR BUSINESSES AND JOBS

Most people think of Delaware as the most business-friendly state in the country. More than 50 percent of all public companies are based in Delaware, and more than 60 percent of the Fortune 500. I think Connecticut can challenge Delaware and eventually supplant it as the most business-friendly state in the country, and I wrote and led passage of a bill this year to make that happen. Under the new law, we created the Commission on Connecticut's Leadership in Corporation and Business Law, which is charged with developing a 10-year plan to attract more companies and business, streamline our business and corporation laws, improve our business tax system and enhance the ability of our courts to adjudicate business disputes. This plan is a major step to putting Connecticut front and center in the national and international competition for businesses and economic growth. PA 14-89 - HB 5353 - Effective Date: October 1, 2014

## ELIMINATING UNNECESSARY REGULATION

Government regulations are essential to responsible governing, but many are onerous and confusing. In the last year, all state agencies performed a comprehensive review of their regulations to find those that are outdated, unnecessarily burdensome, inefficient or ineffective. As a result, hundreds of pages of regulations that affect Connecticut residents and businesses will be rescinded. The implementation of the e-Regulations System, which puts all state regulations online where they can be easily found and searched, will continue to add transparency. This system will also create automatically generated alerts that interested parties can set up to be notified when a specific agency is in the process of creating or changing a regulation. PA 14-187 - HB 5049 - Effective Date: Upon Passage

## PREVENTING CONCUSSIONS

Concussions have been rising at an alarming rate and we are only now beginning to understand the potential devastating effects they can have on children. The Committee on Children heard heartbreaking testimony from students, parents, coaches and others from our community and decided that it was time to act. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the commissioner of the Department of Public Health, will develop an education plan for student athletes, coaches and parents. A new consent form will also be distributed to parents and legal guardians that will have to be returned to the school prior to athletic activity. These steps ensure that we are fighting the issue with proper knowledge prior to an incident rather than when it is too late. PA 14-66 - HB 5113 - Effective Date: July 1, 2014, except for the task force provision, which is effective upon passage.

## PROTECTING ENERGY CUSTOMERS

As a consumer and a member of the Energy Committee, I know how tough it is to deal with energy suppliers. This session we took steps to protect electricity and heating oil customers from abuse.

A state market analysis released in March by the Office of Consumer Counsel estimated Connecticut consumers were overpaying for electricity by an estimated \$13.7 million a month. Electricity suppliers will now be prohibited from offering consumers short-term "teaser" energy contracts with low rates, then switching to much higher variable rate contracts within weeks. Termination fees would be capped at \$50 under the law, and a consumer could switch back to the standard rate charged by CL&P within 72 hours. More transparent billing practices and faster switching, so a customer can fire a company quickly and easily, and prohibitions of coercive and deceptive sales practices, will empower consumers.

In addition, we took steps to protect those families that rely on heating oil. Over the past few years, some heating oil companies have gone out of business, taking their customer's money and not delivering their oil. In order to protect consumers, we created a moratorium on selling fuel oil contracts during the peak heating season (between November 1 and March 31). Dealers that offer prepaid contracts will also be required to disclose details of the offer, including how the contract will be secured.

PA 14-51 - SB 299 - Effective Date: July 1, 2014,

PA 14-75 - SB 2 - Effective Date: Upon passage, except for some provisions.

## HELPING HOMEOWNERS IN DISTRESS

Most homeowners at risk of losing their homes would like to avoid foreclosure. This year I led the passage of legislation that established an alternative to foreclosure that can work for both the lender and the homeowner. Many homeowners in distress would consider a short sale, whereby they would sell their house on the market and avoid foreclosure. Too often, however, the homeowner, bank and other lienholders can't get on the same page to make it happen. As chairman of the Banks Committee, I worked together with our state's Realtors®, including Realtors® in Stamford and Darien, to create a process whereby a homeowner can avoid traditional foreclosure by agreeing with the bank to sell the house on the open market. Under the new law, once the bank and the homeowner agree to sell the house on the open market, a court steps in to supervise that process, keep it on track and avoid many of the hang-ups and roadblocks that often prevent a traditional short sale. We are now leveraging the experience and expertise of our Realtors® to help homeowners in distress get their houses on the market, get out from under crushing debt they can no longer afford and avoid the long, drawn out burden of a traditional foreclosure that can severely impair a home's value and impact the neighboring homes around it. PA 14-84 - HB 5514 - Effective Date: October 1, 2014