

## LEADING MODERATES TO ROLL BACK TAXES

In this newsletter, I am pleased to update you on key legislation and significant increases in funding for Stamford and Darien. It was a huge year for our communities, as the strength of Stamford and Darien's legislators continues to grow.

As I am sure you've heard, it was also a very tough year. After nine years as your state legislator, my role has changed dramatically. I'm now Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. It is also now my responsibility to lead moderate, pro-growth legislators. Sometimes that's a lonely place to be. Hartford is not broken like Washington, but it can be polarized. Bringing people together to forge difficult compromises is not easy, but it is necessary. It's my job.

That's why when the business community expressed serious concerns about the state budget, I led a group of moderates from across the state to roll back many of the proposed taxes in a special session. Because of our efforts, we:

- » Cut \$1.6 billion in spending
- » Cut millions of dollars in state employee overtime
- » Secured millions for property tax relief
- » Defeated a proposed 2% surcharge on capital gains
- » Cancelled a proposed increase in taxes on data services
- » Cancelled proposed sales tax increases on veterinary and accounting services
- » Delayed the implementation of unitary or combined reporting

I will be very candid – this year's budget battle was brutal. Stamford and Darien had much at stake in this budget. Connecticut must have a state budget that provides the services that we need, but one that is sustainable and makes Connecticut as economically competitive as we can be.

There are many more tough decisions ahead and likely more spending cuts that will affect services that we all rely on. I wish I could tell you otherwise. But we have to make these difficult choices while Connecticut continues its economic recovery. Thank you for the opportunity to do this work for you and your family.



### CONTACT WILLIAM TONG

Legislative Office Building  
Room 2502  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
Capitol: 1.800.842.8267  
William.Tong@cga.ct.gov  
www.housedems.ct.gov/Tong



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# William Tong

Proudly Serving Stamford and Darien | 147<sup>th</sup> District



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# PUTTING STAMFORD AND DARIEN FIRST

## 2015 Report from the State Capitol



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## TOUGH LAWS TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

As Chairman of the important Judiciary Committee, I lead the committee with jurisdiction over all criminal laws in our state. As a parent, I am reminded every day that my first responsibility is to keep our children safe. In response to the disturbing events at Stamford High School, in which an administrator failed to report a sexual relationship between a student and teacher, I lead passage of legislation that increases the penalties for teachers and administrators who do not report these relationships. Convictions for failure to report will now be a felony and prohibit offenders from being reemployed by the school district.



## PROTECTING FAMILIES FROM PREDATORY ELECTRICITY RATES

Last year, I called for legislation to fight electricity suppliers who induced residents to accept low “teaser” rates only to jack them up later, particularly on unsuspecting seniors. This year, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to protect residents from electricity providers who offer a low introductory rate that increases rapidly afterwards. Electric suppliers are now banned from offering variable “teaser” rates on new contracts. For those customers currently in a variable rate contract, suppliers cannot charge a termination or early cancellation fee and must allow customers who want to switch to standard service the ability to do so within 72 hours.

## HUGE INCREASES IN STATE FUNDING

Despite the difficult budget fight, Stamford and Darien will receive unprecedented increases in state funding including:

**Major Investments in Transportation.** Under the new state budget, Connecticut will divert .5% of the state’s sales tax revenue to fund transportation infrastructure projects. Connecticut is now on track to invest approximately \$10 billion over the next five years in transportation. Much of that money will be focused on I-95, the Merritt Parkway, the Stamford Transportation Center Parking Garage, and other major projects in our area.

**Over \$60 Million for New Magnet School.** Students in Stamford and Darien, who are already eligible to attend the Rogers Interdistrict Magnet School, will now be part of a major expansion of Rogers at the former Sacred Heart Academy on Strawberry Hill Avenue. The state will now pump nearly \$62 million into a complete renovation and opening of the new school.

**School Construction.** We also secured millions more in direct state aid for education, including a new \$2 million investment per year over the next five years for capital spending on Stamford’s schools.

**Property Tax Relief.** The state will also divert .5% of the sales tax to direct property tax relief to municipalities.

### FUNDING INCREASES

Additional State Funding (Stamford & Darien)	\$4,214,096
Rogers Magnet School Extension Construction	\$61,849,908
Rogers Magnet School Operating Funds	\$900,000
JM Wright Technical High School	\$3,516,042
School Capital Improvements (Over 5 Years)	\$10,000,000
Additional Education Funding	\$2,601,987
Bonding and Grants	\$52,588,996
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$135,671,029</b>

## MAKING CONNECTICUT MORE COMPETITIVE

Connecticut must improve our business climate, and we must become a better place to do business. That is why the Speaker of the House appointed me to serve as Co-Chair of the new Commission on Economic Competitiveness, a permanent commission charged with developing policies to promote economic growth and grow jobs in the state. The Commission will analyze the impact state tax policy has on state business and industry, and will also examine the needs of large and small state businesses and industries and what they need to compete in the global economy. Unlike other task forces and blue ribbon commissions, this was specifically created by the Speaker and the Senate President to take action on proposals to increase our competitiveness and improve our business climate. The Commission includes my co-chair, Joe McGee, of the Business Council of Fairfield County, as well as key stakeholders like the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, representatives of labor, and large and small companies and employers.

## MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

- » Synchrony Financial to add up to 400 jobs in Stamford.
- » Unemployment has dropped to a seven year low of 5.3%.
- » In August, the state added 3,200 jobs; this is the best year over year August job growth in over a decade.
- » Between August 2014 and August 2015, the private sector added 31,100 new jobs.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DELIVERS ENTIRE FLEET OF NEW M-8 TRAINS ON METRO NORTH. MORE THAN \$2 BILLION IN NEW TRAINS WILL GO INTO SERVICE IN 2015.