

## WORKING TO PROTECT WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



With a woman's right to an abortion under severe threat by the conservative majority on the United States Supreme Court, which has signaled a possible overturning of Roe vs. Wade this summer, access may be determined by state laws.

I am proud to join dozens of my colleagues in a newly formed Reproductive Health Caucus. On the 49th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, we joined together and committed to pass bills to modernize the state's reproductive care laws, improve insurance coverage for such care, and safeguard a woman's access to abortion here in Connecticut.



### CONTACT ME

- 📞 860-240-8735
- ✉️ [Gary.Turco@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Gary.Turco@cga.ct.gov)
- 🌐 [housedems.ct.gov/Turco](http://housedems.ct.gov/Turco)
- 📘 [facebook.com/StateRepTurco](https://facebook.com/StateRepTurco)
- 📷 [instagram.com/staterepturco](https://instagram.com/staterepturco)

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**GARY TURCO**  
27th House District | Newington

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# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# GARY TURCO

Dear Neighbor,

The 2022 Legislative Session has officially started, and although it is a short one, I will be using every second to advocate for the residents of Newington. Some of my priorities include helping those who have been negatively impacted economically by the COVID-19 pandemic, helping reduce the cost of living, and addressing the social and emotional effects of the difficulties we have faced.

I will serve again as Vice-Chair of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, where I will focus on reducing student loan debt and increasing workforce training opportunities. As a Veterans' Affairs Committee member, I will work to ensure the state assists veterans in areas where federal programs are lacking.

I also was recently appointed on my request to the Public Safety and Security Committee. I want to work closely with law enforcement and other first responders. They have been on the front lines of the pandemic, and it has been tough combating issues of crime and safety, along with their personal physical and mental health. They need our support, and I want to help.

I look forward to continuing to move our state ahead.

At your service,

State Representative Gary Turco  
Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106-1591

## BIPARTISAN WORK TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH



Rep. Turco standing with Howard Sovronsky, Chief Behavioral Health Officer at Connecticut Children's

With increasing suicide rates among children and teens, children's mental health and well-being have been a source of concern even before the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic, those concerns have grown more dire. Parents, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and teachers have all experienced frustration at the system's failure to adequately address the mental health needs of all children in Connecticut.

Help for children is on the way. **House Bill 5001 - An Act Concerning Children's Mental Health** addresses the mental health crisis in Connecticut in numerous ways, including *investing in the provider workforce and retention, expanding current services, developing new resources in schools inpatient and outpatient facilities, and improving insurance coverage for treatments.*

This legislation will be a top priority for me this session, and I welcome your input and advocacy in getting it passed. Our children need the help now, and we cannot rest until we have done a better job addressing these needs.

## CT ESSENTIAL WORKERS COVID ASSISTANCE FUND

Last session, the legislature approved the Connecticut Essential Workers COVID-19 Assistance Fund. This fund was created to help ease the financial burden for essential workers and their families who lived in Connecticut, contracted COVID-19, became ill and were unable to work, or died, between March 10, 2020 and July 20, 2021. The application portal has officially opened this year and can help cover what is listed below.

- **Lost Wages:** Unpaid leave and lost wages if an employee was unable to work after contracting COVID-19, or due to symptoms later diagnosed as COVID-19.
- **Out-of-Pocket Medical Expenses:** For medical services related to contracting COVID-19 that were not covered by insurance.
- **Burial Expenses:** Burial/funeral expenses of \$3,000 for an eligible essential worker's family who died from COVID-19.



## PROTECTING VOTER'S RIGHTS IN NEWINGTON

Newington recently faced a severe threat to voting access by a proposal that was being considered by the Town Council to reduce our polling places from 7 to 3. This reduction would have caused an increase from around 2,700 voters per polling place to over 7,100. It would have resulted in longer lines, difficulties finding parking, increased traffic, voter confusion, and other complications, especially for seniors and the disabled.



I was proud of the hundreds of Newington residents who banded together across party lines to speak out against the proposal and saved our current polling places.

Protecting our democracy and right to vote comes before all else because, without them, all of our rights are in jeopardy.