

ANIMAL ABUSE AND THE CIRCLE OF VIOLENCE

I continue to work on animal abuse and the fact that it is a red flag for future violent behavior. Several bills directed at cross-reporting with the Department of Children and Families and Animal Control officers made it out of Committee and I will be bringing them back next session. I am happy that we are able to pass a bill that addresses the horrible practice of puppy mills by making it mandatory that certificates of origin for dogs are available and visible at all pet shops. (PA 09-228)



Rep. Urban, with her son, Lex and rescued dogs, Mr. Grizzly Bear and Betty Spaghetti

FIGHTING FOR OUR SENIORS

Safeguarding the health, independence and safety of our seniors is one of my priorities. This session we passed several important bills to improve the quality of life of seniors in our communities.

Affordable Home Care

I am proud to have helped pass this new law that will help seniors remain independent in their own homes by expanding affordable access to personal care assistance services. (PA 09-64)

Silver Alert System

This year the legislature established the Silver Alert System, an emergency system modeled after the Amber Alert. It allows law enforcement agencies to issue public alerts for missing seniors. (PA 09-109)

Senior Discount Programs

Any business that sells goods and services and offers a senior citizen discount is now required to disclose eligibility requirements by placing a sign at the cash register or store entrance stating the qualifying age and discount percentage or dollar amount. (PA 09-53)

Patients Rights At A Nursing Home

The Legislature expanded the Nursing Home Bill of Rights to prohibit the solicitation of donations or gifts as a condition of admission. It also extends this protection to third parties, such as families and friends. (PA 09-168)

LYME DISEASE

Knowing that many of us have contracted Lyme disease and faced dire complications, I and like-minded colleagues wanted to give our doctors the freedom to prescribe long term antibiotic therapy. This new law allows doctors the discretion to continue treating cases of persistent Lyme disease with antibiotics. By passing this law, it is my hope that people suffering from the effects of Lyme disease will be able to find relief from this pernicious disease. (PA 09-128)

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2009 Major Public Acts
2009 Acts Affecting Seniors
2009 State Programs for the Elderly
2009 Acts Affecting Energy & Utilities
2009 Acts Affecting Children
2009 Acts Affecting Education
2009 Acts Affecting Taxes

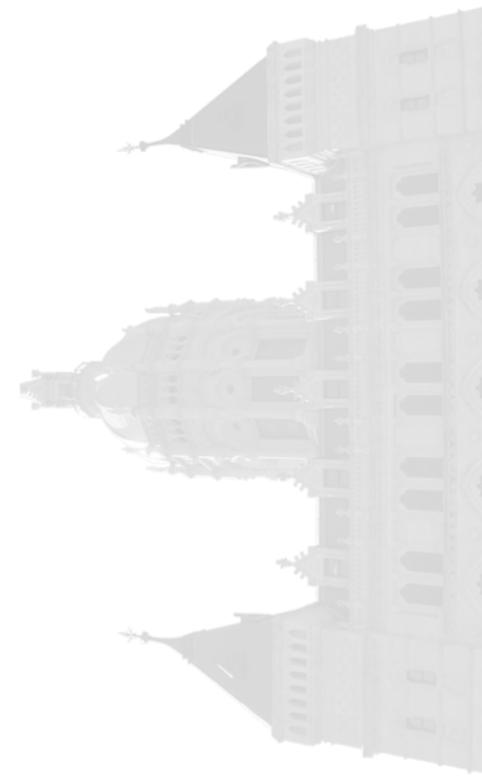
2009 Acts Affecting Insurance
2009 Acts Affecting Businesses
2009 Acts Affecting Real Estate
2009 Acts Affecting Municipalities
2009 Acts Affecting the Environment
2009 Acts Affecting Health Care
2009 Acts Affecting Veterans & the Military

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State Representative
Diana S. Urban
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Dear Neighbor,

Even though things are looking better now, this was the toughest year I've spent in Connecticut's Legislature. From day one, my colleagues and I were confronted with the worst recession in decades and a crumbling financial system that, together, left our state with an \$8.5 billion hole to fill in the biennial budget.

To help Connecticut create jobs, we saved Workforce Investment, Youth Employment, and the Small Business Incubator programs. To continue the state's commitment to quality education, we maintained funding levels for Educational Cost Sharing and support for Priority, Magnet and Charter Schools, and Head Start. To maintain vital health and human services, we continued budgeting for Life Star, Dial-A-Ride, community and school-based health centers, home and long-term care, nursing homes, ConnPACE, Medicaid, and HUSKY.

While fees did go up, I am pleased that we were able to cut taxes for most middle class families by preserving the property tax credit.

In addition, the General Assembly adopted legislation to control health care costs, attack the mortgage crisis, and protect children, seniors, veterans, the environment and family farms. This newsletter summarizes some of these initiatives. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me.

It is a privilege to serve as your Representative in Hartford, and as always, I welcome your comments and concerns.

Sincerely,

Diana
Diana S. Urban

STEAP GRANTS FOR STONINGTON & NORTH STONINGTON

I am pleased that both Stonington and North Stonington will be receiving STEAP funding. To be eligible for a STEAP Grant, a town must have a population of less than 30,000 residents and not be considered a distressed city or town.

- Stonington will receive \$105,960 for a riverwalk and improvements at Donahue Park and \$65,000 for an ADA compliant restroom at Spellman Park Recreation Complex in Pawcatuck.
- North Stonington will receive \$200,000 to help pay for the study concerning the town's drinking water supply wells.

CHILDREN & THE RECESSION

This past spring, House Speaker Christopher Donovan (D-Meriden) created a legislative task force – the Children and the Recession Task Force – that will help plan Connecticut’s response to the increasingly desperate plight of children impacted by the economic recession. I am pleased to have been appointed to co-chair this important group, along with my colleague, Rep. Karen Jarmoc, (D-Enfield).



Rep. Urban with CT Attorney General, Dick Blumenthal, at a press conference.

Connecticut is the first in the nation to form a legislative task force to plan for children in the recession and during the recovery. A recent report issued by the Foundation for Child Development and Duke University predicts the recession will send between 2.6 million and 3.3 million children into poverty, costing American taxpayers \$1.7 trillion. The estimated economic impact on Connecticut of 35,000 children entering poverty is \$800 million annually.

As a state, we will recover from this recession. But what is critical for us to understand is that children will not. By creating this task force, we are not waiting for the negative results to hit in four or five years; we are taking the initiative to address the problems now.

This task force is an ongoing group responsible for reporting to the Speaker and legislative leaders quarterly on key findings. We will also work to identify appropriate federal stimulus opportunities to support programs for children. Please visit the Connecticut Commission on Children’s website (www.cga.ct.gov/coc/) for more information.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN & THE ENVIRONMENT

I have always made the environment one of my top priorities and this session we got some important work done. Connecticut became one of the few states to step up and ban Bisphenol-A (BPA). BPA is an industrial chemical linked to problems with child development and adult reproductive systems and found in baby bottles and plastic food and beverage containers. We also passed legislation to replace hazardous cleaning products in our schools with safe "green" alternatives. There are over 80,000 chemicals now in use in the USA and only 10,000 have been tested by the Environmental Protection Agency. It is critical that we continue to bring these problem chemicals to the forefront to protect Connecticut families.



Rep. Urban with students at the Peace Pole Ceremony at West Broad Street School.

RBA

As many of you know, I have been working long and hard on Results Based Accountability (RBA) as a way to bring efficiency and accountability to State Government. We now have the RBA process embedded in the Appropriations Committee and next session state agencies will be reporting to us in the form of a RBA Report Card. Basically each one page report will focus on a major program and answer the questions "How much did we do, How well did we do it, and Is anyone better off?" This will give legislators important, accessible information on whether programs are actually working.



Rep. Urban speaking on the floor of the House.

In addition, I am so pleased that we have redirected our efforts at "Sunsetting" various entities (which I might add we have put off for 30 years!) with a pilot program that would replace Sunset with an RBA analysis of our major agencies utilizing our own Program Review and Investigations Committee and staff. Our first project is to examine whether programs directed at Prevention are working in our Department of Children and Families. I will work on convincing the General Assembly to adopt this pilot and make it policy! (PA 09-166)

HEALTH CARE REFORM

We are all aware of the national health care debate that is going on in Congress and the plight of the uninsured and underinsured. More than 750,000 Connecticut residents went without health care at one point during 2007 or 2008. Health care costs everyone more each year and taxpayers end up paying more to supplement people who use the emergency room as their source for primary health care. I am pleased that Connecticut has stepped up to the plate and passed, over the Governor’s veto, the Sustinet Plan. (PA 09-148)

The Sustinet bill creates an eleven member board of health care providers and experts to allow Connecticut to take full advantage of federal reforms and provides a framework for expanding high quality coverage to more residents.

We have seen a rise in the incidence of autism and I know that many families are struggling to provide adequate care and treatment for their children. I worked hard as the Chair of the Select Committee on Children with the leadership of the Human Services Committee to pass this bill. This law requires and expands insurance coverage of critical treatments and benefits that will help children with autism. (PA 09-115)

EARLY BREAST CANCER DETECTION

Women who have dense breast tissue have a higher risk of cancer. Previously, mammography reports did not have to include that information. To facilitate early detection of breast cancer, a new law requires that mammography reports include density data to help women identify their risk level. (PA 09-41)

HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES AND FARMS

Our small businesses generate over 80% of all jobs in Connecticut. The recession has hit them hard and we need to do all we can to help. With that in mind I introduced a bill, An Act Requiring Small Business Impact Analyses for Proposed Regulations, that would ensure that all regulations promulgated by state agencies would be checked for their impact on small business. If it is determined that there is an impact then the bill identifies ways to mitigate that impact, allowing small businesses to grow and be competitive. (PA 09-19)



Rep. Urban with Sr. Telchilde Hinckley at a press conference protecting Raw Milk Farmers.

The June 30th Government report from Connecticut Business and Industry Association stated that “Only a handful of adopted proposals can actually be considered of help to the economy. One of the most helpful (PA 09-19) will be a positive step in counting the economic cost of government by requiring the state to quantify the impact of proposed regulations on small business.”

Our family farms are also small businesses and need help during these trying times. I know that many of my constituents are fans of raw milk and I fought Department of Agriculture regulations that would have regulated our 14 raw milk farmers (and 6,000 acres of prime farmland) out of business. I also introduced legislation to allow family farms to diversify their products for sale at Farmer's



Brianne Casadei & Rep. Diana Urban with pigs at Terra Firma Farm.

Markets and was instrumental in establishing the grant program to assist our long struggling dairy farmers.

We lose on average 9,000 acres of prime farmland every year (we lead the nation percentage wise) and the typical distance food travels from farm to plate is 1,500 to 3,000 miles. This is a recipe for disaster. I intend to continue to promote farms, farmer's markets, and a sensible food policy for our state.

VOTING RIGHTS OF 17-YEAR-OLDS

Kudos to Stonington High School and its active Civics classes! After bringing to the legislature’s attention the fact that 17-year-olds that will be 18 by the time of an election were unable to vote in a primary before that election, they spurred us to action. The General Assembly passed a bill implementing a constitutional amendment passed by the people of Connecticut in the 2008 election to make it possible for 17-year-olds who turn 18 before the day of the regular election to vote in a primary. What a great way to impact government and encourage their peers to vote. Go SHS!