

## HELPING OUR VETS FIND WORK AND HOUSING

The Veterans' Opportunity Pilot Program will utilize specialists in veterans' employment and homelessness to assist nonprofit agencies secure work and housing for our vets. At the state level, our Department of Labor will manage a statewide network of employment services for veterans and utilize federal grants to lower the number of homeless veterans in our state.



## HELPING SENIORS PAY THEIR RENT

This year we re-opened the Renters Rebate program to eligible seniors and individuals with permanent disabilities to receive partial reimbursements related to rental payments. \$6.5 million in rental relief will be available to seniors, allowing an additional 12,700 seniors to receive a renter's rebate.



Rep. Vargas at the Puerto Rican Flag Raising Ceremony



Rep. Vargas receiving an award at the Police Chiefs Award Ceremony

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## STATE REPRESENTATIVE **EDWIN VARGAS** PROUDLY SERVING THE 6TH DISTRICT, HARTFORD

# CAPITOL UPDATE 2014

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## STATE REPRESENTATIVE **EDWIN VARGAS** PROUDLY SERVING THE 6TH DISTRICT, HARTFORD



Dear Neighbor:

I am pleased to share with you this update on the recently concluded legislative session. Each year brings a new set of challenges, and the 2014 session was no different. The need to encourage economic growth, help working families, and make critical investments in the future of our children, as well as our state, was clear.

Meeting these priorities while also adopting a balanced budget with no new taxes took a lot of hard work, but I am happy to report to you that my colleagues and I were able to achieve our goals.

Working in a bipartisan manner, we were able to increase funding for education and enable more children to attend pre-school. We also made additional investments in job creation programs such as STEP-UP, which encourages employers to hire veterans and the unemployed, and will help our economy grow.

Recognizing the struggle of many working families, we raised the minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2017. By helping thousands of minimum wage earners, hundreds of millions of dollars will pour into our state economy and help businesses grow and flourish.

Spurring more economic development was also a priority that we met by helping United Technologies Corp. upgrade and expand its aerospace research and manufacturing facilities across the state. This in turn will have a domino effect and help its suppliers and related businesses.

I hope you find the enclosed information helpful and will feel free to call or email me for any reason — legislative or otherwise. It is my pleasure and honor to serve as your state representative.

Thank you,



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# EDWIN VARGAS

PROUDLY SERVING THE 6TH DISTRICT, HARTFORD



## CAPITOL UPDATE 2014

### SUPPORTING BUSINESSES TO GROW

Small manufacturers in Connecticut are an important source of jobs and the engine of economic growth. We work hard to provide support to these businesses through programs like the Manufacturing Reinvestment Account program (MRA). The MRA is designed to help small manufacturers fund capital investments and train their workers. This year, we made it easier for businesses to take advantage of the program by increasing the number of employees an employer may have to be eligible for the program from 50 to 150.



*Rep. Vargas attending a cookout with families and friends*



*Rep. Vargas at the rally for fast food workers*

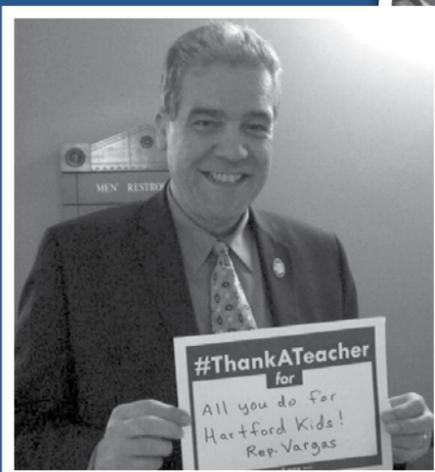
### HELPING BUSINESSES WITH A SOCIAL PURPOSE

Many recent college graduates want to work for companies with a greater social purpose and find some way to give back to society. To attract these young college graduates, and to encourage giving and protect businesses from liability, we supported the creation of social enterprise businesses and benefit corporations. Social Enterprise Businesses are a hybrid between the traditional for-profit business model and the nonprofit model. These businesses operate like traditional corporations but they must have the purpose of creating a material, positive impact on society and the environment stated in their articles of incorporation. They may also identify the specific public benefits that they seek to create.

### EDUCATION FOR ADULTS: GO BACK TO GET AHEAD

Students who dropped out of college before earning a bachelor's degree will be eligible to take three free courses at a Connecticut state college or community college. This initiative is part of the governor's "Transform CSU" plan aimed at increasing enrollment at the state's higher education institutions while also meeting the workforce demands of businesses in the state. The plan includes facilities upgrades that will connect classrooms with 21st century technology, and give our students the tools and skills to be competitive in the increasingly competitive workforce.

*Rep. Vargas attending the UConn Downtown Hartford event with other public officials*



### INCREASING ACCESS TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

The population of students in the state whose first language is not English continues to grow, and this rapid shift has revealed the need for more educators who teach English as a second language.

To recruit more English language learner teachers we expanded the English language learner educator incentive program. Students pursuing a bilingual education certification in the last two years of their teacher preparation coursework will be able to reduce their costs by applying for a grant of up to \$5,000. Those students who receive a grant and teach in a public school in Connecticut will be eligible for reimbursement of federal or state educational loans up to a maximum of \$2,500 per year up to 4 years of teaching in Connecticut.



*Rep. Edwin Vargas with Intern Jaclyn Saunders, and Governor Dannel P. Malloy*

### IMPROVING ACCESS TO UNIVERSAL PRE-K

The newly established Office of Early Childhood will develop a plan to improve access to preschool programs and achieve universal pre-K in Connecticut. In the meantime, we have increased school readiness reimbursements and added 1,020 new preschool slots. We also created a floor rather than a ceiling for Competitive School Districts, allowing these districts to receive more than the \$107,000 grant to accommodate additional preschool spaces.



*Rep. Vargas speaking in the House Chamber*