

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**EDWIN  
VARGAS**

Dear Friend and Neighbor,

Thank you for giving me the privilege of representing you in the CT General Assembly. It is such an honor to continue to serve you in the legislature. I wanted to provide some updates on what we worked on in the 2019 Legislative Session. The 2019 Legislative Session was “long” in duration and “long” on substance. The House passed a budget which is responsible, stable, and funds the Rainy Day Fund at historic levels. With significant investments in education, job growth, and economic development throughout the state, the budget holds the line on spending.

- We’ve increased funding for education from the Governor’s budget and we blocked the cost shifting of the teachers pension.
- Through an agreement, the budget funds local hospitals to expand access to healthcare and protect thousands of jobs.
- Expansions were made to the Angel Investor tax credit and a repeal of the Business Entity tax to support small business starting next year.

With this budget, we’ve made significant investments in Connecticut’s middle class by:

- Supporting the start-up funding for the Paid Family Medical Leave program.
- Funding the workforce development pipeline to better match our curriculum with employer needs.
- Increasing funding for Higher Education to help stabilize tuition and improve the long term stability of our college and university system while establishing a plan for debt-free college.

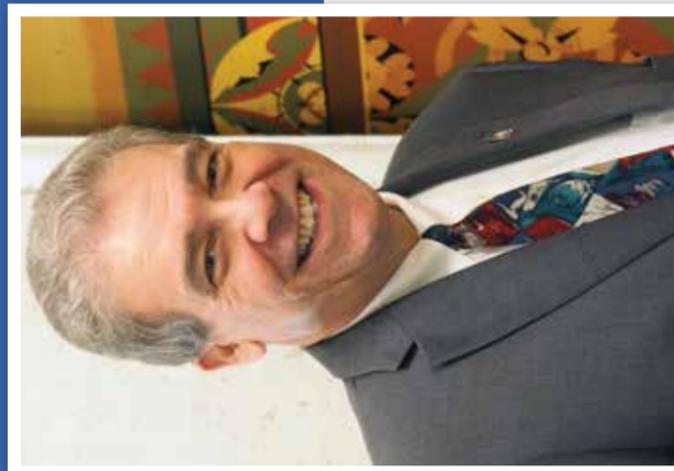
The budget also makes investments in Connecticut’s most vulnerable residents by expanding funding for essential programs like HUSKY A, Medicaid and Meals on Wheels. We’ve worked hard to present a budget that is a reflection of our values and aspirations for the future. With this budget, I believe we offer not only growth, but security for the residents of Connecticut. Over the years I have worked tirelessly with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do what’s best for Hartford and Connecticut. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to my office if I can be of service to you or your family.



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**CAPITOL UPDATE 2019**

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## PAID FAMILY LEAVE

In the event of a medical emergency, Paid Family and Medical Leave allows workers to care for themselves or a loved one without having to face the threat of financial ruin. By providing up to 12 weeks of Family and Medical Leave Insurance per year, equaling up to 95% of an employee's weekly paycheck, we will provide financial protection to those who find themselves in an unanticipated medical emergency. This will help pregnant women on medically-ordered bed rest, families with an infirm or aging parent and new parents who want to bond with an infant. The program is funded by employee contributions. If you or your family has an emergency, there will now be financial peace-of-mind. *(SB 1; Public Act 19-25)*

## RAISING WAGES

No one who works full time should live in poverty. Connecticut families will have more economic security as the state's minimum hourly wage gradually rises to \$15 by June 1, 2023. This legislation will help over 300,000 Connecticut workers who make less than \$15 an hour. The wage will increase on October 1 to \$11 an hour, followed by incremental increases over the next 4½ years. This legislation will:

- Combat persistent pay disparities between races and genders.
- Stimulate our economy.
- Raise the minimum wage incrementally until it reaches \$15 an hour on June 1, 2023.
- Index future minimum wage increases. *(HB 5004; Public Act 19-4)*

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE EDWIN VARGAS

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## KEEPING GUNS IN CARS LOCKED AWAY

Due to the increase in gun thefts from cars, we are now requiring drivers to keep guns locked away. Guns that are kept in the console or on the floor of the driver's or passenger's seat are often stolen from cars and used in violent acts. Having an unsecured gun in plain sight increases the risk of theft, as well as gun injury and death. We hope to reverse this trend by requiring guns to be kept out of sight, locked away.

This law requires gun owners who wish to keep a firearm in their car, to store them either in the trunk, a locked glove box, or a locked safe. This will help prevent gun theft and further violent acts. *(HB 7223; Public Act 19-7)*



## TOBACCO 21

Research shows that if you haven't started smoking by 21, you likely never will. We have made the sale of cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vape products illegal for those under 21. Nicotine creates addiction in teens, and 95% percent of adults who smoke started young. Nationwide, e-cigarette use, also known as "vaping," is on the rise among middle and high school students. This law seeks to keep nicotine out of the hands of minors.

This legislation will:

- Require someone to show their ID proving they are 21 or older to purchase cigarettes / vaping products.
- Protect middle school students who often purchase vaping products from 18 year olds.
- Protect a generation from becoming addicted to nicotine.
- Require dealers who sell e-cigs and related products online to obtain the signature of a person aged 21 or older at the shipping address prior to delivery and require the signer to show proof of age.
- Increase penalties for tobacco and e-cig sales and purchases involving anyone under the legal age.
- Ban smoking and vaping on the grounds of child care centers and schools.
- Require the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to conduct compliance checks on licensed dealers of tobacco products.



## BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR CAREGIVERS

We want to keep bad people away from our loved ones. We expanded access to background checks to help identify potentially dangerous individuals seeking jobs that have contact with our elderly population. We have charged the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors to convene a working group to develop strategies to raise public awareness about the available information on caregivers. *(SB 832; Public Act 19-116)*