

PRSRJT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD, CT
Permit No. 3937



Please Keep in Touch
Representative Toni Walker
Legislative Office Building
Room 4049
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: (860) 240-8585
(800) 842-8267
Home: (203) 562-8003
E-mail: Toni.Walker@cga.ct.gov
Web Site: www.cga.ct.gov/hdo/hdo093.asp

State Representative



TONI E. WALKER

93rd District . New Haven

2006

Dear Neighbor,

What a year this has been in Hartford! As some of you have read in the New Haven Register, I have fought hard to reform the juvenile justice system for our kids. I championed landmark legislation that would make Connecticut redefine our Juvenile Justice system. There is more work that I am doing with this issue.

I supported, and we passed, property tax relief legislation. Now, we can claim up to \$500 of a tax credit on our income taxes for our cars and homes. Additionally, we, the New Haven delegation, brought home an additional \$3.2 million to relieve the property tax burden on our families.

We were also able to restore funding for summer youth employment. Now, over 900 youth from New Haven, ages 14 to 19, will be employed this summer. This, as well as other legislation passed this session in Hartford, will help our families and children.

Thank you for all of your calls and e-mail. Always feel free to contact me! I am honored to be your State Representative and will continue to fight for our working families!

Sincerely,
Toni

More Money for Education



New Haven schools will receive \$128,491,056 from the Education Cost Sharing Grant this year. In addition, Adult Education will receive a 6% increase for a grant of \$2,390,328 and School Transportation will receive a grant of \$4,487,220. Total state aid to New Haven this year will exceed \$194,400,000!



Jobs for the 21st Century

As we work on our infrastructure, we must also continue our focus on job creation and retention. **Our 21st Century Plan includes:**

- New tax credits for movie and digital media productions in Connecticut
- Elimination of the 15% corporation tax surcharge for 2007
- Elimination of the Manufacturing Machinery and Equipment property tax over five years to attract more manufacturing jobs
- A job creation tax credit for creating at least 50 new jobs

More Money for our School Readiness

I worked hard to bring back more money to focus on early education and **new School Readiness slots** for 3 and 4 year olds. This year New Haven is receiving \$5.9 million in aid and next year we'll get **\$7.2 million--that's an 18% increase!**

More Money for our Streets

This year New Haven streets should be better than ever. We will receive a **7% increase over last year** for a total grant of **\$663,351** for road and capital improvements.

OUR CHILDREN'S SCHOOLS

Charter Schools

Charter schools provide a number of Connecticut students with excellent educational opportunities. Highly acclaimed for their record of raising academic achievement, charter schools can now **expand their enrollment from 250 to 300 students** under this bill. In addition, upon the approval of the State Board of Education, charter schools with a strong academic record may enroll up to 85 students per grade.



School Nutrition/Soda Ban

To provide for the nutritional health of Connecticut's children, the Healthy Schools Initiative was passed to reinforce healthy eating habits at schools. **This law bans the sale of soda and sugary beverages** and provides incentives for schools to give healthy snacks to young people. The Department of Education is also required to provide healthy standards of student eating habits while providing financial incentives to public schools.

Early Reading Intervention

Furthering the state's commitment to reducing the achievement gap, HB 5847 enhances intensive remedial assistance for elementary school students through personal reading plans and strengthens school requirements **to improve students' reading levels.** It shifts the policy focus to grades 1-3 reading students to help detect and resolve problems students may face. Each district must submit a progress report to the State Department of Education and work towards **reducing the reading achievement gap.**

School Breakfast Pilot

In an effort to provide students with a healthy start to the school day, this bill establishes a pilot program that provides competitive grants to the 10 severe-need schools to help **start up a school breakfast program.** Eligible schools must include in their application the number of students who will now receive **a nutritious breakfast.**



OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Child Poverty

We approved a program that seeks to match parents up with the **vocational and educational skills needed to succeed** in today's economy. Parents with children who are eligible for, but not receiving, public assistance may now receive assistance for their families by **earning high school diplomas, GEDs, job training skills, and English as a second language classes.**

Underage Drinking

Responsible parents work hard to raise responsible young people who abstain from alcohol. Passage of this legislation makes their jobs easier. **Adults will be prohibited from supplying drinks with alcohol to minors** or permitting minors to possess alcohol. PA 06-112



Autism Pilot Program

Connecticut currently provides little to no support services for adults with autism. Senate Bill 703 will change that. The Department of Mental Retardation must **establish an autism spectrum disorders pilot program.** The program will provide services such as **job skills, life skills coaching, and case management services** for up to fifty autistic adults and their families.

Summer Youth Employment Funding

The **state's five workforce investment boards** will be required to **allocate at least 75% of the money received** through the urban youth employment appropriation to one or more distressed municipalities in its region and the rest to other towns **for summer youth employment.** Any unspent money will go toward year-round workforce development **programs for 14-19 year olds** whose family incomes make them eligible for free or reduced school meals.

Grandparent Notification of Children's Removal

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is now **required to identify and give notice to grandparents** when an abused child is removed from a parent's house.

Deductions for Contributions to CHET

Taxpayers will now be able to **deduct their contributions to the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET)** from their Connecticut adjusted gross income for state income tax purposes. Single filers can deduct up to **\$5,000** whereas joint filers can deduct **\$10,000.** Any unused deductions can be carried forward for the following five years so long as each deduction not exceed the annual maximums.

HEALTHCARE FOR OUR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Healthy Kids Initiative

Connecticut is leading the way in providing healthcare for children. The **Healthy Kids Connecticut Committee** provides affordable and accessible **healthcare for the 71,000 children** in Connecticut that are currently uncovered. It eliminates waste in the system and finds better ways to deliver health care to children - making it more accessible and easier to enroll. This program recognizes that preventive care is more cost effective in the long run. The goal this year was to increase access to healthcare for young children by reducing tedious paperwork in order for families to enroll with ease in the HUSKY program. Laws were passed this year which guarantees that **children in HUSKY A will receive all necessary screening, diagnostic services, and treatment.**



Access To Oral Health Care

In an effort to ensure that children on HUSKY have access to, and receive proper oral health care, we passed legislation increasing the reimbursement rates received by the dental community.

Coverage for Breast Cancer Screening

Women with family histories or personal histories of breast cancer and those with dense breast tissue will have insurance coverage for a comprehensive ultrasound screening under certain individual and group health insurance policies, as of October 1st. Research has shown supplemental ultrasound increases detection from 48% to 97% for women with dense breast tissue.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Raising the Age of Jurisdiction

Currently in Connecticut, the juvenile court system has jurisdiction over matters relating to youth ages 15 and younger. I have worked tirelessly to raise the threshold to 17 years old. I helped form **The Juvenile Jurisdiction Planning and Implementation Team** to arrange for the implementation of any changes needed to **extend the juvenile court jurisdiction over delinquency matters to 16 and 17 year olds.** The team will consist of a variety of professionals and will report their findings and recommendations to the Appropriations and Judiciary Committees by February 1st of 2007.

Relocation of Parents Having Custody of Minor Children

During a child relocation dispute, current law places the burden of proof on the parent that is objecting to the child's relocation to prove why the child should not relocate. **This bill shifts the burden of proof onto the parent who is seeking relocation** to prove that the relocation is **in the child's best interest.** The courts must now consider the parent's reasons for seeking relocation, its impact on the quality and quantity of the child's future contact with the non-relocating parent, whether or not it will enhance the child's life, and if it's feasible to make visitation arrangements with the non-relocating parent.



PROTECTING OUR FAMILIES

Megan's Law

Eleven years ago, Connecticut passed landmark legislation that created one of the nation's first sex offender registries. This legislation has come to be known as Megan's Law and seeks to provide every possible protection for our children from sexual predators. This session, the legislature has enhanced these protections by:

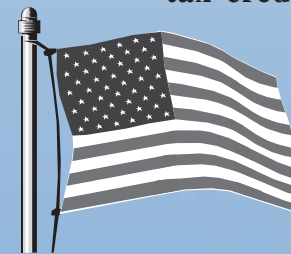
- **Increasing the number of probation and parole officers** who monitor sex offenders
- **Improving the on-line registry** by including the sex offender's most recent photo, contact information for a sex offender's parole and probation officers, and an improved description of the offense
- **Creating a Risk Assessment Team** which will review the files of all offenders, identify the risk posed by each sex offender, and then make recommendations as to what steps should be taken to further protect the public from the offender
- **Requiring registration of sex offenders** before they are released from prison
- **Improving name and address** change notification procedures

OUR VETERANS

Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Exemption

This bill excludes veterans' disability payments when determining income for purposes of income-based property tax exemptions for veterans, the blind, and people with total disabilities. State-mandated exemptions are granted through two statutes; one requires towns to give all qualified applicants a basic **\$1,000 property tax exemption**, and the other requires towns to give veterans who get the basic exemption an **additional exemption, the amount of which depends on their income.**

Furthermore, this legislation requires towns to give a \$1,000 property tax exemption to people who are totally disabled and people who are blind.



TAX CREDITS

Housing Tax Credit

The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority received additional funding to improve and expand upon the Housing Tax Credit Program. Through this program CHFA awards **tax credits to businesses that contribute funds to nonprofit housing organizations** where low and moderate income housing are developed.

Displaced Worker Tax Credit

If a company hires a worker who was employed in Connecticut but let go as a direct result of business restructuring, that company can receive a **\$1,500 per worker business tax credit.** To receive the tax credit, a company must pay an employee 75% of their previous annual wages for the first 12 months of employment.