



Rep. Walker discusses policy with Rep. Holder-Winfield in the House Chamber

### Creating Jobs

The Legislature made sure Connecticut was open for business by enacting laws that:

- » Encourage businesses to create jobs by providing tax incentives through the “First Five” program
- » Save Eli Whitney and other vo-tech schools that teach the skills that put people to work
- » Expand our reinvestments in manufacturing
- » Allow employees to earn paid time off when they or a family member is sick
- » Provide student loan reimbursements for green-tech degree holders after two years of employment in the field
- » Create the Connecticut Airport Authority to run our airports as economic engines for the economy

### Helping Small Businesses

Small business is the backbone of any viable community. We gave small- and minority-owned businesses a better chance at securing contracts that otherwise may not be within their reach. The new law requires the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) to set aside 25 percent of all contracts or portions of contracts for bidding by small contractors and minority business enterprises.

In addition, a study was funded to gather data concerning the state’s minority contractor set-aside program to determine whether intended goals of the program are being achieved.

### Streamlining Government

To address the state budget crisis we cut costs and streamlined government. This year, Connecticut is being run more efficiently with:

- » State agency consolidations
- » Upgraded technology
- » Over \$700 million in spending cuts
- » No borrowing
- » Fully funded pension obligations
- » A commitment to staying below the constitutional spending cap

# CAPITOL REPORT 2011

www.housedems.ct.gov/Walker

## State Representative Toni Walker Proudly Serving New Haven | 93<sup>rd</sup> District

HOUSE DEMOCRATS of CONNECTICUT

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# TONI WALKER

## State Representative

Proudly Serving New Haven  
93<sup>rd</sup> House District

Dear Neighbor,

The 2011 session was an eventful one. Difficult economic times made the budget process tough, with the need for sound fiscal policy and hard decisions to create a responsible budget. We worked well with our new Governor to preserve programs that hold strong value for our families and communities and make smart investments in government agencies.

This fall, we will convene a special session to focus on bolstering job creation. It is my intention to highlight small business development, entrepreneurial opportunity and youth employment during this session; so that we get people in our community back to work.

Additionally, I am proud of my work to keep property taxes down by preserving important state aid to New Haven:

### New Haven Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Aid

PILOT: State Owned Property	\$4,846,710
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$37,547,918
Town Aid Roads	\$610,471
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$1,803,526
Pequot/Mohegan Aid	\$7,553,840
Adult Education	\$3,107,358
School Transportation	\$2,179,779
Educational Cost Sharing	\$142,509,525
<b>Total State Funds to New Haven</b>	<b>\$200,159,127</b>

While job creation and getting our fiscal house in order were my top priorities, the legislature was able to pass many other important laws this year that will benefit Connecticut families. Many of these new laws are detailed in this newsletter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy autumn,



State Representative

# Toni Walker

Proudly Serving New Haven | 93<sup>rd</sup> District



Rep. Walker speaks at a Mothers for Justice forum.

## CAPITOL REPORT 2011

### Protecting the Lives of Connecticut's Children

We can't forget that children need our help in emergency situations, which is why we amended the state's civil preparedness plan to include day care centers and activities focusing on children and youth.

The law requires:

- » Children's evacuation and removal to a safe location
- » Parents to be notified
- » Reunification of parents with their children
- » Care for children with special needs

### School Breakfast

We've increased the eligibility for the school breakfast program by expanding the program. Students learn best with proper nutrition that starts with breakfast.

### Care 4 Kids

The Department of Social Services (DSS) must now post a notice on its website and provide written notice to program participants and providers when it makes any changes to the Care4Kids program (the state's subsidized child care program).

### Keeping Kids Safe

Background checks on all public school job applicants will become mandatory and laws about reporting and investigating cases of abuse or neglect have been expanded.

### Grandparents Rights

Grandparents rights will be the subject of a study aimed at enhancing their ability to seek visitation rights. A task force will report its recommendations to the legislature by February 1, 2012.

### Expanding Educational Opportunities

Now students who have been expelled from school may participate in adult education programs without being required to officially withdraw from school.

### Eliminating Toxic BPA

We have already banned the chemical BPA from infant formula and baby food containers. Now we have moved to eliminate BPA from cash register receipt paper. BPA exposure can be linked to various illnesses and ailments including:

- » Prostate cancer
- » Breast cancer
- » Obesity
- » Attention Deficit Disorder
- » Hyperactivity Disorder
- » Disruption in reproduction and fertility (including damage to fetus)

### Improving Pre-Schools

We have improved Connecticut's early childhood education system by markedly increasing the educational requirements for teachers in state-funded programs.

### Expanding Early Childhood Education

An Early Childhood Education Cabinet has been created to develop a coordinated system of early childhood care and education in Connecticut.

### Getting the Best Teachers Into Our Schools

We made it easier to get the best possible teachers into Connecticut's classrooms by streamlining the process for qualified professionals to teach in charter schools.

### Access to better health care, paid sick days

For years I fought to increase access to quality, affordable health care. This year, I sponsored legislation that allows:

- » Municipalities and non-profits to save money by joining the state health care pool
- » Extended coverage for young adults and those with pre-existing conditions
- » Employees at companies with 50 or more workers to earn up to 5 paid sick days annually to care for themselves or their families

### Helping with Grocery Bills

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (the Food Stamp program) has grown, making it easier for seniors to qualify and better afford their groceries. A household of two can earn up to \$2,248 monthly and still qualify for assistance. More information is available at: 800.742.6906



Rep. Walker leads a Raise-the-Age press conference.

## WATCH VIDEOS ONLINE



### Supporting Medicinal Marijuana

Rep. Walker summarizes an emotional day of public hearings regarding a medicinal marijuana bill.



### Reforming the Welfare System

Rep. Walker speaks to a group of mothers about reforming Connecticut's welfare system to make it more fair.

[www.housedems.ct.gov/Walker](http://www.housedems.ct.gov/Walker)

### Real Tenant Representation

Public housing tenants deserve the right to elect their tenant commissioner and be actively involved in making their communities better places to live. If they choose to, tenants:

- » May petition in order to conduct an election to select the tenant commissioner
- » Can create a jurisdiction-wide resident council that meets federal standards and encompasses all of the duties of a housing authority to select the commissioner by means provided for in their by-laws

### An Orderly Manner to Express your Concerns

Establishing a fair and efficient process to hear tenant complaints and grievances is the goal for the Housing Commissioner when he reports back to the Housing Committee at the beginning of next year. Connecticut lacked minimum standards on these procedures, but a new law requires that these standards become uniform for all public housing facilities.

### Owners Combat Blight

Assisting building owners with low-interest loans to renovate and repair apartment buildings in distressed municipalities and comply with the State Building Code or other state or municipal health codes is a proven method to combat blight. Owner-occupants of buildings with between two and four residential units, including the unit the owner occupies, would be eligible for loan consideration.

### Marijuana Decriminalization

Possession of less than a half ounce of marijuana will now be a \$150 fine for a first offense instead of a criminal conviction. This will allow courts and police to focus resources on violent crimes.

### Expanding Anti-Discrimination Laws

Anti-discrimination laws based on race, religion and sexual orientation were extended to include gender identity. These individuals often face discrimination in employment, education and housing.

### Office Hours - 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Every 3rd Tuesday of the Month at City Hall in Meeting Room 1  
November 15 and December 20

