

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

TONI WALKER

PROUDLY SERVING THE 93RD DISTRICT | NEW HAVEN

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.

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,

Toni Walker
State Representative
93rd District



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A BALANCED BUDGET

Connecticut did what many other states struggled to do this year: We created a balanced budget that protects working families, gives more support to our cities and towns and does not raise taxes. This budget also takes the additional step of protecting us from future financial downfalls by depositing the full 2014 budget surplus of \$43.4 million into our Rainy Day Fund. By spending responsibly now and investing in our future we provide for a more financially stable state population and economy.

FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 AID

Education Cost Sharing	\$154,577,620
Priority School Districts	\$6,900,000
PILOT: State Owned Property	\$6,872,702
PILOT: Colleges & Hospitals	\$42,472,028
Pequot/Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$6,414,427
School Transportation	\$2,438,926
Local Capital Improvement Program	\$1,790,889
Town Aid Roads	\$1,244,746
Adult Education	\$2,908,615
DECD Tax Abatement and MRSA Payments	\$2,394,190
Total State Funds to New Haven	\$228,014,143

INVESTING IN OUR YOUTH

Our youth are incredibly important to us so we invested in some great programs: the Homeless Youth Program, which will provide public outreach, respite housing and transitional living services for homeless and those at risk; the Youth Employment Program, which provides job opportunities and work experience to youth ages 14-21; the Youth Violence Prevention Program, which invests in organizations and agencies that engage our children in anti-violence services and programs; and various afterschool programs for our children to continue learning after the school day.



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PRE-K TO COLLEGE

Kids need Pre-K. We are funding thousands of additional Pre-K slots. Pre-K helps prepare children for grade school, academically and socially. It is a great long-term investment for taxpayers. Pre-K not only increases the chances of future success in and out of the classroom, but helps meet the ongoing challenge of providing equal educational opportunity to every child. We also created the Office of Early Childhood to make sure children have a voice in state government.



We also established the Go Back to Get Ahead initiative which will encourage Connecticut residents who have some college credits, but have not attained either an associate's or bachelor's degree, to return to the state's universities, community technical colleges or Charter Oak State College to complete their degrees. Students who are eligible for the program will be able to receive up to 3 free college courses.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

We will re-open the Renters Rebate program to seniors and individuals with permanent disabilities. If you pay rent and meet the program requirement, you get cash back from the state. We are also looking out for homeless veterans. The Veterans' Housing Program will allow the Commissioner of Housing to prioritize our state's veterans when they are applying to receive a security deposit guarantee on behalf of the state.

SAVING FOR THE FUTURE

50% of Connecticut workers aged 25-64 are not covered by an employer-sponsored retirement plan, resulting in a massive decrease in retirement savings for the average Connecticut resident. This has caused lower income and middle class residents to increase their dependence on Social Security. This year we worked to promote retirement savings by establishing the Connecticut Retirement Security Board and requiring it to (1) conduct a market feasibility study on implementing a public retirement plan and (2) develop a comprehensive proposal for implementing the plan. Among other things, the proposed plan must allow private sector employees to have a portion of their wages automatically deposited into state-administered individual retirement accounts with a guaranteed rate of return.



A WORKING WAGE

Raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2017 will help thousands of struggling working families in our state, add hundreds of millions of dollars to our economy, and is the right thing to do. Connecticut led a national discussion just two years ago about getting to a \$10 minimum wage, and we are proud to lead the way again, setting the stage for Congress to hopefully follow suit.

CAPITOL UPDATE 2014