

STATE REPRESENTATIVE TONI WALKER

Proudly Serving the 93rd House District | New Haven

Dear Friends,

I am sharing with you some of the accomplishments for the completed 2017 session. This session was a rigorous ten month process that encompassed deficit mitigation, bipartisan negotiations and ultimately a balanced budget. Although imperfect, I fought to protect funding that supports New Haven such as municipal aid, education, early childhood, healthcare and elderly services.

I will continue in the next year to fight for our families focusing on keeping New Haven a great place to live and work.

I hope you find the enclosed information helpful. Our future is stronger when we work together, so don't hesitate to reach out to my office if I could be of help to you or your family. It is my pleasure and honor to serve as your State Representative.

Thank you,



www.facebook.com/RepWalker



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CAPITOL UPDATE 2017



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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Having a highly skilled workforce is critical to attracting new businesses, keeping the high-performing companies we have and connecting our residents with good paying, quality jobs. That's why we created a landmark initiative within the Department of Labor that will strengthen existing workforce development programs and implement new job training opportunities using a mix of public and private funds. In addition, we are moving the vo-tech schools out from under the State Department of Education so they are able to be more responsive to job market changes. These initiatives will make sure we have an economy that is competitive for the future.

TRANSPORTATION

In this budget, we agreed to a long-term plan to move more sales tax revenue into the Special Transportation Fund. The fund is responsible for rehabilitating bridges, maintaining and enhancing transit services and resurfacing state roads.

SUPPORTING CT'S SMALL BUSINESSES

The newly passed state budget maintains funding for important programs that our small businesses rely on, including: The Bioscience Innovation Fund, Angel Investor Tax Credits, and the Women's Business Development Council. Each of these programs provides resources and guidance for growing industries and Connecticut-based entrepreneurs. While the overall state budget reduces state spending for a number of programs, it is important that we not abandon successful programs that are creating jobs.

HOSPITAL TAX AGREEMENT

This year I made it a priority to work with Yale New Haven Hospital and support it as an economic driver in our community. My colleagues and I met with nearly every hospital in the state and talked to them about the issues that help and hinder their growth. Building on those conversations, the bipartisan budget implements a proposal that will bring new revenue to the state, while also increasing state payments to hospitals over 2017 levels, due to enhanced federal reimbursements. Enacting this agreement will support community hospitals and those that serve a disproportionate share of Medicaid clients. And putting additional federal dollars into the system will have a ripple effect on our economy.

BONDING CAP AGREEMENT

The budget creates three new caps on general obligation bonds: Allocation, issuance and spending. The allocation cap is \$2 billion, meaning the State Bond Commission may not authorize more than that amount in a calendar year. The issuance cap is \$1.9 billion, meaning the treasurer may not go out into the bond market to issue more than that amount in a fiscal year. The spending cap is \$1.9 billion, the governor may not approve the expenditure of more than that amount in any fiscal year. All three caps are tied to inflation and bonds for the CSU 2020 and UConn 2000 programs are not counted under any of the caps.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Isolated Confinement

Growing research suggests the use of solitary confinement in our prisons can have lasting psychological effects and may complicate rehabilitation efforts. We responded by banning its use on most minors and increased our state reporting to better inform policy makers. Additionally, we require improved wellness training for our front-lines corrections officers.

POLICE BODY CAMERAS

This year the legislature expanded and extended by one year, to Fiscal Year 2019, a grant program that reimburses municipalities for purchasing body cameras for use by sworn members of municipal police departments. The legislature also commissioned a task force to examine the use of body cameras by state and municipal police and report its findings.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

New legislation we passed this year ends the practice of committing juvenile offenders to the state Department of Children and Families and confining them at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or the Girls' Pueblo Unit. Rather, the judicial branch will manage their care and services through community-based providers who will offer different levels of care and security, depending on the minor and the risk to public safety. The measure also permits the court to place a child in a residential setting in lieu of ordering probation and improves coordination between the judicial branch and DCF.

STRANDED TAX CREDITS

Businesses earn or purchase tax credits to help off-set their tax liability, sometimes these tax credits can become "stranded" when a business has more credits than it does tax liability. The budget that was recently passed requires the Department of Economic and Community Development to establish programs to help businesses use these "stranded" tax credits in exchange for the company's investment in projects that generate more state revenue than the amount of tax credits that will be used, expand their businesses, increase employment at their business or generate a significant return to the state's economy. The business may also use the tax credits in return for investing in DECD's venture fund, but the investments must be made in Connecticut's businesses.