

Dear Neighbor,

The 2024 legislative session has come to a close, and while it brought moments of frustration, I am still proud of the work we did for the residents of our state.

The legislature had a choice: open the bipartisan budget agreed upon last year and make major changes, but also risk tax increases and major cuts to areas like education and funding for non-profits. Or, we could keep it as is and maintain our budgetary commitments, and accept that our fiscal stabilization plan would not have as many options to address emerging problems.

As one of my responsibilities was to ensure that the state kept its promise to the 114th district by funding education and supporting families, I endorsed the stabilization plan. We protected the largest tax cuts in state history and supported seniors and veterans. We made investments in higher education, mental health, and the IDD community. Incremental changes toward common goals can be frustrating, but it was the right path to take for the long-term fiscal health of the state. This newsletter has more details.

Thank you again for the opportunity and the honor of serving our communities.

Mary Welander



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Maintained historic tax cuts set in the bipartisan biennium budget
- Invested in clean energy initiatives like solar canopies and offshore wind
- Created a pilot program for public-private partnerships in childcare
- Protected our most vulnerable residents:
 - » Ensured victims of domestic violence can't be forced into debt by their abuser
 - » Streamlined process of acquiring wheelchairs and timely repairs under Medicaid



STATE REPRESENTATIVE MARY WELANDER

PROUDLY SERVING DERBY, HAMDEN, ORANGE AND WOODBRIDGE



CAPITOL UPDATE 24

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CAPITOL UPDATE 2024

FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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PROUDLY SERVING THE 114TH DISTRICT

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

MARY WELANDER

CAPITOL UPDATE 2024

OUR BIPARTISAN BUDGET INCLUDES

PROTECTING TAX CUTS

WE PASSED A BIPARTISAN BIENNIUM BUDGET THAT INCLUDES HISTORIC TAX CUTS AND INVESTMENTS FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

- **LARGEST INCOME TAX CUT** in state history
- **Biggest investment in public education ever**
- **New supports for the IDD community**
- **Expansion of debt free community college**
- **Protected safety net programs**

THIS SESSION WE PROTECTED THESE TAX CUTS AND INVESTED MILLIONS OF FEDERAL FUNDS IN:

- **Higher Education - \$160 million with a path to grow to \$200 million**
- **Early Childcare - \$21.8 million**
- **Mental Health - \$24 million**
- **Nonprofits - \$50 million**



ECONOMY

- Established a trade commission with Ireland
- Made it easier for out-of-state nurses and social workers to move to and practice in CT
- Expanded the small business loan program for lower-income communities

HEALTH

- Allowed telehealth to continue for in-state and out-of-state residents without letting the practice sunset
- Ensured doctors' offices that are group practices have more accessible equipment to assist those with physical disabilities
- Required health insurance coverage for detecting coronary artery disease

SENIORS

- Expedited Medicaid coverage for home-based care as an alternative to more costly nursing home care
- Strengthened oversight of negligent nursing homes
- Required nursing homes and retirement communities to provide at least 60-90 days' notice of any fee increases and improved transparency around fees

ELECTIONS

- Banned foreign nationals from making campaign contributions in CT or spending money on behalf of candidates
- Required video monitoring of ballot drop boxes
- Made it a crime to harass election workers

CHILDREN

- Streamlined criminal background checks for prospective foster families without compromising thoroughness
- Protected the personal information of special victims like minors and victims of abuse from public disclosures
- Required the Department of Children and Families to hold safety plan visits in-person

SAFETY

- Improved the eligibility process for getting benefits to the families of first responders who died in the line of duty
- Established a Fallen Officer Fund to provide families of police officers who died in the line of duty with cash assistance and health care coverage

SUPPORT FOR OUR VETERANS

As the sister of three combat veterans, I am committed toward honoring and protecting our veterans. This year we made these important changes:

- Exempted permanently and disabled veterans from paying property taxes
- Made it easier for veterans to earn a Q license endorsement to join fire departments
- Expanded eligibility for grants from the Military Relief Fund for families experiencing hardship
- Expanded veterans' driver's license and license plate options to reservists
- Formally recognized Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange

SUPPORTING OUR EDUCATORS, CHILDREN, AND SCHOOLS

- Established the Education Mandate Review Advisory Council to review proposed and existing mandates on local boards of education
- Required same-day parental notification when a child hurts themselves or others
- Required the State Department of Education to provide school districts an estimate of their next year's funding by the end of the current year, to ensure better budgeting
- Provided help to classroom paraeducators to pay for their health insurance
- Cut certification red tape to make licensing faster and enable teachers to teach more subjects across more grades