

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE ROBERTA WILLIS

## Capitol News 2005

### ECONOMIC BOOST FOR THE CITY OF TORRINGTON

The City of Torrington, once a manufacturing area, has seen those jobs disappear over the last three decades. To jumpstart the local economy, promote our highly skilled workforce, and entice new businesses to locate here, I introduced legislation expanding the Enterprise Corridor Zone eligibility to Torrington and Winsted. This new criteria will provide economic development opportunities by allowing manufacturers and certain businesses that build or expand facilities or create new jobs to qualify for property tax abatements and tax credits. This could be a vital new tool for the city and our region in its redevelopment efforts. Torrington must be able to be competitive to attract and encourage businesses to invest in our community. For more information, contact Torrington's Office of Economic Development at (860) 496-5920. (P.A. 05-194, effective July 1, 2005)



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALL TOWNS

It is a pleasure to announce that the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP), which allows towns to apply for grants to fund economic development, community conservation and quality of life projects, has been reauthorized for \$20 million a year over the next two years. Several towns in the Northwest corner have already applied to fund new projects. This funding helps our towns preserve our small town quality of life by investing in worthy and needed endeavors. (P.A. 05-194, effective July 1, 2005)

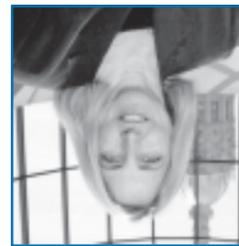
STEAP has contributed to many valuable and noteworthy projects in our communities; among them are:

- **Cornwall:** athletic fields and the library building
- **Goshen:** restoration of Old Town Hall for the Goshen Players
- **Salisbury:** streetscape improvements, new sidewalks and pedestrian walkways
- **Sharon:** historic preservation of the Sharon Valley lime kiln
- **Litchfield Hills Facade Improvement Program** for area businesses



### 64<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

*Cornwall  
Goshen  
Salisbury  
Sharon  
Torrington*



64th District

ROBERTA WILLIS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE



Legislative Office Building, Room 1802  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
Working Hard for You  
Capitol: 860.240.8585  
toll-free: 1-800-842-8267  
e-mail: roberta.willis@cg.state.ct.us  
www.cg.state.ct.us

## Making Our Roads Safer...

### NEW CELL PHONE LAW

This year we passed legislation to restrict cellphone use, and ban the use of other electronic devices (such as pagers, personal digital assistants, etc.), while operating a motor vehicle. Drivers now must use hands-free technology, although they still may turn a cell phone on and off, dial, answer cell phones manually, and respond to an emergency. Emergency personnel, while performing their official duties, are exempt from the hands-free requirement. (P.A. 05-159, P.A. 05-220, effective Oct. 1, 2005)



### NEW RESTRICTIONS ON TEEN DRIVERS

Young drivers need more experience and less distractions. To reduce the prevalence of motor vehicle crashes involving young people, we passed new restrictions this year on the privileges of 16- and 17-year-old drivers. 16- and 17-year-old drivers will now be prohibited from driving between 12:00 AM and 5:00 AM unless they are driving to or from school, a job, a religious activity, or as a result of an emergency. The number of on-the-road hours of experience that teens learning to drive under a learner's permit will need to acquire will also be increased. Finally, in other legislation, we will ban completely 16- and 17-year-olds from using a cellphone of any type for any reason while driving. (P.A. 05-54, effective Oct. 1, 2005)

### CHILD SAFETY IN MOTOR VEHICLES

Nationally, the #1 cause of death for children ages 4-7 is motor vehicle crashes. Connecticut has joined a growing list of states that require children ages 4-7 to be in booster seats when they are passengers in motor vehicles. It is now required that children up to their 7th birthday, or until they reach 60 pounds (whichever happens first), ride in a booster seat. Children in the 4-7 age category are often too big for car seats and too small for traditional seat belts, which are manufactured for adults. The new law also requires that children up to age 1, or until they reach 20 pounds, ride in a rear-facing car seat. (P.A. 05-58, effective Oct. 1, 2005)

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

# Making Connecticut a Healthier and Better Place to Live

## Protecting Connecticut's Heritage

### Farmland, Open Space, Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation

Connecticut is losing its farmland and open space to development at a faster pace than any other state. Called one of "the most worthy and visionary pieces of legislation approved this year," we passed a law to help stem the loss of Connecticut's rapidly shrinking farmland and open space. This new law creates a fund for conserving farmland and open space, preserving historic buildings and creating affordable housing. The funding is generated by a \$30 fee collected by towns for each document they record in their land records, of which the municipality keeps \$3 to fund capital improvement projects. (P.A. 05-228, effective July 1, 2005.)



## Special Session Alert Emergency Home Heating Assistance Bill Passed

With winter upon us and energy costs increasing at an alarming rate, expanded fuel aid assistance and energy conservation incentives for low and middle-income families clearly demanded immediate action by the Legislature. In response, we passed a bill that provides expanded relief to our residents by:

- Increasing basic Low Income Heating Assistance Program benefits by \$200
- Creating a \$300 basic benefit and additional \$200 deliverable fuel crisis benefit for Connecticut Energy Assistance Program recipients
- Providing a sales tax holiday (11/25/05 to 3/31/06) on home weatherization products and energy-efficient home heating equipment and windows
- Creating HEARTH program, which provides a \$50 rebate for home heating tune-ups and weatherization installation
- Increasing oversight authority over the home heating oil industry to help deter price gouging

For more information, contact Infoline (211) or your local fuel assistance coordinator.  
(S.B. 2100 An Act Concerning Emergency Home Heating Assistance)



## Providing Quality Health Care

### Stem Cell Research: New Hope

Embryonic stem cell research holds great promise for finding cures for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, juvenile diabetes and other diseases, as embryonic stem cells have the unique potential to repair all types of damaged tissue in the body. Connecticut has become the third state to endorse and fund human adult and embryonic stem cell research. The landmark bill provides a 'safe haven' for stem cell researchers, establishes a regulatory framework for conducting the research and bans human cloning. Included is a 10-year, \$100 million funding commitment designed to keep Connecticut's best and brightest scientific minds in state, as well as attract new ones from around the nation and world. (P.A. 05-149, effective June 15, 2005)

### Insurance Coverage for Infertility Treatment

If you know someone who has experienced the distress associated with an infertility diagnosis, you probably know that most health insurance plans provide limited, if any, coverage for diagnosis and treatment of this problem. Costs associated with treatment options can be devastating without insurance coverage.

Now certain individual and group health insurance policies issued after October 1, 2005 will cover the costs of diagnosing and treating infertility with certain limitations. The law limits coverage to people under age 40 who have been covered by the policy for at least 12 months. (P.A. 05-196)



### Health Insurance Coverage for Breast Cancer Screening

Detecting cancer while it is still in its early stages greatly increases the chances that it can be successfully treated. Since 1991, breast cancer death rates have declined more than 20% due to widespread awareness of the importance of early detection.



We approved legislation that requires insurers to cover ultrasounds, which have proven to be an effective tool for breast cancer screening, if recommended by a doctor. This form of screening will help to prevent misdiagnosis and will increase the overall quality of breast cancer screening. (P.A.05-69, effective Oct. 1, 2005)



# at your service

Questions ~ Concerns? Call State Representative Roberta Willis at 1-800-842-8267.