

# The New Vet Express

## Providing Benefits for Connecticut's Veterans

The CT Department of Veterans' Affairs has recently begun a new mobile veterans' service program called the "Vet Express." The Vet Express is a new van that is equipped with computers and printers to allow DVA veteran service officers to initiate claims for veteran's benefits. The service officers will also provide general information and assistance. The van is handicapped-accessible and has two work stations along with a waiting space. The Vet Express visits convenient locations such as town halls, libraries, state facilities and shopping centers to provide direct customer service to the state's veterans. No appointment is needed to visit the van at any of its scheduled locations.



*Vet Express Stops in Our Area*

### 3RD Tuesday of Every Month

From 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Connecticut Works  
486 Winsted Rd.  
Torrington, CT 06790

### Last Friday of Every Month

From 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Winchester/Winsted Town Hall  
338 Main Street  
Winsted, CT 06098

### Scheduling the Vet Express for Special Events

In addition to a monthly schedule of visits to towns throughout the state, organizations can request the Vet Express for special events where large groups of veterans may gather. Organizations interested in scheduling the Vet Express for special events should contact the DVA Community Affairs Office at (860) 721-5826 or visit "The Vet Express" at [www.ct.gov/ctva](http://www.ct.gov/ctva).

## News Brief

### Curbing the Illegal Use of Handicapped Parking Spaces

To crack down on the illegal use of handicapped parking spaces, a new law increases the fine for violating the law from a previous minimum fine of \$85 to \$150 for the first violation and \$250 for each subsequent violation.

Violations include illegal parking in a handicapped spot, unauthorized display of handicapped parking pass, failure to return a pass when required by the DMV, and failure to provide designated parking spaces for handicapped persons. PA 07-52



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**ROBERTA WILLIS**

64th District



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State Representative

# Roberta Willis

Working Hard for the Northwest Corner



# Good News for Connecticut's Economy & Jobs

A stronger state economy is producing improved results. Thus far in 2007, the state has added 14,000 new jobs. Economists are saying the state could add more than 20,000 jobs this year, well above earlier forecasts. The healthier economy is producing added revenue for state. As a result, the state budget surplus grew during the final weeks of the 2007 session of the General Assembly. It helped persuade the Governor and lawmakers that enacting significant tax increases was not necessary.

## 2007 Highlights



- Protected the \$500 property tax credit and stopped an increase in the income tax.
- Exempted from the state sales tax vehicles that get 40 or more miles per gallon. (January 2008)
- Required the implementation of electronic product recycling programs by manufacturers.
- Permanently exempted energy efficient products from the state sales tax.
- Protected teachers' retirements by providing adequate funding.
- Required the prompt reporting of lost or stolen handguns.
- Promoted initiatives to create affordable housing.
- Added \$136 million to Connecticut's Rainy Day Fund.
- Provided tax credits to attract movie and TV production.

# CAPITOL UPDATE 2007

## Investing in Our Children

### Expanding Educational Opportunities

The State of Connecticut this year made an unprecedented commitment to expanded educational opportunity for all its students in grades kindergarten through 12 and college.

- Made historic investments in education for our children.
- Renewed Connecticut's commitment to quality pre-school education. This investment has proven it can produce lifelong educational gains.
- Provided opportunities for about 10,000 more students to attend private and public colleges by increasing financial aid to \$63 million - a \$21.9 million increase.

- Increased support of high school vocational agricultural programs from \$700 to \$1,350 per student.
- Provided for more jobs for the Summer Youth Employment Program, a most valuable opportunity for our young people.
- Created an office of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Autism Spectrum Disorder affects one out of every 150 children, so this is a major step forward for people with Autism and their families.



## Making Connecticut a Healthier Place

### Increasing Access to Health Care

We made several improvements to our current health care system to expand access to quality, affordable health care.

- ✓ Increased support in state health care, ranging from expansion of coverage for uninsured children and their parents to financial assistance for insurance premiums.
- ✓ Expanded HUSKY to 10,000 more people and increased parental eligibility.
- ✓ Expanded HUSKY coverage for pregnant women and required automatic enrollment of uninsured newborns for the first four months.
- ✓ Raised from 18 to 26 the eligible age for young adults covered under their parents' insurance.
- ✓ Increased reimbursements paid to hospitals, physicians, dentists, and other Medicaid providers - the first such increase since 1993. This will allow health care providers to see more patients.



## Protecting Property Rights

### Restricting the Use of Eminent Domain

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling that held that the City of New London could use eminent domain to take privately owned property for economic revitalization even though the property would be used for private development (Kelo v. New London). The court in effect allowed eminent domain to be used for a private purpose, not just for public use.

In light of that decision, Connecticut needed to reform its procedures to protect owners' rights that are threatened by eminent domain. Most importantly, it ensures that towns face a number of hurdles before approving a taking of property.

The new process states that the primary purpose is not to enhance local tax revenues. In the event that eminent domain is approved, it provides for greater compensation for homeowners at 125% of the fair market value and relocation assistance.



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