

Saluting Our Veterans



Providing a better life to those who protected us

Veterans, along with their families, have sacrificed so much so we can enjoy our freedom and a democratic way of life. Veterans returning from foreign engagements need to know that we appreciate what they do for us and that means passing legislation that helps them and their families.

Veterans' bills passed this session:

- » Offer veterans' license plates to a member of the U. S. armed forces or his or her surviving spouse.
- » Allow veteran status to be on a driver's license or identity card.
- » Provide disabled wartime veterans with free parking, admission, and boat access to state recreational areas.
- » Expand the waiver of property tax interest for certain armed forces members in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- » Waive the \$20 fee for one certified copy of a veteran's death certificate when requested by family.
- » Create a one-stop website for services available for veterans.

FIND OUT MORE



Watch Videos Online

Rep. Willis speaks out against the increase of dating violence on college campuses.

Visit My Website

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www.housedems.ct.gov/Willis



State Representative

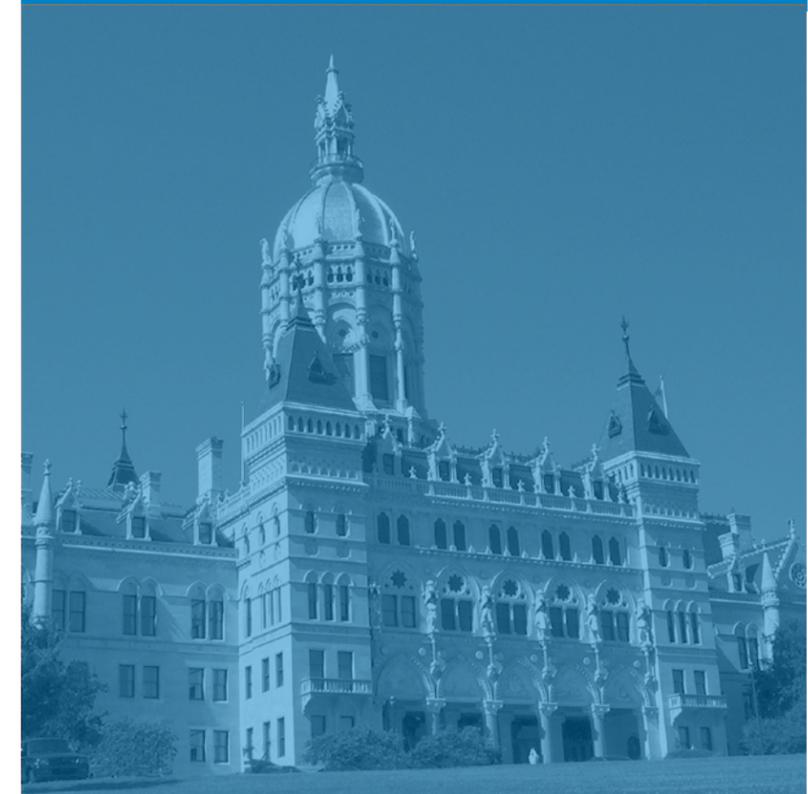
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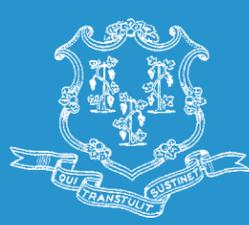


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Meeting the Fiscal Challenge

Resolving the Budget Crisis

- ✓ Protected state funding for our cities and towns to keep local taxes down.
- ✓ Maintained Connecticut's funding for education to towns to protect our kids.
- ✓ Reduced the number of state agencies by 30% and streamlined government to improve efficiency which will lead to cost savings for taxpayers while making it easier for citizens and businesses to work with government.
- ✓ Cut spending by \$1,092 billion before raising revenue.
- ✓ State employees approved an agreement saving the state \$1.6 billion over 2 years and \$21.5 billion over 20 years. These savings were achieved in the areas of health insurance, pension benefits and wages.
- ✓ The new budget protects the middle class by providing a \$300 property tax credit.

Investing in Innovation and Economic Growth



The UConn Health Center is an academic medical center. It combines education, research and patient care. A new initiative will create a major research center to serve as an economic driver that fuels job growth and spurs innovation in the bioscience industry, a key to our long-term prosperity.

It will also put people back to work and boost economic growth with:

- 3,000 new construction jobs estimated.
- 100 additional medical school students, 48 more dental school students, and 50 new medical researchers to meet future demands for health care.

Tackling the High Cost of Electricity

We are all trying to reduce our electricity usage to save energy and money. High electric rates also affect the cost of doing business. The electric market deregulation enacted years ago has not worked, so this year we passed a major bill to help alleviate the burden on customers. This legislation will reduce energy costs by:

- 💡 Eliminating an electric bill surcharge which will amount to a 5% savings for the average household or business.
- 💡 Investing in energy efficiency and clean energy technologies in homes and businesses.
- 💡 Reforming state agencies to provide tighter controls over your energy costs.

Saving on Health Insurance

Due to the ever-increasing cost of quality healthcare benefits, businesses, individuals and municipalities are having trouble affording it. We all have, in some way, become a captive consumer and powerless to stop these rising costs. The new Connecticut Healthcare Partnership offers the state health insurance coverage to municipalities and to non-profit organizations. Taking advantage of the increased bargaining power and reduced administrative costs associated with the state plan will allow municipalities and non-profits to provide quality coverage at less cost. When towns save money on health insurance and prescription drug coverage, those savings can be passed onto taxpayers.



Oversight of Insurance Rate Increases

Thousands of Connecticut residents, who have no leverage to negotiate with the big insurance companies, are facing unconscionable increases in their insurance premiums. The Office of the Healthcare Advocate and the Attorney General can now request that the Commissioner of Insurance hold a hearing on proposed rate increases of 15% or more on individual and small group HMO insurance plans. Hopefully, this will address the concerns over unjustified rate increases.

Preserving our Open Spaces

While Connecticut has safeguards to protect privately held forestland (Ten Mil Program), the tax valuation freeze that caps the tax rate at 10 mils is coming to an end for some 14,000 acres. A spike in property taxes could put this property at risk for development. Property owners now have two options that will preserve our forestland for future generations:

- Convert the land to the state's Forest Preservation Program, or
- Remain in the Ten Mil Program at the forest preservation program mil rate.

Increasing Recreational Opportunities on Public Land



Towns are increasingly exposed to enormous liability for injuries occurring on their recreational lands. As a result, many towns were considering, or had already begun, to limit recreational activities on their land.

We enacted legislation to give towns limited liability protection. Providing this protection to towns will give them confidence to keep open their lands for public use, plus encourage them to acquire open space for preservation and expand opportunities for people to enjoy.

Making our Communities Safer



Preventing Drunk Driving

Ignition interlock devices (IID) will be required for repeat drunk driving offenders that will prevent them from starting the car if their blood alcohol content (BAC) exceeds .08 percent.

Expanding DNA Collection

DNA samples will now be collected from convicted felons after a subsequent arrest. Since felons are likely to have committed other crimes, DNA can solve open cases with matches against a national database.

Helping Domestic Violence Victims

Domestic Violence laws have been strengthened making it easier for victims to get a restraining order, giving law enforcement more tools to protect our community and improving access for victims to support services, by:

- Improving information sharing between state agencies.
- Facilitating victims' access to support services.
- Requiring the judicial branch to recommend long-term solutions.

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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