



Women Legislators From Both Sides of the Aisle Working Together to Improve Lives

In a remarkable show of bipartisanship, all 55 of Connecticut's women legislators, from both sides of the aisle, joined forces to cosponsor legislation to stiffen penalties for crimes involving human and sex trafficking. The law authorizes the forfeiture of money and property used, obtained or derived from trafficking.

Human trafficking is the illegal trade of human beings for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor. Most human trafficking takes place out of the sight of the public, so statistics are hard to confirm but it is believed that 80% of the human-trafficking victims are women and children, and of that figure it is believed that nearly half are children and teens.

It is so difficult to believe that this can happen in Connecticut, but sadly, it does. There has been a dramatic increase in the trafficking of minors in Connecticut over the past few years. State agencies identified 100 human trafficking victims, 82 being children, from 2008 to 2011.



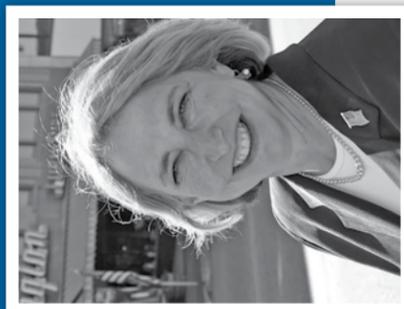
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State Representative
Roberta B. Willis
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CAPITOL UPDATE 2013

State Representative
Roberta B. Willis

Legislative Office Building, Room 1802
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: 800-842-8267
In District: 860-435-0621
roberta.willis@cga.ct.gov





Education

Recognizing the Value of Early Childhood Education

The scientific evidence is clear – investing in the well-being of young children lays the foundation for a healthy society.

It is in Connecticut's interest to ensure that families have access to the services necessary to promote the developmental needs of their young children.

The key to improving education in our state is better access to quality early learning opportunities for every single child. The newly created Office of Early Childhood represents an important step toward reaching that goal. Improved access to quality early childhood education and care means more young people get the tools they need to be successful in school. Where a child lives or their family's income should not be determining factors for a child's future.

The new agency builds on work done in 2012 when Connecticut invested in early childhood and created 1000 new spots for early learners. In addition, we were able to expand the Care 4 Kids program which helps low to moderate income working families in Connecticut pay for child care costs.



2013 in Review

Moving Toward Economic Recovery

- ✓ State government continues to make steady progress resolving the fiscal crisis. The new two year budget is balanced, and it is under the state's spending cap.
- ✓ Every town in the state will receive no less than it did in 2013. And we have kept our financial commitment to fund education.
- ✓ The State of Connecticut closed Fiscal Year 2013 with a surplus – the result of both unanticipated revenue and historically low spending growth. The overall outcome was good, but we must also exercise caution as our state and national economy continue on the path to recovery.
- ✓ Last year at this time the state's budget was in the red. We ended last year with a very large deficit, forcing lawmakers and the governor to sit down and come up with a deficit mitigation plan. We ended up reducing the budget by about \$365 million. That combined with a hiring freeze in January allowed the state to end the year with over a \$300 million surplus. The surplus restores money to the Budget Reserve Fund - which should be a first step towards fully funding the 'Rainy Day Fund'.
- ✓ The budget included major investments in science and technology, funding for education reforms and continuing support for successful economic development programs.



Job Growth

'Next Generation Connecticut'

This new initiative received overwhelming bipartisan support in the General Assembly to begin revitalizing the state's economy through unprecedented investments in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) research and education at UConn.

Connecticut used to lead the way when it came to innovation – we had more patents and more groundbreaking discoveries than anywhere else in the world. We no longer hold this distinction. According to the Governor, this is about to change.

“This initiative will prepare students for good-paying jobs in the fields that we are working so hard to expand here in Connecticut – bioscience, engineering, digital media, and technology.” - Governor Dannel Malloy



Higher Education

The High Cost of College

“We've got a crisis in terms of college affordability and student debt. . . Higher education is still the best ticket to upward mobility in America, and if we don't do something about keeping it within reach, it will create problems for economic mobility for generations to come.”

- President Barack Obama

The newly designed Governor's Scholarship Program will provide financial aid to eligible residents pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree from in-state public and private, not-for-profit, institutions of higher education.

The new financial aid program now offers two opportunities:

- The first is based on a student's high school academic merit and family financial need. The award can be up to \$4,500 annually.
- The second is awarded directly to students by participating CT colleges. Students may be eligible to receive a need-based grant of up to \$3,500.

Providing Financial Aid Information to Help Address the Challenges of Student Debt

Choosing a college to attend can be a very confusing time for students and their parents. We have worked to make the admissions process in Connecticut easier and more transparent by passing a law that requires all Connecticut colleges to provide uniform financial aid information. Colleges will now be required to use the financial aid shopping sheet developed by the Federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the U.S. Department of Education. Students and parents will be able to do side-by-side comparisons of each school's financial aid package, allowing the applicant to make a more informed decision on which school is right for them.