

2018 CAPITOL UPDATE FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE **CHRIS ZIOGAS**

Dear Neighbor,

It is an honor to serve you in the legislature. This year's legislative session has concluded and for the second year in a row we passed a bipartisan budget agreement.

The budget protects towns, restores cuts to the Medicare Savings and Renters Rebate programs that help elderly and disabled individuals, funds transportation infrastructure, and increases Bristol state education aid by \$660,883 over the last year – all without raising taxes.

I also secured \$54 million in funding for the renovation of Memorial Boulevard School into an arts and theater magnet school. These funds will allow the project to move forward with limited expense to Bristol taxpayers.

I hope you find the enclosed information helpful. Please don't hesitate to reach out to my office if I can be of service to you or your family.

Sincerely,



LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Commerce
Environment
Higher Education



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
CHRIS ZIOGAS

PROUDLY SERVING BRISTOL

Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
860-240-1378
Chris.Ziogas@cga.ct.gov
www.housedems.ct.gov/Ziogas

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE **CHRIS ZIOGAS**

PROUDLY SERVING BRISTOL



2018 LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ *Supported a bipartisan budget adjustment package that provided more education funding to Bristol*
- ✓ *Secured \$54 million in funding for Memorial Boulevard School renovation*
- ✓ *Restored funding for the Medicare Savings Program*
- ✓ *Added \$2 million in funding for veterans' health care*

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GOOD NEWS FOR MEMORIAL BOULEVARD SCHOOL



I am proud to share that the Legislature approved a school construction bill this session that allocated \$54 million in state funding for the renovation of Memorial Boulevard School to be used as an arts and theater magnet school. The renovation project has been one of my top priorities, and the approval of this funding is a big step forward. Having an arts and theater magnet school in Bristol will provide an additional educational opportunity for our students while putting an important historic building to good use. The state will reimburse over two thirds of the construction costs, making this a smart fiscal move for Bristol, so long as Bristol approves the project and their share of the funding.



PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Continuing our efforts to encourage students to consider careers in manufacturing, we are working to develop mobile manufacturing training labs that will visit middle and high schools to educate students about advanced manufacturing. This continues our work to invest in our community colleges and technical high schools, and reaffirms our belief that technical education and career training can lead students to family-supporting jobs.



A BIPARTISAN BUDGET FOR CONNECTICUT AND MORE FUNDING FOR BRISTOL

I was proud to support a bipartisan state budget that increased state aid to Bristol from \$50,286,892 to \$50,380,286 in the fiscal year that begins this July.

We also voted to reverse the Governor's cuts to state education funding to Bristol schools under the Education Cost Sharing formula. We increased funding from what we received in 2018 from \$44,603,676 to \$45,324,316 in the coming fiscal year.

Some of the most important pieces of this package are:

- Fully restores the Medicare Savings Program, so no one will see a reduction in benefits
- Protects municipal aid from being cut
- Restores HUSKY A eligibility
- Restores funding for the teacher mentoring program (TEAM)
- Gives the Veterans Hospital and Home in Rocky Hill the resources they need to maintain their current status (\$2 million)
- Restores \$10 million in clean energy funds, helping to protect our environment
- Provides a funding boost for our dairy farmers, and our vo-ag programs
- Rejected the Governor's proposal to cut funding for Graduate Medical Education programs at hospitals
- Restored and protected funding for summer youth employment

Hartford  **Courant**

“...the Rainy Day Fund has exploded to the highest level in state history”

SUPPORTING OUR VETERANS

Veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, a traumatic brain injury, or are the victims of military sexual trauma deserve support as they recover and reintegrate into civilian life. However, these conditions pose unique challenges and some veterans receive a less than honorable discharge from the military, which makes them ineligible for services. We successfully passed legislation this session to allow these veterans to access the state services they need and earned. The budget agreement also restores \$2 million in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs.



MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM RESTORED

The bipartisan budget agreement restored funding to the Medicare Savings Program. MSP helps low income elderly individuals and the disabled pay for the cost of medicine and healthcare premiums. The 2017 budget called for a decrease in eligibility that was scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2018. The 2018 agreement maintains the current income eligibility limits and ensures no one will see a reduction in benefits.

FIGHTING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

In the ongoing fight against opioid abuse, the legislature approved a number of initiatives aimed at curbing use and improving our state and local responses and interventions. The new law prohibits prescribers from writing prescriptions for immediate family members and promotes increased use of overdose-reversing treatments like Narcan.

REDUCING PRESCRIPTION COSTS



I recognize that prescription drug prices are the number one driver of rising healthcare costs. This session, we passed landmark legislation to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable and increase transparency. The bill creates a mechanism by which drug rebate savings are reflected in your premiums. Additionally, health carriers must now submit information about which drugs are most frequently prescribed and which are most expensive.