

Dear Friends,

First, the good news about our 2023 session: we passed a bill to create a position of a statewide food access coordinator at the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CWCSEO) that will create a hub of accessible information. It will address the fair distribution of food across our state. The bill also creates incentives for food stores to open in food desert areas.

We passed a budget that delivers and increases funding for students, families, and our most vulnerable residents, while paying down our long-term debt, including an additional \$2.072 billion in unfunded future pension liability. In contrast to the discord in Washington, D.C., Connecticut's budget negotiations were marked by bipartisan cooperation. The budget also offered historic tax cuts.

We strengthened protections for women's reproductive rights, enhanced our state's gun safety laws, passed several bills to protect seniors, and we helped college students – including a bill to reduce college debt for graduates of Connecticut educational institutions (public, private, and vocational) who decide to stay and work in Connecticut.

More highlights include enhancing voting rights access, including early voting and putting an unconditional (“no excuse”) absentee ballot referendum directly to the voters in November 2024. We passed legislation to protect workers, help small businesses, and enhance children's health and education.

Now for the bad news: We did very little to address climate change. While we passed some bills to enhance Environmental Justice by allowing DEEP to deny permits for new polluting facilities in overburdened urban and rural areas, it is at the commissioner's discretion. Existing polluters still can expand operations. The bill fails to address the existing problems of the South End. We also passed a bill that enables anyone feeling reasonably threatened to shoot a black bear in self-defense. This bill, in my view, could cause public safety issues. My caucus (Animal Advocacy Caucus) and I had worked on a proper bill addressing concerns about human / bear interactions and this was not the outcome we hoped for.

We short-changed our nonprofit community and failed to reform affordable housing (including capping rent) or make more housing available to the homeless or those with lower income and didn't pass paid sick day legislation. We also failed to pass a full expansion of Husky to all those eligible, regardless of immigration status. There is certainly still work to do.

Should you have any questions or comments on anything, do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



NEW LAWS IN CT: A YEAR IN REVIEW

FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE DAVID MICHEL

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CAPITOL UPDATE 23





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CAPITOL UPDATE 2023

FROM STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DAVID MICHEL
PROUDLY SERVING STAMFORD

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DAVID MICHEL

CAPITOL UPDATE 2023



FUNDING TO STAMFORD

(Excluding Town Aid) in FY 24 Budget)

- * Stamford Senior Center - \$100,000
- * Domus Kids, Inc. - \$25,000
- * Project Music, Inc - \$40,000
- * RF Youth Boxing, Inc. - \$170,000
- * Mill River Park Collaborative - \$100,000
- * My Architecture Workshops - \$30,000
- * Boys and Girls Club Stamford - \$130,000
- * Stamford Public Education Fund - \$313,000
- * Saint Joseph Parenting Center - \$200,000
- * Sound Waters Summer Camp - \$100,000
- * 100 Black Men of Stamford, Inc. - \$25,000
- * Jackie Robinson Park of Fame - \$25,000



BIG WINS FOR STAMFORD

- Largest and second largest tax cuts in CT history
- Cut more taxes on retirement income
- Historic funding for schools
- Massive deposit into Rainy Day Fund
- CT became a beacon for reproductive healthcare
- Modernized voting system with early voting
- Invested in growing healthcare workforce

I am proud to deliver \$2,030,583 in additional state funding this year for our community and will continue to work hard for more funding in the future.

	FY 2023	FY 2024
City Funding	\$12,380,857	\$13,242,256
Education	\$16,298,040	\$17,467,224

OUR BIPARTISAN BUDGET INCLUDES LARGEST TAX CUT IN STATE HISTORY

- ✔ \$600 million middle class tax cut
- ✔ Increased **earned income tax credit** for lower income workers
- ✔ Expanded cuts to retirement savings to **benefit seniors**

WE INVESTED IN:

- ✔ More funding for K-12 education
- ✔ More funding for higher education
- ✔ More funding for community organizations
- ✔ More funding for childcare



ELIMINATING MORE TAXES ON RETIREMENT

We made CT a desirable place to live and retire...

Current law exempts 100% of pension and annuity income from the state's income tax, and we are halfway to phasing out 100% of IRA income for those making \$75,000 or less annually (\$100,000 for joint filers).

We extended the exemptions to taxpayers making up to \$100,000 (\$150,000 for joint filers) by phasing out the deduction between 2.5% and 100%, depending on your income.

MAJOR INITIATIVES AFFECTING STAMFORD

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

This session we also:

- Banned hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs
- Protected migratory birds by requiring state-owned and leased buildings to turn off unnecessary outdoor lighting
- Provided additional funding to towns to deal with harmful chemicals like PFAs
- Expanded eligibility for Microgrid and Resilience Loans - allowing the state to build more green buildings
- Expanded bonding funds for bikeways, greenways, and trails
- Held manufacturers of tires partly responsible for their recycling

There is more work to do:

Sadly, we failed at passing a proper climate change bill, and an important bill to protect biodiversity, which protects us from climate change through a noise threshold limit on offshore wind construction. I have worked hard for 5 years with environmental advocacy groups and the Commission on Environmental Standards to come to an agreement, and all recommend that DEEP adopt a noise threshold limit in the RFP process. I urge everyone who cares about this existential issue to testify on bills during public hearings – you can do this in person or virtually.

IMPROVING EDUCATION- THE GOOD AND BAD

- Passed an English Learners Bill of Rights, which was a fantastic start at addressing equity in schools
- Created a student loan forgiveness program, applications begin in July 2024, that will forgive up to \$20,000 in debt in exchange for volunteering at a local nonprofit
- Established lower state-backed loan refinancing rates for licensed nurses with student loans
- Created student loan subsidies for paraeducators and school counselors in our lowest-performing districts, as well as for police officers in distressed municipalities and emergency medical service personnel
- Unfortunately, we did not pass the green school construction bill I was supporting, nor a bill establishing temperature and humidity standards for all schools in our state. **We will try again next year!**

HOUSING REFORM- WE CAN DO BETTER

Positive - we capped rental application fees and overdue rent fees, but looking at equity also means looking at the connections between food access, housing, education, and healthcare access.

Here are our shortcomings for housing reform this year:

- Failed to Cap the Rent
- Failed to create a plan to build housing for the homeless and lower income
- Failed to raise the affordable housing percentage in new construction
- Failed to pass a winter eviction moratorium