

Investing in Our Education Future

I have been fighting for state funding for the Charter Oak School since my days on the school board. It was a very special day when West Hartford broke ground on its first new elementary school in 50 years. The school, with an International Baccalaureate curriculum, will be open to all West Hartford students in 2016 through a lottery process. Call 860-233-8506 for more information.



Working with Students

Last spring, I was proud to work with students involved in the Helping Hands Club at Hall High School to establish an annual bicycle drive. All the donated bikes went to those in need of transportation at the McKinney Shelter, which is operated by the Community Renewal Team. To find out how you can support Helping Hands, email: HallsHelpingHands@gmail.com.

Your State Senator

Beth Bye

Representing
Bloomfield, Burlington, Farmington & West Hartford

Legislative Office Building, Room 2700, Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol: 860-240-0428 or 1-800-842-1420

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Transparency & Fairness for Electricity Pricing

Growing numbers of electric consumers reported being coaxed, through the lure of low rates, into signing variable-rate contracts. Many testified that, soon after the contracts were signed, and without warning, their rates increased significantly and they were charged costly fees to terminate their contracts. Electric customers deserve stable, predictable rates. That is why we passed legislation to **ban variable-rate residential electric contracts beginning October 1, 2015.**



Also, please be aware that state law requires that every residential electric customer's monthly bill must display his or her rate for the coming month. To file a consumer complaint, contact PURA: 1-800-382-4586 or www.ct.gov/pura.



Open Space for Bloomfield & Burlington

I worked to secure state grants to preserve more than 125 acres of land in Bloomfield and Burlington. The Wintonbury Land Trust was awarded funding to help purchase the 22.65-acre Evans Property in Bloomfield.

Burlington's state grant was applied toward the purchase 105.3 acres of the Taine Mountain Preserve II. This acreage is adjacent to 210 acres of Taine Mountain Preserve, and the



combined land will directly link with Nassahegan State Forest and become part of a 7,000-acre forest block.

This year the legislature also conveyed 2.54 acres of state land on Route 4 in Farmington to the town for economic development purposes. The land had been purchased from Parsons Properties by the state DOT for safety and traffic improvements on Farmington Avenue.

Open, green spaces are desired by our residents. They are valuable to our ecology and our quality of life, and they should be protected with financial investments.

STATE SENATOR **Beth Bye**

Property Tax Relief for Families & Businesses

Whether talking with families, seniors, small-business owners or others in our community, the most frequent concern expressed to me is about property taxes. Historically, state law has limited the ways in which cities and towns can generate revenue almost entirely to property taxes. That's why I am helping lead the charge to limit these crippling taxes.

Cutting Car Taxes

In 2016, **car taxes throughout the state will be capped** at 32 mills, and in 2017 and every year thereafter, the cap will be lowered to 29.36 mills. About one-third of our towns currently have a mill rate of 32 or above, and more than half have a mill rate above 29.36. Statewide, it is estimated that families and businesses will benefit from a **tax cut of more than \$78 million in 2016 and \$107 million in 2017.**



Increasing Municipal Aid

While the **car tax cap will cut local taxes by hundreds of millions of dollars** throughout the state over the next several years, more needs to be done at the local level to get property taxes under control. Democrats in the General Assembly also created a **new source of revenue for municipalities.** Beginning in 2016, a portion of the Connecticut sales tax revenue, 0.5 percent of the tax, will be **designated to every municipality in the state to help alleviate pressure on the property tax.**

Attracting & Keeping Young People in Connecticut

A Gigabit Internet Goal

With the "CT Gig" project, I've been on a year-long campaign to bring affordable, high-speed Internet to Connecticut towns, schools, homes and businesses. Connecticut needs to create an Internet atmosphere that fosters and retains businesses and young entrepreneurs to stay and grow here. Today, there is a coalition of towns working to secure 1 gigabit per second (1,000 megabits per second) Internet service in Connecticut. The recent FCC vote maintaining net neutrality only helps our cause!



reSET Sets the Tone for Entrepreneurs



In October, reSET CEO Kate Emery of Farmington and I toured her new nonprofit headquarters in Hartford. reSET, a social enterprise trust, is organized as a benefit corporation, a new type of business organization approved

by the legislature last year. These organizations advance the social enterprise sector by promoting businesses with a double or triple bottom line, splitting corporate profits between employees, shareholders and charitable donations.

Get There on a Bike!

This year the state legislature gave overwhelming and bipartisan support to my bill that significantly changes the way the state and communities look at bicycling and bicyclists. As more and more citizens use their bikes to commute, the strain on our limited roadway space is increasing. We need to set higher expectations for the use of our public roadways, and we need to amend our laws from time to time to reflect this new reality of more bicyclists sharing the road with motor vehicles.



Smaller Class Sizes

West Hartford has been chronically underfunded for years when it comes to the state's ECS (Education Cost Sharing) grant. In fact, it had one of the worst reimbursement percentages of any city or town in the state! But things took a turn for the better this year when the West Hartford legislative delegation was able to secure a nearly \$6 million ECS increase, which will prevent some smaller classes from being combined into larger ones, resulting in the type of individualized teacher attention that parents and students value so much.



Easing the Burden of Testing on High School Students



Until this school year, 11th-graders were overburdened with duplicative tests. In addition to taking the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test, many high school juniors also took the SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement Exams. Senate Democrats led bipartisan passage of legislation

to eliminate the requirement that 11th-grade students take the SBAC test and require instead that they take a nationally recognized test such as the SAT at no cost to the students and their families. This not only reduces over-testing, it also provides a free college readiness exam for Connecticut's high school students, making college more accessible to all students.

Human Rights for Intellectually & Developmentally Disabled

Almost two years ago, I helped form the General Assembly's Intellectual and Developmental Disability (I/DD) Caucus—the first such state-level caucus in the nation, and one that fights for the rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Members of the bipartisan I/DD Caucus are advocating to update our current, outdated system so that state resources are used to provide the best community services available to reach as many families as possible.

