

Honoring Our Veterans

I was honored to host an event for military veterans from Andover, Bolton, Glastonbury and Manchester at the Army & Navy Club in Manchester and, with state Department of Veterans' Affairs Commissioner Sean Connolly, award them the Connecticut Veterans Wartime Service Medal for their wartime military service. These medals covered service from World War II to the present; some were made posthumously. It's important to remember what our veterans have sacrificed for us and what we owe them for the freedoms that we enjoy. If you have veterans questions, please call the state Department of Veterans' Affairs at 866-928-8387, or reach out to a Veterans Service Officer at 860-616-3683.



Not only is this the right thing to do for those who fought to defend our freedoms, it also helps keep veterans in our state to build our skilled workforce. Many of today's growing businesses are looking to hire highly skilled workers with strong leadership abilities, qualities that most veterans possess.

Lower Taxes for Veterans

Senate Democrats led passage of a tax cut for military veterans. Veterans will no longer pay Connecticut income tax on their military retirement pay. State law used to provide for a 50 percent exemption to retired members of the Armed Forces; now there is a 100 percent exemption. Not

Aerospace Job Growth in Connecticut

I recently toured HABCO Industries, a midsize Glastonbury firm that builds test and ground-support equipment for the aerospace industry. Like many aerospace-related firms in Connecticut, HABCO is expanding its operations. Our state Department of Economic and Community Development is supporting HABCO's plans with a loan so that it can increase its local workforce over the next four years.



Your State Senator

Steve Cassano

Representing Andover, Bolton, Glastonbury & Manchester



Legislative Office Building, Room 2200, Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Capitol: 860-240-5302 or 1-800-842-1420

www.SenatorCassano.cga.ct.gov

Facebook YouTube Flickr

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD CT
PERMIT NO. 3937

Successfully Opposing Electric Rate Hikes

With the help of dozens of area residents, we fought CL&P's proposed rate hike. I want to thank all those who attended my public hearing and signed my petition asking regulators to modify CL&P's request, which I am glad to say they did, cutting it by almost

half. Public input is a necessary part of any utility rate hike request, and I was proud to have our voices heard!

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.



Protecting Your Privacy

News stories about data breaches have become too common. That is why my colleagues and I unanimously passed one of the strongest cybersecurity laws in the nation. The law requires health insurance companies to ensure that customers' most private data is kept secure by developing comprehensive security programs to safeguard the personal information of their enrollees and insureds. For tips and resources on protecting your identity, use the links provided by the state Department of Consumer Protection at www.ct.gov/dcp under "Awareness & Prevention."

Property Tax Cuts to Save Families & Businesses Hundreds of Millions of Dollars

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.**

Capping Municipal Spending

To ensure that additional state aid to towns and cities is utilized for property tax relief, rather than increasing spending, **we've passed a cap on municipal spending.**



Supporting Family Caregivers



Nearly 500,000 Connecticut family members act as caregivers, and many of them feel unprepared to provide the care needed to keep their loved ones healthy. The CARE Act will help to ensure that caregivers are given follow-up care instructions when a patient is discharged from the hospital. It will also reduce costly hospital readmissions.

The CARE Act requires hospitals to:

- Provide patients with the opportunity to designate a caregiver during their admission;
- Make reasonable attempts to notify the designated caregiver if the patient is to be discharged; and
- Provide the caregiver with instructions on how to perform medication management, wound care, injections or other medical tasks when the patient returns home.

Helping Seniors Find the Right Resources



Senior citizens from our region recently crowded the hallways of the Great Path Academy at Manchester Community College for the annual 4th District Senior Fair. I'm proud to host this yearly event that attracts so many active and engaged

senior citizens and connects them with the state and private services that make their lives happier and healthier. Connecticut has a wide variety of senior services available 24 hours a day: Call the state **Department on Aging** at 860-424-5274; the **Connecticut AARP** at 1-866-295-7279; or the state **Consumer Protection Department** at 860-713-6100.

Helping Children with Dyslexia

Thousands of Connecticut children struggle with dyslexia, a learning disability that impacts reading. Our state statutes did not provide guidance to school systems about how to detect and assist students with dyslexia. Families with children facing this learning challenge had nowhere to turn. Senate Democrats led unanimous passage of important legislation that requires the state Department of Education to help parents and boards of education detect and intervene for students with dyslexia.



Student Loan Borrowers



Students across the country are accruing crippling amounts of student loan debt. Often, students sign contracts without fully understanding language relating to interest, principal, or the difference between subsidized and unsubsidized loans. We passed legislation

to establish student loan education courses at institutions of higher education. The Department of Banking is required to oversee the implementation of the courses and provide guidance to student loan borrowers. These courses will help students better navigate the funding sources available and ensure they are equipped to become responsible borrowers.

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.