

WORKING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Aid For Bridgeport & Stratford

State funding for cities and towns impacts local property taxes. That's why I fought hard to protect our funding. This table shows the state grants and reimbursements for our district in Fiscal Year 2010–2011.

| | Fiscal Year 10-11 |
|--|----------------------|
| Total Education Grants | \$189,027,489 |
| Town Aid Road Fund Grant | \$956,506 |
| Mashantucket Pequot & Mohegan Fund Grant | \$6,243,553 |
| Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP) | \$2,372,351 |
| Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) | \$12,059,894 |
| Total State Funds to the 23rd Senate District | \$210,659,793 |

Farewell to the Congress Street Bridge

Photo courtesy of Josh Michnom



For more than a decade, the Congress Street Bridge was stuck open—dividing our city and serving as an example of how far we still have to go. That symbol is now gone, as the city secured funding through the federal stimulus to demolish the

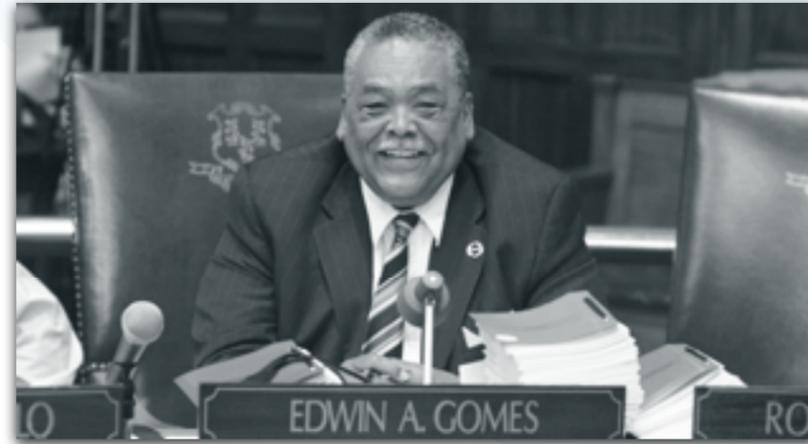
broken bridge. This was the first step in reuniting our community and eliminating the public safety problems that the bridge created.



Protecting Neighborhoods from Foreclosure Fallout

The foreclosure mediation program we created in 2008—and made mandatory in 2009—is a landmark effort that has helped to keep more than 3,300 families and individuals in their homes since it began. This year, I supported extending this successful program for another two years and worked to help find the necessary funding.

Foreclosure affects communities as well as individuals. It brings down property values, encourages blight and crime and impacts our local economy. The proven foreclosure mediation program will help protect our families and neighborhoods as we continue to cope with the effects of the nationwide recession.



Dear Neighbor,

Everywhere I go constituents tell me the same thing: they want state government to focus on growing jobs and balancing the budget. I got the message.

This session we worked with Governor Rell to pass a historic, bipartisan jobs bill. The initiative helps businesses get access to the capital and credit that they need to thrive. We also made Connecticut an easier place to do business by cutting back on red tape and streamlining the regulatory process.

We tackled the budget deficit the same way. By working together, we balanced the budget without raising taxes or cutting municipal aid. Instead, we made significant cuts to state spending, maximized federal aid and reduced borrowing.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you as Connecticut continues on the road to recovery.

Sincerely,


Edwin A. Gomes
State Senator



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STATE SENATOR **Edwin A. Gomes**

Serving Bridgeport & Stratford

HEALTH CARE

Helping Workers Keep Health Care Coverage

Did you know that Congress passed a bill that extends the 65 percent COBRA subsidy for the continuation of an individuals' employer-sponsored health care coverage to those that lost their jobs from September 1, 2008 to February 28, 2010? And that Congress also extended an individual's access to COBRA benefits from 9 months to 15 months? A new state law extends the benefits to people who worked for companies with 20 employees or less.

Ensuring That State Funding for Children's Health Care is Spent Effectively

Connecticut spends millions of dollars each year to help children and low-income families receive adequate health care. Considering how much is at stake, it is critical that resources are spent effectively and efficiently. A new law would have ensured that Connecticut taxpayers get more bang for their buck by requiring the state to hire an independent monitor which would provide important oversight and transparency of the HUSKY program. Unfortunately, the governor vetoed this bill.



Cracking Down on a Children's Health Risk

According to a recent report, since toxic lead was banned from use in children's toys, some Chinese manufacturers have been turning to another toxic heavy metal: cadmium. It is common in children's jewelry and can cause short and long-term health concerns. So, beginning July 1, 2014, Connecticut will ban the sale of children's jewelry containing significant amounts of cadmium. The bipartisan initiative will help protect children and give parents more peace of mind.



With a class of pre-kindergarten students in the Family Resource Center at Cesar Batalla Middle School in Bridgeport as part of Read Across America Day and the birthday of Dr. Suess.

GROWING JOBS

Landmark Jobs Bill

There was no greater priority this legislative session than helping Connecticut create high-quality jobs. We worked with Governor Rell to do just that. Provisions of the new law include:

- ▶ Loans for small businesses to help fund expansions and additional hires
- ▶ Sales-tax exemptions for machinery and fuel used in renewable energy industries
- ▶ Loan reimbursements and grants for education and careers in green technology and health information technology
- ▶ Tax credits for angel investments in bioscience, photonics, information technology, and green businesses



Working Together to Balance the Budget



The 2010 legislative session began with the state facing a projected deficit of more than \$1.2 billion for the current two-year budget. Despite the daunting task of closing the deficit, we were able to work together in a bipartisan fashion with the governor to balance the budget. We did it without raising taxes or cutting municipal aid. Instead, we cut state spending by hundreds of millions of dollars,

reduced borrowing and worked hard to maximize federal funding.

I'm also pleased that we were able to protect critical investments in education, job training and health care. We worked hard to:

- ▶ Provide adequate funding for trade programs at our technical high schools
- ▶ Reduce co-payments in the Home Care Program for Elders, which helps seniors stay in their homes
- ▶ Reopen enrollment in the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program



Connecticut's fiscal challenges aren't over, but by reducing borrowing and cutting spending now we're better positioned for the future.



EDUCATION

Helping Connecticut Schools Race to the Top

The Obama Administration's Race to the Top program made \$4.3 billion available to states that reform public education. To meet that challenge, we approved a landmark education bill that uses technology to track students' academic growth, creates new teacher accountability standards and provides options to fix failing schools. With these reforms Connecticut will have a better shot at securing Race to the Top funds, closing the achievement gap and ensuring that our graduates can compete in the global economy.

A Safer Ride to School

Recent school bus accidents have prompted many parents and lawmakers to review current safety requirements. Some people want seat belts on all school buses, while others are concerned about the cost to local taxpayers. The General Assembly found common ground by passing a bill that provides towns with an incentive—not a mandate—to install seat belts in school



buses. This program partially reimburses towns for the sales tax on new buses equipped with three-point harness seat belts.

Lowering Energy Prices

I voted for landmark energy reform legislation this year—the most important in over a decade—that targets a 15 percent reduction in our electric rates, increases our commitment to Connecticut-based renewable energy generation, consolidates various state energy entities and provides assistance for state residents to make efficiency and renewable energy improvements in their own homes. Unfortunately, these important measures were vetoed by the governor.

