

REPRESENTING WATERBURY, NAUGATUCK & MIDDLEBURY

# STATE SENATOR **Joan V. Hartley**



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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

As we approach the year's end, I write to share with you a brief summary of the 2013 legislative session.

My efforts, as in previous sessions, were directed toward working to ensure that state government "lives within its means," and to establish efficiencies while prioritizing and preserving vital services. To that end, I unsuccessfully opposed a major budget change which I believe will lead to greater fiscal challenges in the future and significantly diminish accountability.

My first priority for the 2013 session was a bipartisan commitment to support Connecticut's economic recovery with job-creation initiatives such as the Shared Work Program and the Subsidized Training and Employment Program, which were broadened to assist more workers, veterans and employers.

As always, it is my honor to be your voice in Hartford. I believe that we in the 15th Senate District are uniquely blessed by the strength of our neighborhoods, families and committed citizenry.

My very best wishes to you and your family for a healthy and happy New Year.

Sincerely,



Groundbreaking for the 885 North Main Street project—new construction of affordable rental apartments on vacant land in Waterbury.

## Help for Homeowners & Tenants

The state's Judicial Branch sponsors a Volunteer Attorney Program to help Greater Waterbury area homeowners and tenants avoid displacement due to foreclosure. Members of the local bar volunteer to help with legal questions and provide advice about mediation, loan modification and other foreclosure-related matters. Attorneys are also available to help with family law issues like divorce, custody and child support.

This free-of-charge program is available on Wednesday mornings from 9:00 to 11:00 in the Waterbury Superior Court building, 300 Grand Street in Waterbury, in second-floor rooms 9.05 and 9.06. Participants are not required to live in the district or have a legal case pending.

## Cracking Down on Distracted Driving

Using cell phones while driving can have deadly consequences. The U.S. Department of Transportation reports that in 2011, accidents involving a distracted driver resulted in the death of over 3,000 people. This year we enacted laws in an effort to combat distracted driving, increasing fines while requiring that violations appear in drivers' history and be made available to motor vehicle insurers. Additionally, we expanded existing laws to prohibit using cell phones while at a temporary standstill, such as waiting at an intersection or red light.

## Good Citizenship

I had the pleasure of welcoming winners of the Secretary of the State's 2013 Poster Contest to the State Capitol, including Anais Valenzuela (center) of Waterbury. This year's contest theme was 'Good Citizenship Is In My Community.' More than 500 students participated statewide and four students from Waterbury schools were among two dozen contest winners recognized at the ceremony.



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# Update from SENATOR **Joan V. Hartley**

## ***Committed to Economic Recovery***

At the beginning of the global economic recession, Connecticut economists predicted a very slow recovery. At the State Capitol, we took action. During the last three legislative sessions and the 2011 October Special Session on jobs, historic, bipartisan, job-creating bills were enacted.

We launched and then expanded programs to help thousands of small and medium-size businesses. For example, the **STEP-Up** and **Small Business Express** programs—which so far have assisted nearly 850 firms to create or preserve almost 12,000 jobs—offer job-training support for veterans and the unemployed and low-interest loans and state grants for small businesses.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we have created more than 41,000 private-sector jobs since 2011.

## **Resources to Grow Jobs**

- ▶ **Job Expansion Tax Credits** for small businesses: [www.decd.org](http://www.decd.org)
- ▶ **Small Business Express** to get funding for your small business: [tinyurl.com/SmallBizXpress](http://tinyurl.com/SmallBizXpress), or contact Michelle Peters at 860-270-8052 or [Michelle.Peters@ct.gov](mailto:Michelle.Peters@ct.gov).
- ▶ **STEP-Up** (Subsidized Training & Employment Program) provides worker training subsidies for small businesses and small manufacturers: [www.stepct.com](http://www.stepct.com)
- ▶ **Connecticut Reemployment Portal** if you have recently lost a job and are looking for work: [www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/CTReP](http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/CTReP)
- ▶ **Job & Career ConnecTion** for details on job and training programs: [www.ctjobandcareer.org](http://www.ctjobandcareer.org)

To learn more about job growth in Connecticut, visit: [www.senatedems.ct.gov/GrowJobs](http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/GrowJobs)



## ***Support for Local Businesses***

Many businesses in the 15th Senate District are utilizing important programs like Small Business Express (SBX) and STEP-Up to preserve and create jobs. Below are the number of local companies participating.

	STEP-Up	SBX
Waterbury:	30	33
Naugatuck:	6	3
Middlebury:	2	2

## ***Preparing the Workforce of Tomorrow***

There are nearly 5,000 manufacturing companies doing business in Connecticut and I often hear that our state's workforce doesn't include people prepared for manufacturing positions. A recently approved state grant will provide upgrades of important teaching equipment that will help students learn essential components of high-tech, 21st century manufacturing strategies at Waterbury's Kaynor Vocational Technical High School. The funding will be used to replace lathes and milling machines for instruction and student use. This investment will soon yield well-trained, experienced new members of a vibrant Connecticut workforce.

## ***Stamping Out Price Gouging***

In light of recent severe hurricanes and historic snowstorms that have battered Connecticut, members of the public have been vulnerable to price gouging by shady service providers for snow removal, flood abatement, roof raking and lodging. That is why we expanded consumer protections by prohibiting price gouging for services that are essential for the health, safety and welfare of consumers in the aftermath of severe storms. This will be a deterrent to exploitative business owners and will protect consumers from predatory practices. For more information about how to report price gougers, contact the Department of Consumer Protection at 860-713-6300 or visit [www.ct.gov/dcp](http://www.ct.gov/dcp).



## ***Mediation for Claims Disputes During Emergencies***

Citizens who suffer losses in emergencies will now have access to mediation in the event of disputes over certain insurance claims. A new law, which took effect on October 1, allows Connecticut's Insurance Department to establish a mediation program to settle certain disputes due to a catastrophic event that took place during a state of emergency. The program applies where the difference between the parties' positions is \$5,000 or more. However, parties may agree to mediate disputes involving smaller amounts.



It was an honor to meet actor Dylan McDermott when he was inducted into the Waterbury Hall of Fame during a ceremony at his alma mater, Holy Cross High School, in November.