Supporting Family Caregivers

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

The CARE Act requires hospitals to:

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

Providing a Bill of Rights for Seniors in Continuing Care

Rather than moving directly from their homes to an assisted living facility or nursing home, many seniors are choosing to move to continuing-care retirement communities. Individuals choosing this option often invest their life savings in these communities with the understanding that the facility will be a wise steward of their funds. The legislature unanimously approved legislation **creating a bill of rights for residents of continuing-care retirement communities.** The legislation also allows residents to form their own council within each of these communities to establish a more effective communication system between themselves and the facility in which they live.

From your State Senator
Ted Kennedy, Jr.

For more information about this or any other matters, please contact me at my office at:
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Legislative Aide: Aurora D'Angona
Phone: 860-240-0455 **Toll-free:** 1-800-842-1420
www.SenatorKennedy.cga.ct.gov

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Legislative Update *from* Ted Kennedy, Jr.

DEFENDING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Helping to Preserve Long Island Sound

The legislature unanimously approved a measure to **establish the Blue Plan for Long Island Sound, a coordinated strategy for the future use of Long Island Sound.**

The inventory and final plan compiled by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection will be submitted to the General Assembly for its final approval. Once finished, the Blue Plan will provide a detailed inventory of all natural resources, plant and animal habitats, and environmental features along Connecticut's coastline. It will also provide information on the impact that climate change could have on the coast, allowing for more effective preservation strategies in the future.

Earth Day Rally at the State Capitol: Senator Kennedy and Senator Tony Hwang stand with Mary-Beth Kaeser, founder of Horizon Wings, a nonprofit raptor rehabilitation organization, and a teenage bald eagle she rescued.

STANDING UP FOR VETERANS

Women Veterans' Program

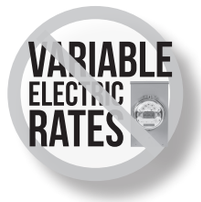
The legislature unanimously approved the creation of the Connecticut Women Veterans' Program, which will require the state Department of Veterans' Affairs to **establish a program that will reach out to women veterans to improve their awareness of federal and state veterans' benefits and services.** The bill also calls for an assessment of women veterans' needs for benefits and services, as well as a review of programs and initiatives currently available to women veterans in our state.

Supporting Veterans on Campus

We passed and the governor signed a bill requiring a study to examine ways to **make Connecticut's OASIS (Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service Members) centers for veterans more effective.** There are about 6,000 veterans enrolled in Connecticut colleges and universities; veterans use the OASIS centers to meet, study, relax and talk and to gather information on federal veterans benefits, the GI Bill, tuition waivers, disability benefits and more.

PROTECTING CONSUMERS

Transparency and Fairness for Electricity Pricing

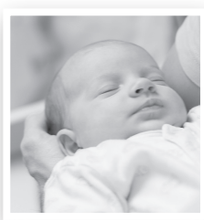


Many consumers have reported that they were enticed into signing a variable-rate contract with a low "teaser" rate, only to see their bills increase significantly without warning. Electric customers deserve stable, predictable rates, whether obtained through standard offer service or from competitive offers in the private supplier marketplace.

Senate Bill 573 will **ban variable-rate residential electric contracts and ensure fixed-rate contracts** provide consumers with stability and security.

In 2014, the legislature passed a bill which enacted several reforms for the protection of electric consumers. Beginning this July, 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**

FAMILY HEALTH CARE



Safe Sleep Practices for Infants

Every year, more than a dozen Connecticut children die needlessly due to unsafe sleep practices. With undivided approval, the Senate passed a bill that will **educate new parents on the latest safe sleep practices** before they take their child home from the hospital.

The bill brings Connecticut in line with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics by advising parents on safe sleep practices, including: always place babies on their backs for sleep; use a firm sleep surface covered by a fitted sheet; have the baby share the parent's room but not the parent's bed; and keep soft objects, including pillows and loose bedding, out of a baby's sleep area. These simple recommendations can help parents with their newborn and possibly save a child's life.

EDUCATION

Easing the Burden of Testing on High School Students

Many 11th-grade students are overburdened with the numerous standardized tests placed on them. In addition to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test, many juniors also take the SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement Exams and class finals all within a window of just over a month.

The General Assembly passed a bipartisan measure 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.

By providing a free college readiness exam for all of Connecticut's high school students, the state is not only saving families money, but also making college more accessible to all of our students.