

Honoring Darien & Stamford Veterans

I had the honor of hosting veterans from Darien and Stamford with state Department of Veterans' Affairs Commissioner Sean Connolly and presenting them with the Connecticut Veterans Wartime Service Medal. We could not enjoy the quality of life we have today if it weren't for the bravery of our veterans. The medals we presented represent the gratitude this state feels for those who heard the call and stood up for their country. It is important that we all take the opportunity to thank Connecticut's veterans and their families for the sacrifices they have made for this country.



Improving the Safety of Stamford's Roads

Safety improvements, including the installation of vehicular traffic gates and warning lights, have been completed at a private railroad crossing in the Springdale neighborhood of Stamford. Several accidents involving vehicles striking trains have occurred in recent years in this neighborhood. Stamford residents identified the need for improvements, and I worked hard to get this project approved. The River Bend railroad crossing has been a challenging location for commuters, but the new warning lights and gates will help make that a thing of the past.



Teen Drug Testing to Prevent Tragedy



Drug abuse can place a great strain on a family, especially when parents must confront their child about suspected, yet unconfirmed, drug use. Stamford parents witnessed their 17 year-old son's behavior change dramatically in a short period of time. They attempted to secure a hair follicle drug test for their son, but despite having a doctor's authorization for the test, they were repeatedly turned away from a testing facility. Sadly, he committed suicide before getting the help he needed. I led passage of legislation to require testing facilities to honor orders from licensed physicians, physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses.

Your State Senator

Carlo Leone

Representing Stamford & Darien



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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.



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 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.



Listening to EMS Providers

Stamford EMS providers contacted me to discuss the constant abuse of the 9-1-1 system for non-emergency health care. While EMS personnel are qualified to care for individuals in many of these situations, 9-1-1 medical services are more costly than other forms of community-based health care. They suggested integrating a more cost-effective component into our system to provide post-hospital care for non-emergency services called Mobile Integrated Health Care Services. I spearheaded legislation to study this issue and work toward a solution. The preliminary report and recommendations are due February 1, 2016.



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 residents 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.

Meeting the Needs of Stamford Students



Enrollment in Stamford Public Schools has grown by nearly 5,000 in the past fifteen years, and more growth is projected. This year, I secured funding for a much-needed expansion of the Rogers International Inter-District Magnet School which will help meet the growing demand for classroom space in Stamford. The Rogers International Inter-District Magnet School is a modern school building with a track record of success in offering a high-quality

education to students. This expansion will provide additional classroom space in an area of Stamford with some of the most overcrowded schools.

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.



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.

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.