



Dear Friends & Neighbors:

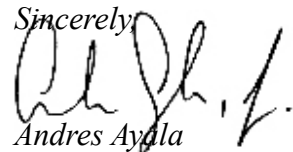
I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as your new State Representative. I am honored and excited to have the opportunity to serve you at the State Capitol, and I am looking forward to working diligently over the upcoming months to make productive changes for the City of Bridgeport and the state as a whole.

As your representative in the Connecticut General Assembly, I feel that my duty includes keeping you informed of items of importance occurring in the legislature, and I will make every effort to ensure that you are kept up-to-date on the issues.

The Speaker of the House appointed me to the Planning and Development, Public Health and Transportation Committees. I will be working with my colleagues on these committees to address important issues, some of which I have outlined in this mailer.

Please feel free to visit me in person at the Legislative Office Building, or contact me by e-mail at Andres.Ayala@cga.ct.gov or by phone at 800-842-8267.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your State Representative.

Sincerely,

Andres Ayala

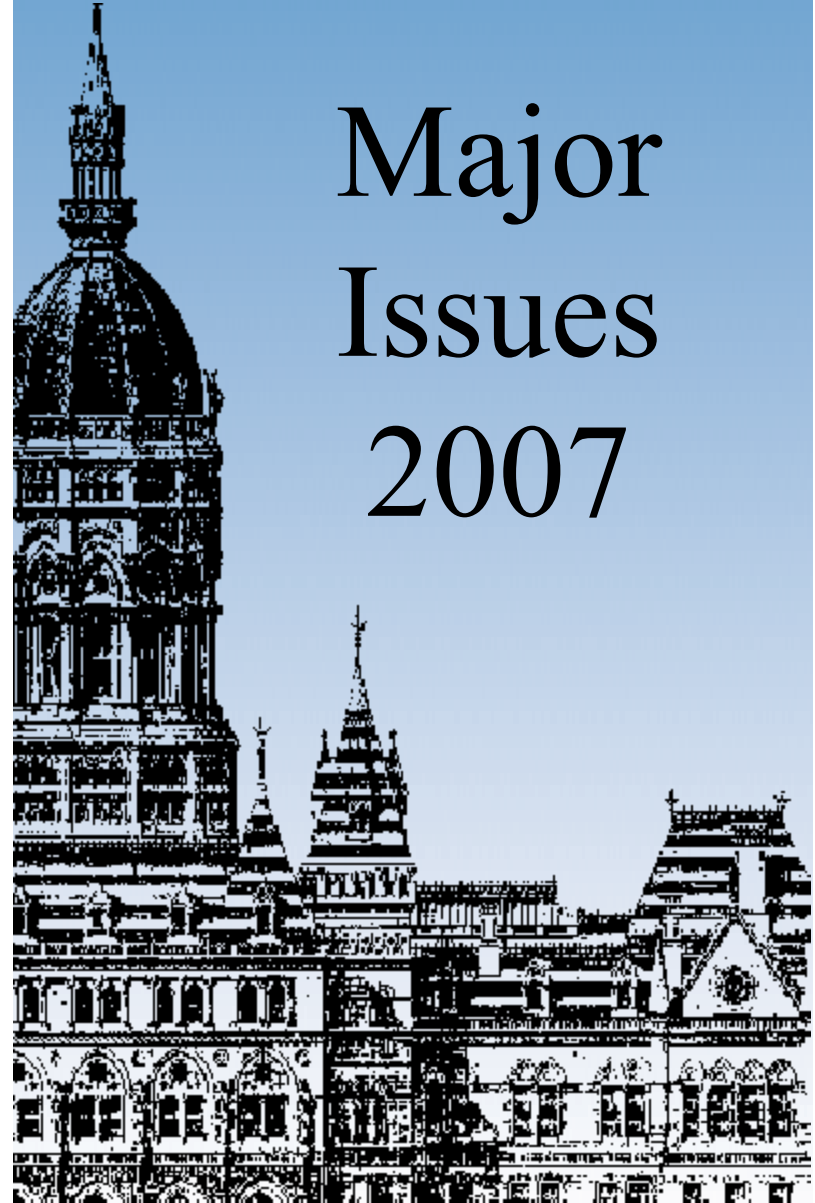
KEEP IN TOUCH



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Representing Bridgeport's 128th Assembly District

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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

This session the Planning and Development Committee may place focus on the property tax's unintended effects, including disparities in towns' ability to fund education and land use policies intended to boost property tax revenues. In doing so, the legislature might consider ways to reduce towns' reliance on the property tax.



We may also debate whether eminent domain should include taking land for private economic development, and may make changes to the taking process, including requiring local legislative bodies to approve each taking and increasing the amount of compensation towns must pay when taking a property.

A final important issue that has developed over the last five years is that there has been an increase in the number of towns and developers requesting interim changes to the state Plan of Conservation and Development (Plan of C&D). By law, the Plan of C&D controls only where the state can spend money on new roads, sewers, facilities, and other infrastructure. It does not directly bind local plans and land use decisions, but some local officials believe they will jeopardize future state funding if they approve projects in areas the Plan of C&D designates for conservation. Consequently, legislators may consider proposals to clarify the relationship between the state and local plans.

I want to hear from you...

Please feel free to contact me with your questions or concerns:

Representative Andres Ayala
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PUBLIC HEALTH

Although Connecticut has been very successful in reducing the number of uninsured children, largely through the HUS-KY plan, nearly 400,000 residents had no insurance, and over half these individuals had incomes less than 200% of the federal poverty level (\$19,600 annually for one person).



I feel that this is unacceptable and our state must begin to consider numerous approaches to improve access to health care for the uninsured. There are several methods we could use including: expanding existing public programs to allow more adults to participate (with federal matching funds available); putting more resources into its safety net providers (e. g. , community health centers and school-based health centers); offering premium assistance to residents who have access to employer-sponsored coverage; funding reinsurance programs to reduce the price of private insurance or provide tax incentives to encourage people to purchase insurance; looking at the types of insurance products that are offered and allow policies with no mandates or "mandate light" coverage to be sold in the state; and mandating that employers offer coverage or face a financial penalty.

The Public Health Committee will also be dealing with a very important issue facing the state; Connecticut's hospitals appear not as healthy financially as those in the rest of the country, according to a new study from the Program Review and Investigations Committee. Their operating margins are lower; their labor, insurance, and energy costs are higher; and their physical plants are older than their counterparts elsewhere. Eleven of the state's 31 acute care hospitals reported operating losses in FY 05, according to the Office of Health Care Access. The Program Review and Investigations Committee is expected to make recommendations later this year to the General Assembly.



TRANSPORTATION



The Transportation Committee will be considering various measures to continue the improvement of the transit system in an effort to aid travel congestion. For the past couple of years the legislature has made vast progress in this area, and we will continue to search for ways in which we can improve.

In addition to the continued focus on the transit systems, the committee will discuss highway safety issues once again. Although Connecticut's fatal accident rate is among the nation's best, interest in improving it even further drives many initiatives in areas such as:

- speeding
- drunk and drugged driving
- inattentive driving
- teenage driving
- photo-based enforcement of traffic violations
- identifying problem drivers
- motorcycle safety
- extending mandatory seat belt use requirements to all vehicle occupants, rather than only those in the front seat
- establishing requirements for drivers renewing their licenses, either for all drivers, or for those who reach certain ages
- improving local police departments' awareness of the Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) procedural needs when it conducts administrative license suspension hearings for people arrested for drunk driving
- improving coordination between the departments and DMV, given the strict time frame for conducting the suspension hearings