

## ***AN AMBITIOUS AGENDA.....***

The 2007 Session is underway, and a staggering number of bills have been filed—over 3,300. Expect some interesting debates on a host of topics including:



- Banning political Robo calls
- Eminent Domain Reform
- Electronic Waste—disposing of computers and TV's that contain hazardous waste
- Increasing fines/enforcement for illegal use of cell phones when driving
- Eliminating estate tax cliffs
- Juvenile court age limits
- Changing Federal “Electoral College System”
- Elderly property tax credits
- Funding the Clean Water Fund
- Deposits on water bottles
- Reducing the gas tax
- Funding for the Teachers Retirement Fund
- Increased funding for long-term care alternatives
- Business tax credit for employee shuttle service to and from mass transit
- Biofuel incentives
- Fines for unauthorized parking in handicapped spaces
- Uniform condominium association rules
- Limiting disclosure of residential addresses of probation officers and parole officers
- Sunday hunting
- Sunday liquor sales
- Special elections to fill vacancies in the U.S. Senate

## ***Tom Drew - Representing Fairfield • Southport***



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# Connecticut Concerns--2007

## Can we find a way to reduce soaring energy costs and promote alternative fuels?

While most people now agree that the deregulation of our utilities failed in its mission to spur competition and stem rising costs, a workable solution to our energy crisis is still a work in progress. The solution could include allowing electric companies to re-enter the generation market, changing the way electric rates are set, adopting new generation and energy conservation efficiency standards, and developing alternative fuel initiatives.



The short and long-term benefits of alternative and renewable fuels are being carefully considered as well as an extremely aggressive conservation effort.

There is a lot at stake and it is imperative that we craft a plan that works for ratepayers and allows businesses to retain a competitive edge.

## Can we lead the way to healthcare coverage for all?

We all understand and are troubled by the reality of both children and adults without preventive healthcare. The difference at this time is that both consumers and the business/investment community are standing together in the view that affordable and accessible preventive healthcare may likely be less expensive than the current system of providing catastrophic care alone to the uninsured. Further, it comes as a surprise to many of us that the insurance industry adds approximately 30% to healthcare costs, while the single-payer Medicare system is about 3%. What role of the private health insurance industry is desirable and affordable?



In the absence of a federal solution requiring preventive healthcare access for everyone, we will likely at least increase health insurance coverage for more uninsured under HUSKY or similar programs. An important debate this session will be whether we require all to have health insurance. *Any suggestions you have to add to this debate will be most welcome.*

Important questions have surfaced regarding whether the Judicial Branch can or will regulate itself with integrity and serve the public's legitimate needs. These questions include public openness of the courts, balancing needs and rights of crime victims and witnesses along with the public's right to know, and the Judicial Branch's willingness to adequately self-police. The debate is both necessary and historic.

## Is this the year we develop a new plan for property tax relief and education cost sharing?

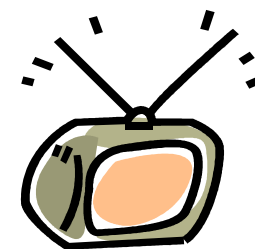
Property taxes are the main source of revenue for our cities and towns. An equitable system of state grants and education funding have become contentious issues for municipalities and legislators. While many legislators frequently call for property tax reduction, few suggest methods to pay for it.

It is essential that state funding intended to reduce local real estate taxes be used by the municipalities exclusively for this purpose. There will be considerable discussion about the way we fund special education costs and the education cost sharing plan that has been in effect for a number of years.

In addition, there is sure to be debate about the property tax on cars. Do we eliminate the property tax on cars, or impose an equal statewide property tax on cars? A vigorous debate regarding the features of a fair tax system will result.

As we try to find the right balance, we will most likely explore earned income tax credits, elimination of the "cliff" in the estate tax, and the current structure of the state income tax.

## Can or will the Judicial Branch self-police with fairness and transparency?



**Join Tom Drew for A Connecticut Conversation on Channel 79, Wednesday evenings at 8:00 p.m. Thursdays at 2:00 p.m.**

**Suggestions for future topics always welcome!**

***I would like to hear from you . . . . 1-800-842-8267 at the Capitol . . . . (203) 256-8050 in the District***