

Rep. Mikutel Secures 5.5 Acres for Athletic Fields; Griswold and Voluntown To Benefit

This session, in response to my constituents request that our area needed more athletic fields, I was able to obtain from the Department of Environmental Protection a land conveyance that will provide Griswold with 5.5 acres of state land for recreational use. Not only will the land be protected from development, but it will also provide Griswold and Voluntown with much needed recreational fields for our growing youth sports programs. The land is located in the vicinity of Sheldon Road and Route 165. I also secured **\$50,000** in the state budget to go towards developing these fields.



Rep. Mikutel meets with Scott Dawley, DEP, Ted Kovio, President of Griswold Football, and John Taylor, Vice-President of Griswold Football, to survey the new land to be used for athletic fields.

Property Tax Reform Stymied Again

Property tax reform is one of the most challenging public policy issues facing our state, and it's high time for politicians to stop talking about it and just do it. Yet once again the Governor and legislative leaders just continued to talk about it.

Politicians can't get beyond the talking stage on property tax reform because to do it would require a dramatic increase in state funding to municipalities, and there is no consensus on how to pay for it (i.e., whose taxes will have to be increased).

Let me be perfectly clear. I hate the property tax! It is the most burdensome and most regressive tax of all. It particularly hurts those on fixed incomes and yearly increases of 6 percent are forcing people into leaving the communities where they were born and raised.

For years, I have been advocating a property tax reform/relief plan that tied increased state aid for localities to a **cap** on local property taxes. Under my proposal, taxes for the wealthiest income earners would increase but middle class workers would get a tax cut in the form of a direct property tax credit. This way you, the taxpayer, benefit directly.

Property tax reform is long overdue in Connecticut. It presents a huge financial challenge for legislators. I will not shrink from this challenge. The time for talk is over!

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Rep. Mikutel discusses legislative business with his colleagues.

State Representative



STEVE MIKUTEL

Capitol News 2007



Dear Friends:

The 2007 legislative session has come to a close, and I would like to share with you some key legislative accomplishments. I hope you will find this information helpful.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve you and for the trust that you have placed in me. It is an honor to represent you in Hartford.

Please call me should you have any questions or if you need help resolving a problem with state government.

Sincerely,

Steve

Jessica's Law Means Stiff Mandatory Sentences For Child Sex Predators

Throughout my legislative career, I have fought to protect women and children from sexual predators. This session I worked collaboratively with the Governor's Office and legislative leaders to pass Jessica's Law. Jessica's Law establishes a new crime of aggravated sexual assault of a child under age 13 that carries a mandatory minimum prison term of 25 years for a first offense and 50 years for a second offense. This crime would be triggered by any predator who, for example, kidnaps, restrains, stalks, or causes serious injury to the victim.



Rep. Mikutel receives a signed copy of his Jessica's Law bill from Governor M. Jodi Rell.

Cheshire Home Invasion Murders

A Tragedy That Could Have Been Prevented.

Message To State: Stop Indulging Career Criminals



We should all be **outraged** by the torture and murder of Jennifer Hawke-Petit and her daughters by two career criminals who were set free by a state parole board that failed to obtain and read the convicts' sentencing transcripts. In both of the killers' parole hearings, crucial information required by law was not forwarded to the parole board by police, prosecutors and the courts, and the Board didn't ask why. **I believe the Board members should resign** as they have failed in their primary mission – keeping the people of Connecticut safe. **Remember, only chance made the victims the Petit family and not mine or yours.**

During the next legislative session, I will introduce legislation calling for the creation of a new **Home Invasion Protection Act** that would create a new class of crimes for any criminal who enters a home with the intent to do harm. **Such a crime would be subject to a mandatory sentence of 25 years** and could not be reduced by a judge or plea bargained down by a prosecutor. Home invasions would be reclassified as violent crimes.

“Keeping the people of Connecticut safe should be every legislator's first and foremost responsibility. I want burglaries of occupied homes to be reclassified as violent crimes subject to longer sentences.” Steve Mikutel

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Rep. Mikutel speaks against the taking of private property for private gain at a rally in New London.

I never believed that our framers of the U.S. Constitution ever intended that state and local governments should be allowed to take individual homes and businesses to transfer the land to private businesses for private profit. But that is exactly what the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled in the Kelo vs. New London eminent domain case. In effect, the government under Kelo can now decide who owns what property. To quote Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, "...the specter of condemnation now hangs over all property. Any property may now be taken for the benefit of another private party."

Fortunately, state legislatures can adopt laws that restrict the use of eminent domain for economic development. So this session I introduced legislation that would put limitations on the taking of private property for economic development purposes. The legislature responded by overhauling our eminent domain laws to protect property owners' rights, which was long overdue since the Kelo decision. Municipalities now face a number of new hurdles before approving the taking of private property, and would have to pay landowners 125% of fair market value in the event that eminent domain is used.

Transportation

Key Projects for Southeastern Connecticut to be Funded

As Vice-Chairman of the Transportation Committee I helped to lead the fight to ensure that important mass transit projects in Southeastern Connecticut were funded. Key projects expected to be included in the transportation bond package include:

- \$6.3 million for expanded Shore Line East service, including weekend and additional daily service between New Haven and New London.
- \$24 million for funding expansion of Shore Line East, including increased parking, bridge repair and locomotive and rail car purchases.
- Added authorizations for use of bond funds to purchase at least 24 electric rail cars for use on the New Haven Line and Shore Line East.
- \$1 million to help complete the Route 11 Greenway (acquisition of land).
- \$3 million per year in FY 08 and FY 09 to support the Southeastern Connecticut Tourist Transit System.

Rep. Mikutel speaks at a press conference regarding Shore Line East expansion along with members of the eastern Connecticut delegation.



45th District Still Near Top in Per Capita State Aid



The towns in the 45th District received over **\$34.2 million** in state grants in FY 2007-2008, keeping them in the top 5% of all the state's municipalities in per capita state aid. Close to 50% of all local budgets in the 45th are made

up of state dollars. Without this state financial aid, local property taxes would increase dramatically. This is why I have always led the fight for increases in state aid to municipalities.

The average per capita state aid for the 45th District for FY 2008 is **\$1034**, nearly double the state average of **\$529**. Out of 169 municipalities, **Voluntown ranks 8th, Plainfield 9th, Griswold 13th and Lisbon 16th** in per capita state aid.

State Budget: Historic Increase in Education Aid

In the newly adopted two-year state budget, town aid swells by **\$221.3 million** for the upcoming fiscal year and an additional **\$131.5 million** for FY 2009.

The 45th District will receive an additional **\$2.41 million** under this budget. I fought hard for this historic increase in municipal aid because it is necessary to maintain municipal services and hold down property taxes.

Funeral Protestors Silenced By New State Law

Recently an intolerant religious group has engaged in protests at the funerals of members of the US Armed Services. The General Assembly sought to stop these disruptions and return respect to these heroes' funerals. Under the bill I introduced, a protest within 150 feet of a funeral will become a class A misdemeanor which will be punishable by up to one year in prison, a fine of up to \$2,000, or both.

During my testimony before the Veterans Committee, I said that "everyone has a right to mourn a loved one without a person in their face protesting." I am proud of my efforts on behalf of our fallen heroes.

