



Improving Access to Quality Affordable Health Care

This session the legislature took steps to lower costs and enhance transparency and accountability in our health care system. New legislation:

- » Saves money for towns by allowing them to join the state in bulk purchasing of prescription drugs
- » Requires insurance companies to disclose denial rates so consumers can compare the quality of different plans
- » Extends state COBRA coverage from 18 to 30 months so laid off employees can keep their health insurance as they look for new jobs
- » Requires insurance companies to refer consumers to the state Office of the Healthcare Advocate for assistance with denials of coverage
- » Improves coverage for chemotherapy patients
- » Enhances patient safety by improving hospital reporting of medical errors
- » Expands access to Health Care for part-time employees working at least 20 hours per week.

Protecting our Children

It's important that we ensure our children are safe and healthy. This year the General Assembly passed legislation that bans cadmium from being placed in children's jewelry. Cadmium is a known carcinogen that is especially unhealthy for children and there is no reason it should be in their jewelry. By taking this small step we've removed another risk to our children's health.

State Representative



LINDA SCHOFIELD



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State Representative



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE of the CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Capitol Update

The 2010 legislative session was one of both challenge and compromise as we worked to address the state budget deficiency. In the end, the governor and legislative leaders agreed to a budget that raised no new taxes and made relatively few cuts, but included a hidden tax on electric rate payers and a substantial dose of additional borrowing. Because of my strong opposition to the borrowing, I did not vote for this compromise. We have now been downgraded by one of the bond rating agencies, which will make our cost of borrowing higher. This was one of the outcomes I feared would result from the budget adopted by the legislature and the Governor.

As we look ahead to the future, fiscal challenges remain. While I am truly optimistic about Connecticut's economic recovery, I remain adamant about the absolute necessity to prevent wasteful spending, and keep taxes in check, while still preserving essential safety net services for needy people. I will continue to work towards those goals as your voice in the State Capitol.

State Representative

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Creating Jobs: Priority Number One

Dig Out of the Recession

Working with the Governor, we passed a significant new jobs bill that will help put Connecticut on the road to economic recovery with:

- » Up to \$500,000 per company in loans and lines of credit for small businesses and nonprofits
- » Personal income tax credits for investments in "new technology" businesses
- » Sales tax exemptions for machinery, supplies and fuel in renewable energy industries
- » Tax credits for small businesses of up to \$200 per month per new employee
- » Up to \$150,000 in pre-seed financing and technical services to businesses developing innovative concepts
- » Student loan reimbursement for careers in new and emerging fields
- » Changes to the film tax credit program that will create more jobs in Connecticut

Improving Education

Education is one of the most important services that government provides. This year we took bold steps to help increase our chances for federal education dollars, turn around under-achieving schools, improve our vocational high schools and help students with autism.

The legislation:

- » Raises academic standards for high school graduation
- » Links teacher evaluations to student academic performance
- » Creates an alternate route to certification for administrators to increase the supply of top quality principals
- » Develops new programs, including greater parental involvement, to help turn around low-achieving schools
- » Requires autism therapists in schools to be certified
- » Improves vocational schools by assuring proper facility maintenance and adding members with manufacturing/vocational expertise to the state Board of Education

Streamlining to Reduce Red tape

To help accelerate the pace of job creation, we passed legislation that will expedite the permitting process for projects that will create at least 100 jobs. I'm proud to say we were able to balance this need while still maintaining high standards for projects that could be environmentally sensitive.



THE BUDGET

Town Aid for Simsbury

Although I did not vote for the budget, there were some good parts to it, including:

- » Lower co-pays for home care services for low income seniors.
- » \$500 individual property tax credit to help offset local property taxes
- » Funding for programs that help prevent mortgage foreclosure
- » Reducing last year's increase on state park fees and fishing/hunting licenses
- » Town Aid for Simsbury was preserved, see chart

Fiscal Year 2010-2011	
Total Education Grants	\$5,367,517
Town Aid Road Fund Grant	\$183,201
Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP)	\$158,925
Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$118,245
Pequot/Mohegan Aid	\$31,183
School Transportation	\$111,780
Total State Funds	\$5,991,290

Searchable Database of State Expenditures

It is very important for citizens to know what their government is doing and how the government spends their tax dollars. To ensure transparency and accuracy the General Assembly unanimously passed legislation to establish a searchable online database of state expenditures. The database is due to be up and running no later than July, 2011.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

We all recognize the importance of recycling to protect our environment. Connecticut residents will now be able to recycle more through changes made to state law that:

- » Allow for more types of paper and plastic to be recycled
- » Require trash collectors to offer recycling at curbside
- » Require recycling bins in public areas where regular trash bins are located
- » Reduce redundant and costly reporting requirements for towns

Simsbury Saves by Working Together

Simsbury can now team-up with other towns to save money while delivering necessary services.

We passed several bills that enable municipalities to operate more efficiently. We also released them from certain unfunded mandates.

Over the coming year, additional opportunities for cost savings will be discussed with local government officials and business leaders – all working together to encourage more cooperation between towns.

This year we passed bills:

- » Getting local taxpayers off the hook for storing the belongings of evicted tenants.
- » Allowing two or more municipalities or boards of education to purchase employee health benefits jointly to save money.
- » Saving money on school transportation by giving money to towns that work together to provide transportation services.
- » Allowing towns to join the state in bulk purchasing of prescription drugs which will save money.

Good News for Seniors

This year we took important steps to help improve the lives of seniors. The General Assembly passed legislation that:

- » Re-opened the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program that provides up to 30 days of respite care relief to family caregivers
- » Protected the assets of a senior living at home when his or her spouse enters a nursing home under Medicaid

Reducing the Cost of Hunting and Fishing

Earlier this year the legislature reduced hunting and fishing license fees. Further action was taken to provide a credit to folks who had already purchased the licenses. This credit can be used towards the purchase of next year's hunting or fishing licenses.

Stopping Unwanted Calls

This year we strengthened our laws against unwanted calls by increasing fines for businesses that violate the do not call list. This should help reduce unwanted calls from disturbing you and your family.

State Representative



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