



Dear Neighbor,

*I'd like to extend my thanks to the town of Simsbury for giving me the opportunity to represent our wonderful community at the State Assembly. It is a real honor to serve in this capacity, and I will serve you honorably.*

*I am excited by the potential to make a real difference, as the legislature tackles important issues such as health care access, energy costs and education funding.*

*To best represent your interests and opinions, I need to keep you informed and to hear back from you. I invite you to play an active role in making the laws of Connecticut by contacting me to share your expertise or express your thoughts. I will hold regular office hours in Simsbury and attend many community events to make myself available to you. Of course you can also contact me at the Legislature either by phone at 240-8585, or by mail at Legislative Office Building, Room 4044, Hartford, CT 06106, or by e-mail at [Linda.Schofield@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Schofield@cga.ct.gov).*

*I look forward to working with you.*

Sincerely,

*Linda Schofield*



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**State Representative Linda Schofield**

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State Representative  
**Linda Schofield**  
16th District  
**Simsbury**



**2007 Legislative  
Session Preview**

# WHAT'S HOT THIS SESSION?

There are literally thousands of bills introduced each year in the Connecticut General Assembly. Here are a few of the big issues we expect to debate this year:

## **ENERGY**

Connecticut's electric rates are high – indeed, higher than surrounding states. This hurts not only residential consumers, but businesses, and makes Connecticut uncompetitive in attracting new businesses. Options for immediate relief appear to be primarily related to better conservation of energy to reduce demand. However, the long term options relate to construction and ownership of new power plants. Since de-regulation, our power vendors have been prohibited from owning their own power generation infrastructure.

## **HEALTH REFORM**

Connecticut has an estimated 400,000 uninsured individuals. We need to assure that all businesses and individuals have access to affordable benefits and are encouraged to purchase them. Small businesses in particular find the cost of health insurance prohibitive, in spite of their desire to maintain their employees' health and productivity. Health reform must address two major problems: How to reduce costs for those currently insured and how to encourage and enable the uninsured to obtain coverage.

## **PROPERTY TAX RELIEF**

Connecticut has one of the highest property tax burdens in the nation. Again, this drives families, seniors, and businesses to consider re-location elsewhere. Property taxes are driven in large part by the state's under-funding of public education costs, which are largely

supported through local property taxes. Proposals for property tax relief include better funding of education to enable towns to reduce their mil rates or conversely giving income tax credits directly to property tax payers.

## **EDUCATION FUNDING**

Despite projections of a significant budget deficit, it is imperative this year the legislature re-examine the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula. The ECS formula is how the state determines how much education funding to give each town's public schools. Many towns throughout Connecticut are struggling with rising costs of education, and the unhappy solution of either raising local taxes or cutting services. A fairer and better-funded ECS formula will help address the problem.

## **THE BUDGET**

Trumping all other issues is the budget. We cannot add state obligations for energy conservation, greater education funding, property tax relief, or health reform unless we find a way to balance the budget. Already the budget is predicted to be in the red for the coming fiscal year, without the addition of any new services. Inflation's impact on the costs for services is exceeding the growth in current revenue sources. Our state's debt service is one of the highest in the nation, so borrowing is not an acceptable alternative.

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My commitment is to keep you informed as the legislature grapples with these and other issues, to actively seek and listen to your input, and to vote in a manner that furthers the collective interests of Connecticut's citizens, businesses, and environment. I plan to hold a series of forums on issues before the legislature, in which I can

both bring you information and gather your thoughts and expertise. In addition, I will tape regular shows to be aired by our public access TV station, SCTV. These too will address public policy issues of interest to our community.

## **COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

I have been assigned to the Education, Insurance, and Human Services Committees. Given the high priority of education to Simsbury's families, I am very pleased to be on the Education Committee. Because of my career experiences, running both the Medicaid program and two different health insurance plans, I requested and am pleased to be on the committees responsible for health insurance and Medicaid. I hope to use these latter two assignments to pursue my objectives related to health reform.

## **\*\* E-mail Distribution Database \*\***

**Would you like to receive more regular session updates? I will soon start sending a periodic legislative update via e-mail during session. If you are interested, simply send me an e-mail asking to be added to the distribution list.**

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