

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Contact: Jason York
jason.york@cga.ct.gov

STATE REPRESENTATIVE GARY TURCO RECAPS 2022 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

The 2022 session of the Connecticut General Assembly finished last week, and **State Rep. Gary Turco (D-Newington)** said that despite its brevity — 84 days from start to finish — the session was long on accomplishments for the most pressing issues facing Newington residents and people across Connecticut.

The [updated state budget](#) that the House and Senate approved, and was signed by Gov. Ned Lamont, offers Connecticut taxpayers \$600 million in tax cuts with historic relief for parents, retirees, workers and property owners.

The budget cut taxes by:

- Cutting state income taxes on pensions and annuities for retirees
- Lowering property taxes on homes and cars
- Extending tax cuts for workers in low-paying jobs through the Earned Income Tax Credit
- Creating a state tax credit for childcare
- Extending the 25-cent gas tax cut until December
- Establishing a state child tax credit worth \$250 per child

"Targeted tax relief to combat the rising cost of living and help those that need it the most is a continuing legislative priority for me," said Rep. Turco. "I had also previously introduced legislation for a more expansive property tax credit and strongly supported a child tax credit."

Rep. Turco was immensely proud to see the passage of [SB 358](#), a bill that expands mandated health insurance requirements for early detection and diagnosis of breast and ovarian cancers. SB 358 will help patients take control of their health and expand access to preventative services by covering up-to-date diagnostic, testing and treatment services.

"Passing this bill was also personal to me as my mother is a three-time breast cancer survivor," said Rep. Turco. "I would also like to thank **State Rep. Dorinda Borer (D-West Haven)**, **State Rep. Kerry Wood (D-Newington, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield)**, **State Rep. Kara Rochelle (D-Ansonia, Derby)** and **State Sen. Matt Lesser (D-Middletown)** for their work in championing this legislation to make it a front-and-center issue passed resoundingly by both chambers."

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Adding that legislative leadership asked members to prioritize only the most pressing issues this session amid the ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on our communities, Rep. Turco said the House and Senate also passed crucial public safety and mental health bills during the last three months.

[HB 5417](#), a comprehensive and bipartisan bill to help reduce juvenile crime, ensures better accountability, provides additional tools to law enforcement and the courts and improves services to prevent repeat offenders.

"Both parties worked very hard to create these solutions with direction from law enforcement and juvenile justice advocates," said **Rep. Turco**. "While all crime won't be reduced overnight, this bill takes steps to make our streets safer in all communities throughout the state. Crime in Connecticut was at decades-low levels before the pandemic, and the proactive reforms we enacted last year are helping us get back there. HB 5417 will build upon those efforts and create a more accountable and responsive justice system."

Connecticut, like other states, experienced a wave of catalytic converter thefts. As a result, the legislature passed [SB 256](#) to curb these thefts by eliminating the market for these parts. In addition, the bill addresses the receipt and sale of catalytic converters and provides law enforcement tools to better track and identify potential criminal activity.

"As a member of the Public Safety and Security Committee, which I asked to be assigned to ahead of the session, I worked to get this bill through the committee process and passed in a bipartisan manner," said **Rep. Turco**.

There was also a considerable focus on responding to the ongoing youth mental health crisis worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. [HB 5001](#) addresses the immediate and long-term mental health needs of our children by:

- Enhancing the behavioral health workforce
- Supporting school-based mental health services
- Expanding mental health treatment facilities across the state
- Supporting and expanding existing services
- Increasing access through improved insurance coverage

[SB 1](#) establishes several initiatives to address better students' mental and physical health, including supporting and expanding school-based health centers, assisting efforts to hire additional social workers, equipping schools with Narcan, supporting minority teacher recruitment, and building out mental health plans for student-athletes. [SB 2](#) addresses the pandemic impact on childhood depression, anxiety, and developmental delays by making necessary investments in comprehensive support services.

Women's reproductive rights are under threat from a conservative-leaning US Supreme Court, which is contemplating overturning *Roe v. Wade*, and a wave of anti-abortion laws are being enacted across the country. According to Rep. Turco, expanding access to and protecting reproductive rights in Connecticut has never been more critical.

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"The landmark decision of *Roe v. Wade*, which upholds a woman's right to choose, is codified into our state law," said Rep. Turco. "Abortion-related care will remain legal here, but that is unfortunately not the case for many states."

[HB 5414](#), which Governor Ned Lamont has already signed into law, expands the eligibility for certain advanced healthcare practitioners to provide legal protections for those seeking or providing abortion-related care in Connecticut.

HB 5414 also:

- Expands eligibility to perform abortion care to include advanced nurse practitioners, nurse midwives and physician assistants to perform first-trimester aspiration and medication abortions
- Protects individuals accused of seeking or providing reproductive healthcare in Connecticut that may be criminal in other states from extradition
- Prohibits state agencies and health care providers from assisting in out-of-state investigations or prosecutions of reproductive healthcare that is legal in Connecticut
- Anyone being sued in another state for allegedly providing, or receiving support for, reproductive health services that are legal in Connecticut can recover certain costs they incur defending themselves

Rep. Turco also co-sponsored a pair of climate and clean energy bills that will make a difference to Connecticut and the planet.

[SB 4](#) is a big step toward reducing carbon emissions. The transportation sector is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (38%) and asthma-causing air emissions (67%) in our state.

This legislation improves air quality by reducing the allowable emissions emitted by medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, plus it invests in the transition to electric and zero-emission state vehicles and school and transit buses.

SB 4 makes it easier for consumers to reduce their carbon footprint through increased access to rebates and vouchers to buy electric vehicles through programs like CHEAPR and assists municipalities and businesses in purchasing electric vehicle charging stations.

Mitigating the effects of climate change is an urgent matter and hitting our target of zero greenhouse gas emissions in the electric sector is another meaningful step.

[SB 10](#), An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation, cements a commitment for Connecticut to transition to a zero-carbon electricity supply by 2040. Clean, zero-carbon electricity is the future of the economy. SB10 offers planning, policies and funding foundations to achieve this goal. Additionally, it would provide businesses with the needed certainty for long-term planning and help bring good-paying clean energy jobs to Connecticut.

"Bold, decisive action is needed, and SB 4 and SB 10 would invest in Connecticut's environment and economy," said **Rep. Turco**.

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