

HELPFUL RESOURCES

ENERGY ASSISTANCE & CONSERVATION

- ▶ **SAVE ON YOUR ELECTRIC BILL**
Choose Your Electric Supplier—The rate you pay for the generation portion of your electric bill may be lowered by 10 percent.
1-877-947-3873 or www.ctenergyinfo.com

Home Energy Solutions—This program helps customers reduce their bills by making their homes more energy-efficient. 1-877-947-3873

Helping With Payments—Programs are available to help customers reduce or eliminate their past-due balances. 1-800-286-2828



With constituents at my September Senior Fair at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich where dozens of vendors met area seniors to provide them information about government and nonprofit programs, products and services directed toward older residents.

JOB RESOURCES

- ▶ **CTWORKS CAREER CENTERS**
A regional Career Center is located in Norwich to provide guidance and services to those seeking employment. 860-859-5600
- ▶ **CTJOBCENTRAL**
An online job bank where individuals can search for jobs as well as upload their resume and access various employment-related information.
1-866-268-6206 or www.jobcentral.org/ct

FOR SENIORS

- ▶ **MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAMS (MSP)**

Individuals who are enrolled in both Medicare and ConnPACE are no longer able to access ConnPACE benefits. Instead, those eligible for Medicare should apply to the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) in order to receive prescription drug assistance. There is no asset test for this program, and the income limits are the same as those for ConnPACE.

MSP offers eligible seniors savings of at least \$1,000 per year in Medicare Part B premiums. The Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy would lower prescription co-payments to \$6.30 or less. For information visit www.ct.gov/dss/medicaresavingsprograms or call Infoline at 211, or CHOICES at 1-800-994-9422.



CONSUMER PROTECTION

- ▶ **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ON SENIOR CENTERS**
A recent law ensures that seniors who sign up at senior centers won't have their names, phone numbers, addresses and other personal information released to members of the public. This precaution will help protect seniors from being targeted by solicitors and scam artists.

Additional Resources and Links

Find these special pages under "Resources" at www.senatedems.ct.gov:

- ▶ **Connecticut Veterans' Guide; Protecting Homeowners, Preventing Foreclosures; Health Care Programs; and more.**

Dear Neighbor:

These are unprecedented times: families are struggling, yet gridlock in Washington ensures that Congress gets nothing done. It's a different story in Connecticut; we put partisan differences aside and passed an historic Jobs Bill. The legislation will help create thousands of jobs by reducing red tape, cutting taxes for small businesses and investing in training and education.

Together, we're working to strengthen Connecticut's economy, balance the budget and show Washington that cooperation doesn't have to be a bad word.

This newsletter details some of the initiatives we've taken to help our economy and improve your quality of life. Please don't hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Edith Prague
State Senator

Stay Informed in a "Green" Way



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Fighting for Jobs & the Economy

State Senator

Edith G. Prague

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1-800-842-1420

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LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS

Improving Early Childhood Education

Getting our children off to a strong start early on in their education benefits them for the rest of their lives. We passed legislation to create a coordinated system of early care education and child development to address the needs of children from birth to age 8 (changes take effect in 2013.) The plan will focus on developing oral language and social skills, as well as on closing the achievement gap, improving participation in early childhood programs and increasing parent engagement.

Cracking Down on Online Bullying

Connecticut already has a strong anti-bullying law, but we reinforced it this year with two key provisions: we've added electronic "cyberbullying" to the list of prohibited activities, and we've expanded the number of mandatory school reporters and the responsibilities of school districts to include bullying incidents that occur off school grounds. Bullying has expanded into the electronic world of social media, and we're keeping pace in protecting our younger citizens.

Fighting Against Domestic Violence

This year we passed a domestic violence law that strengthens a victim's access to restraining and protective orders, improves information sharing about



At United Services in Columbia last year in my ongoing effort to spread the word about laws protecting women.

domestic violence incidents, and expands the ability of victims who have experienced a pattern of threatening or stalking to request a restraining order. We also fixed a contradiction in state law that exempted people who are dating from arrest when a domestic violence crime is

committed. Connecticut is making it easier for victims to protect themselves and making it harder for perpetrators to commit such crimes.

Covering Early Colon Cancer Screenings

Colorectal cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths in the United States. Nearly all colon cancers begin as noncancerous polyps, which slowly develop into cancer. However, early diagnosis often leads to a complete cure. That's why I voted to prohibit certain health insurance policies that cover colorectal cancer screening from imposing a coinsurance, copayment, deductible or other out-of-pocket expense.

GROWING JOBS

Jobs are the number one issue facing Connecticut today. We took action in the legislature this year to put more people back to work and get our economy growing again. Unlike the partisan gridlock in Washington, both parties came together in Hartford to pass a Jobs Bill of common-sense improvements. We focused on small businesses, **cut the business entity tax in half** and **streamlined state regulations**. Other highlights of the bill include:



- ▶ **Helping small businesses with hiring**—We established a monthly hiring tax credit that increases when businesses hire unemployed, disabled or veteran workers. We also made it easier for businesses to hire new workers for on-the-job training.
- ▶ **Investing in start-ups**—At a time when many banks aren't lending, we invested in new start-up companies by building business incubators and expanding the angel investment tax credit.
- ▶ **Building a workforce of the future**—We will recruit students for vo-tech, agri-science and tech education by promoting the benefits of those programs with middle-school parents and local boards of education. We'll also establish manufacturing technology programs at three community colleges.
- ▶ **Investing in infrastructure**—We paved the way for economic development zones at Connecticut's general aviation airports, allocated funds for shovel-ready bridge projects and passed major reforms to lower energy costs and increase energy efficiency.

In separate legislation, we rebuilt the UConn Health Center, attracting bioscience leader Jackson Laboratory to build a \$1.1 billion research facility nearby. This will create 900 construction positions and up to 6,000 long-term jobs.

The national economy remains tough, but we took big steps this year to get Connecticut growing again.



Diplomas for Our Korean War Veterans

There has been a longstanding state law that awards high school diplomas to World War II veterans who had to leave high school to fight for our country. Unfortunately, that was not the case for our Korean War veterans—until this year. The legislature has now expanded a local school boards' authority to award high school diplomas to veterans who did not receive them because they left high school for Korean War military service. It's a long-overdue recognition that is well-deserved.

FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Bozrah Quarry Plans Suspended

A stone quarry was proposed—and permits granted—for a site near the center of Bozrah, right behind the fire station and within walking distance of Town Hall. It was said 18 large trucks a day would begin hauling stone through town and a rail spur would be restored to accommodate freight trains. I led state and local officials in negotiating a settlement with the permit holders; plans for this quarry were suspended.

Community Projects

State funding was directed toward the Integrated Day Charter School in Norwich this year. This will help hundreds of school-aged children pursue the individualized instruction, multi-age student groupings and other innovations that made this program a fixture over the past 15 years.

In addition, renovation and consolidation of Three Rivers Community College continues. A state grant worth \$1.28 million will underwrite design of a new classroom building for the art department and a new auditorium.

Another state grant will facilitate repairs at the home of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA) in Norwich, which provides social services to an estimated 24,000 economically and otherwise vulnerable area residents each year through 28 assistance programs.



At the Hop River State Park Trail in Andover after receiving an award from the Connecticut Greenways Council for my work in support of greenway initiatives in the state. Behind me is Andover First Selectman Bob Burbank.



Learning From Two Extreme Storms

Connecticut was hit hard with two extreme storms nine weeks apart. In both instances hundreds of thousands of households lost power, most for several days, and many for more than a week. The large number of lengthy outages across the state, primarily in CL&P coverage areas, has led to many questions about this utility's ability to prepare for and manage these drastic situations. CL&P is now under heavy scrutiny and action will be taken by the legislature to address their failure. In a series of post-storm hearings, we listened to suggestions from the public and local officials based on their experiences. We crafted their ideas into recommendations that have now been shared with the governor's Two Storm Panel.



Lebanon First Selectman Joyce Okonuk testifies before a legislative hearing on Connecticut's readiness and response to Tropical Storm Irene.