

# CHRIS MURPHY

U.S. SENATOR FOR CONNECTICUT

# 2017

Year in Review



# SENATOR CHRIS MURPHY 2017 END OF YEAR REPORT

*"Every day, I'm grateful for the honor of serving Connecticut's residents in the U.S. Senate. Your feedback helps make me a better Senator. 2017 was a tough year, but I'm proud of everything we fought for and everything we accomplished together. I'm going to keep fighting for you." - Senator Chris Murphy*

Senator Chris Murphy has worked tirelessly for the issues that matter most to Connecticut families. The following report outlines the efforts Chris has led in the U.S. Senate and the work he did for Connecticut residents this past year.

## Listening to and Working Hard for Connecticut Families

### SENATOR CHRIS MURPHY - 2017 BY THE NUMBERS



Traveled across the state, hosting over **80 town halls**, roundtables, and listening sessions with Connecticut residents



Introduced or cosponsored **269 pieces of legislation**, including bills, amendments and resolutions



Sponsored and cosponsored **75 pieces of bipartisan legislation**, partnering with Republicans across the aisle.



Completed the **2<sup>nd</sup> Walk Across Connecticut**: five days, 108 miles, through 22 towns, talking to hundreds of people and holding 4 town halls along the way



Responded to over **240,000 calls, letters and emails** from Connecticut residents



Returned **nearly \$1 million** to residents, including owed Social Security payments, veterans benefits, tax refunds, and other savings from federal agencies



Helped **over 2,300 Connecticut residents** work through federal issues and get their owed benefits



Offered **46 internships** to Connecticut students in Hartford and Washington, D.C.

## Working Across the Aisle

Senator Murphy has worked hard to find common ground on the issues that matter most to Connecticut residents, working across the aisle on a number of bills.

### Chris has sponsored or cosponsored 75 pieces of bipartisan legislation. Here are a few examples:

- ✓ **Fix NICS Act** to fix the broken background check system and ensure that federal and state agencies upload records necessary to prevent criminals and domestic abusers from buying guns
- ✓ **Wounded Officers Recovery Act** to assist Capitol Police officers wounded in the congressional baseball game shooting in accessing funds for recovery and treatment
- ✓ **Helping Angels Lead Our Startups (HALOS) Act** to remove burdensome restrictions from individuals called angel investors who want to invest in startups and help startups grow and create jobs
- ✓ **Century Farms Act** to recognize farms that have been in continuous operation for 100 or more years
- ✓ **The Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act** to allow Americans to make certain qualified sports and fitness purchases, like gym memberships, fitness equipment, and youth sports league fees, with money they have saved in pre-tax health care accounts
- ✓ **Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act** to ensure that workers are not double taxed if their work brings them across state lines
- ✓ **Lifetime Income Disclosure Act** to help Americans plan for their retirement savings
- ✓ **Reach Every Mother and Child Act** to strengthen efforts to end preventable deaths of mothers, newborns, and young children in developing nations around the world
- ✓ **Save Our Seas Act** to help federal agencies tackle the problem of marine debris and reauthorize the Marine Debris Program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- ✓ **A bill to limit U.S. support for Saudi Arabia's military campaign in Yemen** until the Government of Saudi Arabia demonstrates an ongoing effort to target terrorist groups, minimize harm to civilians, and facilitate humanitarian assistance
- ✓ A resolution designating **October 2017 as "National Dyslexia Awareness Month."**

## Strengthening the Economy

Far too many Connecticut families worry about how to afford their kids' education, save for retirement, and make ends meet. Wages haven't kept up. In the Senate, Chris has been laser-focused on growing jobs in Connecticut and boosting our economy.

### Investing in U.S. Manufacturing

#### CONNECTICUT POST

*"Murphy has proven himself a tireless champion of more and more dollars for attack and ballistic missile submarines."*

March 22, 2017

The manufacturing industry plays a crucial role in Connecticut communities, creating new jobs and accelerating our state's economic recovery. Today, Connecticut's 4,600 manufacturers account for 10% of the state's jobs, driven by our defense and aerospace sectors. Manufacturing is coming back in Connecticut, and Chris knows the federal government can play an important role in giving it a boost.

Chris fought for a seat on the Senate Appropriations Committee to help bring federal money back to Connecticut. He's helped Connecticut manufacturers like Electric Boat (EB), Sikorsky, and Pratt & Whitney and their suppliers secure significant federal projects, growing good-paying jobs in our state.

Groton is the submarine capital of the world, with EB employing over 10,700 workers in Connecticut and working with over 450 local manufacturing suppliers. This year, to help EB hire trained workers and grow its work with the U.S. Navy, Chris:

- Helped secure a \$5 billion contract for Electric Boat to complete the design of the Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine
- Authorized \$1.8 billion for the Columbia-class program and \$6.4 billion for Virginia-class submarines

Chris also fought for money to help Sikorsky and its workers in Stratford and Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford and Middletown. He voted to authorize \$12 billion for 94 Joint Strike Fighters across the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps; \$1 billion for 48 Black Hawks; \$1.3 billion for 6 CH-53Ks; and \$354 million for the Air Force's Combat Rescue Helicopter program.

Each week, Chris highlights the great work of a local manufacturer.

So far, he's called attention to 133 "Murphy's Monday Manufacturers"

## Closing Loopholes in Buy American Laws

Since coming to Congress, Chris has been on a mission to fix our broken Buy American laws. These laws are designed to ensure taxpayer dollars purchase goods made by American workers, but they are riddled with loopholes. Over the last ten years, the Department of Defense — the largest purchaser of manufactured goods in the world — spent almost \$200 billion on manufactured goods made by foreign companies. Chris is fighting to keep taxpayer money from being sent overseas and instead to be used to support jobs here at home.

### TheMiddletownPress

*"U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy doesn't give up easily... Murphy has been seeking to close loopholes in 'Buy American' laws since 2009, when he was U.S. Representative for Connecticut's congressional 5th District."*

*September 15, 2017*

During President Trump's first week in office, Chris sent him five executive actions he could take immediately to strengthen Buy American laws and create thousands of jobs. President Trump heeded Chris' suggestions and introduced an executive order to crack down on excessive waivers and conduct a government-wide audit.



*Editorial Board: Trump should "embrace" Murphy's American Jobs Matter Act*

*July 31, 2017*

Chris has continued to work with the Trump administration on bipartisan legislation to shine light on the issue of the overuse and misuse of Buy American laws. His *BuyAmerican.gov Act* would create an online hub to track federal contracts, increasing transparency and helping local manufacturers secure federal contracts.

Additionally, Chris introduced other pieces of legislation to fix the broken Buy American laws. His *American Jobs Matter Act* is a simple bill that, for the first time, takes into account the creation and retention of U.S. jobs when awarding federal contracts. His *21<sup>st</sup> Century Buy American Act* would close loopholes that allow the federal government to skirt the law and help U.S. manufacturers compete against foreign competitors for government contracts. Chris has also introduced numerous amendments and called for investigations and audits to crack down on the violation of Buy American laws and increase transparency.

**The non-partisan Economic Policy Institute said Senator Murphy's Buy American efforts would create up to 100,000 jobs.**

## Helping Local Businesses

Chris is focused on helping local businesses grow and create jobs. His office is here to help small business owners cut through red tape. In October, Chris invited SBA Administrator Linda McMahon to meet with local businesses and manufacturers in Connecticut. He spent the day with her, touring the state to spread the word on how small businesses in Connecticut can use SBA resources to grow and create jobs.



Chris has also traveled across Connecticut, joining local economic development leaders and business owners to learn more about how Congress can incentivize the cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated industrial sites — called brownfields — across Connecticut. Specifically, he helped secure \$450,000 in funding and technical assistance from the EPA to support brownfield remediation and redevelopment in Shelton, Waterbury, and Hartford. He also fought against proposed cuts to the federal brownfields program. President Trump proposed cutting that program by almost a quarter, \$35 million.



## BAD SONS BEER COMPANY

*BAD SONS is a new craft brewery located in a 105-year-old former factory and brownfield site in Derby. When brothers and founders Bill and Mark DaSilva were having trouble receiving a response from the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau regarding permit applications that they needed to operate the brewery, Chris stepped in to help expedite the process.*

*"We have old factories all across our state, and I want to help towns and small businesses across Connecticut put them back to use in our community, just like Bill and Mark did," said Senator Murphy.*

*"I'm glad I could play a small part in helping them get BAD SONS Brewery up and running."*





## WIND HARDWARE

*Patrick Wind, owner of Wind Hardware, a local Newtown engineering company, suspected a foreign competitor of committing trade fraud and artificially undercutting prices. When he reached out to Chris for help, his office helped him file and track a successful trade violation complaint through U.S. Customs and Border Protection.*

*"It's been one of those experiences where you go in with low expectations, but it has been followed up on extremely well," said Patrick Wind, owner of Wind Hardware.*

*"I'm very impressed with the government over this. It's a very daunting process, but we are making progress."*



Senator Murphy also hosted the fourth annual Discover Connecticut reception, which showcased more than 20 small-batch food producers, restaurants, breweries, tourist attractions, and other businesses. The event brings Connecticut companies to Washington to highlight the state's vibrant business community in front of Members of Congress, staffers, national retailers, and current and former Connecticut residents.

### Supporting Job Training Programs

Another one of Chris' top priorities is expanding job training programs to help Connecticut workers get jobs in manufacturing. With all this new defense industry work coming to our state, and amidst an ongoing surge of commercial aerospace orders, the only thing that can stop Connecticut from adding thousands of new manufacturing jobs is not having trained workers ready to fill these positions.

That's why Chris fought to secure several major federal grants for new training programs in Connecticut, including a \$6 million grant to set up the Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline. Eastern CT Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative has trained and helped place over 600 Connecticut



*"Manufacturing pipeline opens path to employment at Electric Boat."*

*July 6, 2017*

workers in family-sustaining careers in the shipbuilding industry at Electric Boat and other eastern Connecticut manufacturers in 18 months. When President Trump threatened to cut job training funding earlier this year, Chris personally urged Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta to commit to continue to fund these critical job training programs.

With work at Electric Boat booming, local manufacturers have told Chris they want to compete to become an EB supplier. In response, Chris partnered with the Waterbury Chamber of Commerce and Electric Boat to host a workshop with local manufacturers across the state to help connect them with opportunities at EB.

### **Re-training workers**

Data shows that people who lose their jobs when they're older have a harder time finding a new job. When President Trump threatened to eliminate funding for a key job training program for older workers, Chris stepped in to stop it. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, he led the effort to restore \$400 million in funding for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) – the only federal community service and work-based job training program for low-income or unemployed older Americans. Connecticut has received nearly \$4.7 million in SCSEP funding to train seniors.

*“Our great appreciation goes to Senator Murphy and the Senate Appropriations Committee for helping to secure funding for SCSEP to support tens of thousands of older workers facing significant employment barriers.”*

*Joseph Carbone  
President & CEO of The WorkPlace*



*“Sen. Murphy, Waterbury Chamber to host Electric Boat seminar”*

*March 31, 2017*

## Focusing on Local Connecticut Economic Priorities

### Fostering Innovation

Chris believes entrepreneurship and innovation are building blocks for a strong economy. He sees the tech field as the biggest opportunity for job growth in Connecticut and is working in Congress to support innovators in our state.

This year, Chris launched a new series to highlight Connecticut's innovators and entrepreneurs called "Innovator of the Month." Highlighted companies include startups like IsoPlexis in Branford and Arvinas in New Haven, both of which are working on therapies to combat cancer and other diseases; SeeClickFix in New Haven, which helps local government leaders be more responsive to community concerns; and The Refinery in Westport, which supports women-owned and led companies.

In the U.S. Senate, Chris introduced a bipartisan piece of legislation to incentivize investments in startups. The *Helping Angels Lead Our Startups (HALOS) Act* removes burdensome restrictions from individuals called angel investors who want to invest in startups--helping startups grow and create jobs. In May, the *HALOS Act* passed the U.S. House of Representatives.



### FACEBOOK WORKSHOP FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

*This year, Chris partnered with Facebook and the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce to offer a free workshop in New Haven for local businesses to help them learn about effectively using social media to grow their business. Over 450 local business owners attended.*

### Supporting Connecticut Farmers

Farming in Connecticut is on the rise, contributing \$4 billion to the state's economy each year and supporting approximately 21,000 jobs. Chris has traveled the state, visiting local farms to hear directly from farmers about what matters most to them so he can fight for them in Washington. Chris invited U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue to visit Connecticut, and this past August, Chris joined Secretary Perdue at a visit to Prides Corner Farm in Lebanon. Local farmers got the chance to talk to Secretary

Perdue firsthand and discuss how the federal government can provide stability and help them grow their business.

After hearing from concerned dairy farmers about unstable milk prices and double-digit price declines year after year, Chris worked hard to find ways to help. He led a bipartisan letter urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to create new insurance programs and products to help dairy farmers. He also worked as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee to make changes to the flawed Marginal Protection Program in the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee bill.



Chris also helped secure important investments in Connecticut agriculture. For example, he championed research funding that supports land grant universities like UCONN, and secured \$250,000 for beginning farmer mentors. He also led the effort to secure \$1 million in first-time funding for the Acer Program, which supports maple syrup producers.

Chris teamed up with Senator John Boozman (R-Ark.) to introduce their bipartisan *Century Farms Act* to recognize farms that have been in continuous operation for 100 or more years. The state of Connecticut has recognized over 60 century farms, but no federal recognition exists.

Chris also joined the congressional delegation in securing \$368,000 in Rural Development grants to help Laurelbrook Farm in East Canaan, Bishop's Orchards in Guilford, The Plant Group in Franklin, and Mapleleaf Farm in Hebron develop renewable energy systems and improve their energy efficiency.

## **Harnessing the Economic Power of the Long Island Sound**

Connecticut's economy depends on a healthy Long Island Sound. Each year, the Sound generates billions of dollars from tourism, fishing, shipping, and recreation. Chris has made it a priority to protect it as an ecological treasure and support businesses that are major drivers of Connecticut's shoreline economy.

Chris is a co-author of two important bills to protect Long Island Sound—the *Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act* and the *Plum Island Conservation Act*. The *Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act* is a comprehensive bill that funds water quality improvements and shoreline habitat restoration projects. The U.S.

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee unanimously passed the bill earlier this year. Chris is also a co-author of the *Plum Island Conservation Act*, which repeals a requirement that Plum Island be sold to the highest bidder. Plum Island is a pristine natural treasure that used to house a government research facility, and the future preservation of this island is at risk without federal action.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Chris led the bipartisan charge to reverse President Trump's proposal to eliminate the Sea Grant Program. The grant is a critical source of funding for Connecticut's Sea Grant College Program at UConn Avery Point, which provides vital support to local businesses and is a crucial resource in efforts to preserve Connecticut's coastal communities. After President Trump proposed eliminating the program, Chris visited Connecticut Sea Grant to hear firsthand from fishermen, shellfish growers, students, and researchers. In the Senate Appropriations Committee, Chris helped stop the program from being eliminated and instead secured an increase in funding for the program.

Additionally, Chris fought for and successfully doubled funding for the Long Island Sound Geographic program, which funds projects to restore coastal ecosystems and improve water quality. He also secured funding increases to support aquaculture research at places like the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's Milford Laboratory and UCONN Avery Point.

## **Working for a Fairer Tax Code**

Chris supports tax reform that simplifies the tax code and actually lowers taxes for working families. Unfortunately, Republicans in Congress refused to work on a bipartisan tax bill and instead worked behind closed doors to craft a tax reform bill that cuts taxes for their rich donors and raises taxes on the middle class, and passed it as quickly as possible with no public input.

The GOP tax bill is a disaster for Connecticut families. By 2027, families earning under \$75,000 will pay more in taxes than they do today, while the richest 1% will enjoy the largest tax breaks. In fact, the top 1% will reap 83% of tax benefits and receive an average tax break of nearly \$100,000, while over half of American households will face tax hikes in ten years. Even worse, the bill hits states like Connecticut the hardest,

## **NEW HAVEN REGISTER**

*Murphy: Long Island Sound gain made by Congress threatened by Trump budget*

*May 28, 2017*

resulting in double taxing by limiting Connecticut residents' ability to deduct state and local taxes, like property, income, and sales tax. The new law blows a hole in the deficit, possibly costing up to \$2.2 trillion, and Republicans are using this as an excuse to start slashing funding for the things Americans need—schools, roads, Social Security and Medicare.

Chris is also a cosponsor of the *Working Families Tax Relief Act*—legislation to put money back into the pockets of working Connecticut residents and ensure that no worker can be taxed into poverty by the federal government. Specifically, the bill would expand access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and increase the Child Tax Credit. In Connecticut, EITC boosted about 6,600 people over the poverty line and eased poverty for another 99,000 residents.

## **Fighting to Put More Money in Connecticut Residents' Pockets**

Wages are not keeping up with the rising cost of living for too many Connecticut families. Chris believes that no one working full time should have to live in poverty, which is why he supports raising the federal minimum wage to a livable wage of \$15/hour.

Chris is fighting to strengthen and expand Social Security, which so many Connecticut residents rely on. Specifically, he introduced the *Social Security Caregiver Credit Act* to create a Social Security credit and provide modest retirement compensation to individuals who left the workforce or reduced their hours to care for a loved one. He also released a comprehensive [report](#) that outlines the hardships many family caregivers face and suggests policy reforms. On average, total wage, private pension, and Social Security losses due to caregiving is more than \$300,000 per caregiver, which can significantly threaten retirement security. In Connecticut, family caregivers provide more than 427 million hours of unpaid care, and more than half of Connecticut residents age 40 and older say they have provided care on an unpaid basis for an adult loved one.

Chris is also fighting to ensure equal pay for equal work. He cosponsored the *Paycheck Fairness Act*, which would strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and help women challenge pay discrimination and hold employers accountable. Women in the United States still make only 80 cents, on average, for every dollar earned by a man. The gap is even wider for women of color, with African American women making 63 cents on the dollar and Hispanic women making only 54 cents, on average, compared with white men.

## Protecting our National Security

The United States faces unprecedented challenges abroad. A strong military is the foundation of U.S. national security, and Connecticut manufactures a lot of the equipment that keeps America safe. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Chris has fought to secure tens of billions of dollars in new funding for the construction of submarines, F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, and Black Hawk helicopters—all made in Connecticut.

But Chris believes that having a strong military alone is not sufficient to protect America's national security. He's a leading proponent of a progressive foreign policy, and earlier this year, he unveiled a comprehensive report called [Rethinking the Battlefield](#). His visionary plan outlines a roadmap for rebuilding our foreign policy toolkit in order to keep pace with current global challenges like terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and climate change. Specifically, it calls for nearly doubling the U.S. foreign affairs budget — which includes the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other agencies — with an emphasis on funding for international development, additional foreign service officers, anti-corruption efforts, countering propaganda, crisis response, and humanitarian relief.



### PRAISE FOR RETHINKING THE BATTLEFIELD

*"Rethinking the Battlefield is a comprehensive blueprint for how America can protect its citizens, build our prosperity, and defend our way of life in the 21st century. Senator Murphy recognizes that now is not the time for America to retreat from the world, and that we should be doing more, not less, to deal with challenges abroad before they affect our security and prosperity at home."*

- *Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright*

## Working Across the Aisle

As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Chris is actively involved in bipartisan efforts to protect our national security. He joined with Senator Rob Portman (R-Ohio) to author the *Countering Foreign Propaganda and Disinformation Act* that was signed into law last year. Their legislation strengthens the ability of the United States to counter foreign propaganda and disinformation from our enemies, including Russia and terrorist groups like ISIS. This year, the senators continued to work together

to implement the law, fight for funding, and make improvements, including several provisions that were signed into law as part of the *National Defense Authorization Act*.

Chris has also led bipartisan efforts to block arms sales to Saudi Arabia and address the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. He joined Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) in introducing legislation to limit U.S. support for Saudi Arabia's military campaign in Yemen until the Government of Saudi Arabia demonstrates an ongoing effort to target terrorist groups, minimize harm to civilians, and facilitate humanitarian assistance. He also joined Senator Todd Young (R-Ind.) in introducing an amendment to the *National Defense Authorization Act* to hold Saudi Arabia accountable before spending taxpayer money abetting the civil war in Yemen.

## Standing up to President Trump

Chris has been a leading voice in countering President Trump's reckless behavior that puts Americans at risk. He introduced a bill prohibiting President Trump from starting a preemptive war against North Korea, absent an imminent threat to the United States or without express authorization from Congress.

He also vehemently opposed President Trump's travel ban and refugee ban, arguing that both make America less safe by playing into the hands of our enemies while ignoring more effective ways to screen travelers regardless of what country they come from. After each iteration of President Trump's unlawful travel ban, Chris introduced a bill to reverse the executive order and block its implementation. He also wrote the *No Ban on Refugees Act*, which would prohibit the U.S. government from barring refugees from entering the United States based on their country of origin.



## REUNITING THE KASSAR FAMILY

*Fadi Kassar, an Orange resident, was about to be reunited with his wife and two young daughters, who had been granted refugee status and were preparing to travel to the United States. But after President Trump signed an executive order barring refugees from entering the United States the family was turned away during their layover and their visas were rejected.*

*Senator Murphy's office stepped in, working alongside the Connecticut congressional delegation, the family's immigration lawyers, the U.S. State Department, and U.S. Customs and Borders to help reunite the family. Murphy also shared the family's story on the Senate floor, urging his colleagues to speak out against the ban. One week later, the Kassars were able to get their visas reinstated and the family was reunited. They have since settled into their new home in Connecticut.*

**Hartford Courant**

*Sen. Murphy: Tough Talk Alone Won't Work With North Korea*

*August 11, 2017*

## Supporting Veterans & Our Troops

To Chris, it's simple: the brave men and women of our armed forces serve our country selflessly, and we have a responsibility to provide them with timely care and assistance the minute they come home. From affordable quality housing to better access to health care, veterans deserve the absolute best resources and support available. Chris is a cosponsor of legislation to expand access to job training programs for veterans, protect veterans from predatory for-profit colleges, and help family caregivers of veterans.

For years, Chris has focused on ensuring veterans have access to mental health care. Right now, tens of thousands of combat veterans who risked their lives for our country and were injured in the line of duty are being denied medical and mental health care. In

Connecticut, according to the Yale Veterans Legal Clinic, that number is between 800 and 1,000 veterans. These are veterans who suffer from mental health issues or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of their service, and who've acted out – gone AWOL for a short period of time or committed small acts of misbehavior – as a result of their diagnosis. Because of their misconduct, which

occurred because of their injury, they are given what's called an other-than-honorable or "bad paper" discharge from the military. This "bad paper" discharge means that the servicemember is ineligible for medical services from the VA. It creates a no-win situation for veterans—they get injured in war, act out because of their injury, and then are refused help to recover.

As a result, Chris introduced his *Honor Our Commitment Act*. His bill is pretty simple. It says that any combat veteran who has received an other-than-honorable discharge because of conduct caused by his or her service-connected mental health issues should be able to get mental health treatment at the VA. His bill passed the Senate Appropriations Committee as an amendment, and he continues to push for a vote in Congress.

## THE REGISTER CITIZEN

### *Chris Murphy receives Veterans Justice Award*

*November 21, 2017*

*"Sen. Murphy truly never forgets the special debt we owe to veterans. This year in particular, Senator Murphy has gone the extra mile."*

*Margaret Middleton  
Exec. Director of the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center*

## CONNECTICUT POST

### *Senator Murphy: How our country is leaving veterans with mental health injuries behind*

*November 29, 2017*

## Serving Connecticut Veterans

Chris and his staff provide services to veterans and their families—from helping veterans receive the VA benefits they earned to replacing service medals or securing them for the first time. Here are a few stories of how Chris was able to help:



### ZENOBLA BAILEY

*Zenobia Bailey of Trumbull reached out to Chris because her mother was struggling to secure her pension benefits from the VA. Chris and his staff were able to help cut through the red tape at the VA and not only secure her mother's rightful monthly benefits, but also ensure that she received full retroactive compensation.*

*"I am delighted to share that from my very first contact and inquiry, I found Senator Murphy's office to be welcoming and engaging," said Zenobia. "I was never left wondering if or when I would receive a return call or response to a question that I had. At times, I heard back within minutes, if not sooner."*



### MOHAMMED WARDEH

*As a young boy in Syria, Mohammed Wardeh dreamed of living in the United States. In 2007, Wardeh came to the U.S. for his job working at the United Nations and in 2012 he was granted asylum. After securing his green card, Wardeh, a Danbury resident, decided to give back to his country by joining the National Guard.*

*Chris and his staff worked with the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to remove a hold on the status of Wardeh's certificate of naturalization and help him attain his citizenship.*

*"I can't thank Senator Murphy and his staff enough. I am so grateful for what they've done to help me. It's sentimental to become a citizen of the country that I signed up to serve and put my life on the line for. It's a real honor and a privilege," said Wardeh.*

As a U.S. Senator, Chris has the honor of nominating promising young women and men to West Point, the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. This year, he nominated 46 Connecticut students.

## Improving Health Care & Combatting the Opioid Epidemic

Chris has been a leading voice in the fight for better health care and against the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. As a member of the Senate Health Committee, Chris has worked to find bipartisan solutions to lower health care costs, expand access to services, and stabilize the insurance market.

Chris is working to lower the cost of prescription drugs. He is working on a bill to allow everyone and every employer the choice to buy into Medicare. He is also a cosponsor of legislation that would unleash the bargaining power of seniors for a better deal on prescription drug costs and allow Medicare to negotiate the best possible price of prescription drugs.

### Stopping Trumpcare

This year, congressional Republicans were on a mission to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Their disastrous Trumpcare plan would have resulted in higher costs for families and millions of Americans losing health care, all to pay for huge tax cuts for the wealthy and special interests. The bill would have charged elderly Americans and sick people more for health care, gutted Medicaid, and prevented people from accessing much-needed treatment for addiction amid the opioid crisis. Health care repeal could have cost Connecticut up to \$2.9 billion per year. As a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Chris helped lead the fight in the Senate against repeal.

Chris listened to the more than 20,000 Connecticut residents who were concerned

about the effects that repealing the Affordable Care Act would have on their families. Due to their activism and the advocacy of families across the country, Republicans failed to pass any version of health care repeal. Chris instead urged Republicans and Democrats to start working together for bipartisan solutions to drive down costs, stabilize the marketplace, and expand access to quality, affordable health care.



*"After Senate Fails On Obamacare Repeal, Connecticut Democrats Call For Bipartisan Fix"*

*July 28, 2017*

**POLITICO**

*Senator Murphy has been “one of the Affordable Care Act’s staunchest defenders since its earliest days.”*

*September 8, 2017*

## Fighting the Opioid Epidemic

Chris has made fighting the opioid epidemic a top priority. In just the first half of the year, there were 538 accidental drug overdose deaths in Connecticut, including many that involved the deadly drug fentanyl. If this rate continues, Connecticut will see a projected 1076 overdose deaths in 2017, up from the 917 deaths last year and nearly triple the 357 deaths five years ago.

To fight back, Chris helped get \$1 billion in emergency aid passed into law as part of the package that included his *Mental Health Reform Act*. This aid has helped fund addiction treatment providers and other substance abuse programs in Connecticut. Chris has also worked with local law enforcement officials and first responders to increase access to naloxone, a life-saving opioid overdose reversal drug, and bring down the cost of the drug,



*Murphy: “We have to start thinking out of the box in terms of getting the necessary funding to combat this crisis.”*

*October 16, 2017*

Chris has been a vocal opponent of repealing the Affordable Care Act and gutting Medicaid, which would threaten access to addiction treatment for millions of Americans. In his [CODE BLUE report](#), Chris outlined the dire consequences of gutting Medicaid and access to medication assisted treatment, a lifeline for so many in Connecticut suffering from addiction.

Chris is a cosponsor of the *Combating the Opioid Epidemic Act*, which would invest much-needed \$45 billion for prevention, detection, surveillance and treatment of opioid addiction. He is also a cosponsor of Senator Joe Manchin’s (D-W.Va.) *LifeBOAT Act*, which forces drug companies to fund efforts to support addiction treatment.

In July, Chris convened a bipartisan summit in Bridgeport, Connecticut, to find solutions to curb the opioid epidemic. He invited former President George W. Bush official and member of President Trump’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, Dr. Bertha Madras, to give the keynote speech. Chris compiled the recommendations from local elected leaders, medical professionals, law enforcement officials, and community members and submitted the policy recommendations to the President’s Opioid Commission.

## **Reforming the Mental Health System**

Late last year, President Obama signed the [Mental Health Reform Act](#) into law. The legislation, which Chris wrote with Senator Bill Cassidy (R-La.) after months of collaborating with mental health professionals, policy experts, and family members, is a comprehensive overhaul of America's mental health system that expands federal resources and improves coordination for mental health and substance abuse treatment programs across the nation.

This year, Chris has worked to implement the law, including supporting the first-ever nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Mental Health and Substance Use, a position created by the bipartisan bill. He also helped secure federal grants authorized by the law, including \$600,000 to the University of Connecticut and Western Connecticut State University to train new mental health providers, including psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. Chris continues to fight for more funding to support initiatives to support early intervention and better integration of care.

## **Helping Connecticut Residents Access Health Care**

Chris and his staff have worked hard to help Connecticut residents with health care issues—whether it's Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance.



### **SANDY McCOLLOUGH**

*Canton resident Sandy McCollough reached out to Chris's office when she lost her subsidy and her insurance premium skyrocketed from \$75/month to \$565/month. After working with Chris's office, Sandy received a refund and her costs lowered the very next day.*

*"For months, I had felt invisible, unimportant, helpless, and of no value to anyone 'in the system', and now, somehow magically, everything was going to be ok," said McCollough. "I know that I am only one of the hundreds of thousands of people served by our elected officials, and to have my issues become a priority for any office was a unique experience for me. Thank you Senator Murphy!"*

## Preventing Gun Violence: Keeping Connecticut Families Safe

In the years since the tragedy in Sandy Hook, the gun violence epidemic in America has only worsened as countless communities and families continue to be torn apart by shootings. And yet Congress has failed to act in any meaningful way. Chris is a leading voice in Congress, fighting for commonsense reforms to reduce gun violence. He is the author of the *Background Check Expansion Act*, a bill to expand background checks to all firearm purchases, with some reasonable exceptions. It would close the gun show and internet loopholes. Research indicates that as many as a quarter of all gun sales in the United States occur without a background check. 90% of Americans, including a majority of gun owners, support comprehensive background checks.

Following the horrific mass shooting in the church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, Chris teamed up with Senator John Cornyn (R-Tx.) to introduce the *Fix NICS Act* to fix the broken background check system and ensure that federal and state agencies upload records necessary to prevent criminals and domestic abusers from buying guns. This bill is the most comprehensive bipartisan piece of gun legislation introduced in Congress since the Manchin-Toomey background checks bill.

Chris has also introduced or cosponsored legislation to:

- Crack down on illegal gun trafficking and straw purchasers
- Make it illegal for those on the FBI terror watch list to buy a gun
- Ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines
- End immunity of gun manufacturers against lawsuits
- End the ban on gun violence research at the Center for Disease Control
- Encourage licensing requirements for handgun purchases
- Help keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers



### VOICES OF VICTIMS

*Chris regularly goes down to the Senate floor to tell the stories of victims of gun violence and push for reforms, even when no one else is talking about the issue. Since coming to the Senate, Chris has given over 50 “Voices of Victims” speeches.*

## **Rebuilding our Infrastructure**

Much of Connecticut's economic strength comes from its proximity to New York City and Boston. Unfortunately, Connecticut also has some of the worst traffic and the oldest infrastructure in the nation. Metro-North's New Haven Line is one of the country's busiest, but its trains have to cross century-old bridges daily. Commuters across the state can attest to the inadequacy of our state's roads and bridges. On the Senate Appropriations Committee's subcommittee on transportation, Chris fights to bring much-needed federal investment back to fix and rebuild our state's aging infrastructure.

Chris joined Senate Democrats in proposing a bold \$1 trillion transportation infrastructure investment plan to rebuild America's roads, rails, bridges, and other critical infrastructure projects over the next ten years and create 15 million jobs. Despite President Trump's repeated campaign promises to rebuild our nation's infrastructure, the president and congressional Republicans have still not laid out a plan to do so.

Chris also led a bipartisan effort to increase funding for Amtrak by \$105 million, bringing more federal dollars to the Northeast Corridor for significant capital improvements. The funding will help address a backlog of improvement and maintenance projects that are holding back economic growth along the Northeast Corridor rail line.

## **Fighting to Improve Education and Child Care**

As a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Chris has focused on ensuring that every student in America gets a quality education, regardless of his or her race, zip code, or learning ability. Education is a personal issue for Chris—his mother was a teacher, his wife works in education, and he's a parent of two school-age boys.

As someone who is still paying off college loans, Chris knows the familiar feeling families face when trying to figure out how to make college an affordable reality. Student loan debt is crushing too many students and their families. Chris joined Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) to introduce legislation to make community college free for all students and make public colleges and universities tuition-free for working families making up to \$125,000. On the Senate Appropriations Committee, he fought to reverse significant cuts to education proposed by the Trump administration



*U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy Meets Students to Discuss College Affordability*

*September 1, 2017*

Chris also has focused on holding for-profit colleges – which often leave students in tens of thousand of dollars in debt with no job prospects or credible job skills – accountable. He introduced the *Students Before Profits Act* to protect students from deceptive practices and bad actors in the for-profit college sector. His bill ensures students have access to important and accurate information, strengthens oversight and regulation, and holds for-profit schools and their executives accountable for violations and poor performance.

After hearing from parents across Connecticut struggling to afford the cost of child care, which has increased by 25 percent in the past decade, Chris joined Senator Patty Murray (D-Wa.) to introduce the *Child Care for Working Families Act*. The bill would establish a new federal-state partnership to ensure that no family earning less than 150% of state median income would spend more than seven percent of their income on child care, while improving the quality of child care and helping states to create universal preschool for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Chris has been a leading critic of Secretary DeVos's efforts to roll back civil rights protections for transgender students and victims of sexual assault on college campuses. Since Betsy DeVos's narrow confirmation as Secretary of Education, Chris has fought to ensure that the Every Students Succeeds Act, the comprehensive K-12 education law passed in 2015, is implemented as Congress intended and that the Department of Education only approves state plans that hold districts and schools accountable when they are not meeting the needs of their most vulnerable students.