

2008 NEWS BRIEFS

TEEN DRIVERS: Stricter restrictions on 16- and 17-year-old drivers were imposed in response to the rising number of tragic accidents involving young drivers. Violations can lead to mandatory license suspensions.

15-YEAR-OLD WORKERS: We reinstated the law that allows 15-year-olds to work as baggers, cashiers, or stock clerks in retail businesses under strict work-hour restrictions. School comes first!

SALES TAX FREE WEEK: This year’s sales tax-free week for back to school shopping will run from Sunday, August 17 to Saturday, August 23.

THE BEST PROGRAM: The BEST program, which was the program used to mentor new teachers, needed to be revised, so this bill transitions to an improved New Teacher Mentor Assistance Program. This new program would reduce classroom load for mentors and give full funding to school districts that implement the mentor program. The BEST program would be replaced in the 2009-2010 school year. The video requirement of BEST would also be eliminated. PA 08-107

HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT FOR LANGUAGE COURSES: Foreign language skills broaden the horizons of our youth and enhance both their education and their perspective of the world around them. In today’s globalized society, communicating with others is critical in an increasingly smaller world. That is why this session the legislature enacted a measure allowing high school students to receive foreign language credit towards their high school diploma for world language courses taken at non-profit language programs. Under the new law, local Boards of Education can grant up to four credits taken from private non-profits upon passing an exam approved by the Education Commissioner. Allowing students to supplement the current foreign language offerings of local public schools allows for broader choice when choosing a language to study. PA 08-138

SEXUAL OFFENDER NAME CHANGES: Under existing law, registered sex offenders must immediately notify the Department of Public Safety (DPS) if they change their names. This bill requires registered sex offenders to notify the Department of Public Safety before filing an application for a name change and include a sworn statement that they are not seeking to avoid the legal consequences of a criminal conviction.

DPS is permitted to contest the sex offender’s application. The court may then deny the application if it finds that the offender is seeking to avoid legal consequences. PA 08-54

State Representative

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STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dear Neighbor,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family in good health and in good spirits.

This was a challenging year at the State Capitol. As a state and as individuals, we face many new and difficult demands. In this newsletter, I would like to share some of my accomplishments that will benefit the people of the state and all of us here in Windsor and Windsor Locks.

We have been hard at work crafting the necessary legislation to improve economic stability, education, health care, the environment and services that the people of Connecticut deserve.

However, I am very worried and concerned about the rapid increase in the cost of oil and energy which is affecting all of us. In special session we voted to delete the rescheduled tax increase on gasoline. Our country needs a better energy policy and I will continue to work towards this end.

Please continue to share with me your thoughts and ideas. Your letters, e-mail and phone calls provide insight on what’s best for the district and allows me to understand your concerns. With your input, I will continue to fight for a better quality-of-life for the people of the 60th District.

Sincerely,

Peggy Sayers
State Representative - 60th District



MORTGAGE CRISIS

Empty, vacant homes do not benefit our towns. We offered legislation to work with homeowners to find ways for them to continue paying their mortgage. The bill also creates stricter regulations and greater penalties on lenders and brokers when writing loans for people with limited income and who carry higher debt. To find out more about these programs, call the Department of Banking's Foreclosure Assistance

Hotline at 877-472-8313 or the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority at 860-571-3500. (PA 08-176)

Rep. Sayers in the Windsor Locks Little League Opening Day Parade

**CONNECTICUT HEALTHCARE PARTNERSHIP**

This bill opens up the State Employee Healthcare Plan to municipal employees, non-profit groups, and small businesses. Allowing municipal employees to join voluntarily will help reduce costs to small towns while offering the quality, comprehensive coverage associated with the state plan. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees will be able to take advantage of the increased bargaining power of 250,000 lives in the state pool while giving their employees access to a good healthcare plan, allowing these businesses to expand and grow.

The legislation would have netted considerable savings in reduced premium costs and decrease the number of uninsured. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed this bill. (PA 08-183)

My grandson John with the Red Sox Trophies and Mascot

**SUPPORT FOR GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVE CAREGIVERS**

In order to keep more children with grandparents and other family members, we passed legislation to provide them with financial support. They can now apply for Kinship Fund and Grandparents and Relatives Respite Fund grants under the Probate Court system. Many more family members will now be able to provide care for grandchildren and other relatives, thus keeping them as part of their family. Previously, only guardians appointed through the Probate Court were able to receive financial support. (PA 08-97)

HOSPITAL STAFFING

To better plan for our state's future nursing needs, each licensed hospital must give the Department of Public Health a prospective nurse staffing plan. The plan must improve patient health care and the level of services that are provided. Also, each hospital must establish a staffing committee made up of at least 50% registered nurses to help prepare and implement the plan. (PA 08-79)

YOU DECIDE**NOVEMBER 4, 2008 ELECTION DAY**

"Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to permit any person who will have attained the age of eighteen years on or before the day of a regular election to vote in the primary for such regular election?"

Voters have the final say. If a majority of those voting in the general election approves this amendment, it will become part of the State Constitution.

**CHILD PRODUCT SAFETY**

We passed legislation that establishes lead limits in children's products and prohibits the sale of these products and ones that contain asbestos. The Department of Consumer Protection posts a list of children's products that are banned on its website (www.ct.gov/dcp/). It also ensures that toys previously taken off the market are not resold in places like dollar stores. (PA 08-106 & PA 08-122)

VOLUNTEER SERVICE BY PAID EMERGENCY PERSONNEL OR PAID FIREFIGHTERS

All around the state paid full-time firefighters volunteer their services in the towns in which they live. Without this spirit of volunteerism our communities would suffer. The bill prohibits municipalities from banning paid firefighters or paid emergency personnel from serving as

active members of a volunteer fire department in the municipality where they live. To our volunteer firefighters, thank you for all you do for our communities. (PA 08-131)



My grandson Michael and his fourth grade class on a tour of the Legislative Office Building and State Capitol

Please feel free to contact me if you should have any suggestions, questions or concerns.

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EXPANSION OF THE PILOT PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

We expanded the pilot program from 50 to 75 adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders. As these children turn 18, it is important they receive services to improve their ability to work and live in the community. It expands the current service area and extends the date to June 20, 2009. (PA 08-63)