

# STANDING UP FOR VETERANS

## Women Veterans' Program

The legislature unanimously approved a law to establish the Connecticut Women Veterans' Program, which will require the state Department of Veterans' Affairs to reach out to women veterans to improve their awareness of federal and state veterans' benefits and services. The legislation also calls for an assessment of women veterans' needs for benefits and services, as well as a review of programs and initiatives currently available to women veterans in our state.



## Help a Vet Get to Their Medical Appointments

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization needs your help. Since the federal government terminated its program that helped many veterans pay for transportation to VA medical facilities, the DAV created its own free Transportation Service Program to help veterans who do not meet the VA's Beneficial Travel eligibility requirements.

Please consider donating your time to help a veteran get to his or her medical appointment through this new DAV program. To volunteer, please contact Joseph Canzarella at 860-666-6951 ext. 6513.



## Supporting Veterans on Campus



We passed a new law requiring our public colleges and universities to examine ways to make Connecticut's OASIS (Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service Members) centers for veterans more effective. There are about 6,000 veterans enrolled in Connecticut colleges and universities; veterans use the OASIS centers to meet, study, relax and to gather information on federal veterans' benefits, the GI Bill, tuition waivers, disability benefits and more.

### Your State Senator

# Paul Doyle

Representing  
Cromwell, Middletown, Newington, Rocky Hill & Wethersfield



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## Honoring Our Public Safety Officers



This year I was proud to help secure final approval for a memorial sign honoring the late Sergeant Burton Callahan, a 35 year veteran of the Newington Police Department. When Sergeant Callahan passed away in 2010, his loved ones began seeking a way to honor his memory. This memorial sign will serve as a reminder to everyone who sees it of the honorable work done by this exemplary public servant.

## Working Alongside Local Business Owners

I was pleased to co-host a free conference this year at Middlesex Community College to provide area employers with valuable assistance and information about utilizing state programs that could benefit their businesses. One program that employers requested information about was the state's STEP-Up program, a program that offers wage subsidies aimed at encouraging local employers to hire new employees, particularly unemployed veterans. For more information about state programs that assist local businesses, visit [www.senatedems.ct.gov/GrowJobs](http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/GrowJobs).



## Redeveloping Contaminated Site in Downtown Middletown

I worked to secure funding from the Department of Economic and Community Development to remediate and redevelop blighted storefront space at 339 Main Street in Middletown. This cleanup will transform an eyesore on Main Street into a mixed-use commercial facility that will generate new jobs and economic growth in downtown Middletown. This redevelopment project will continue Middletown's revitalization of its Main Street into a thriving destination.



## Transparency & Fairness for Electricity Pricing

Through the promise of low rates, growing numbers of electric consumers reported being coaxed into signing variable rate contracts. Soon after the contracts were signed, many consumers testified that without warning their rates increased significantly and they were charged costly fees to terminate these unfair contracts. Electric customers deserve stable, predictable rates. That is why I, as Chairman of the Energy & Technology Committee, led the fight to pass legislation to **ban variable-rate residential electric contracts beginning October 1, 2015.**

Also, please be aware that state law requires that every residential electric customer's monthly bill must display his or her rate for the coming month. To file a consumer complaint, contact PURA: **1-800-382-4586** or [www.ct.gov/pura](http://www.ct.gov/pura).



## Safe Sleep Practices for Infants

Every year, more than a dozen Connecticut children die needlessly due to unsafe sleep practices. With bipartisan approval, the General Assembly passed legislation so that new parents will be educated on the latest safe sleep practices before they bring their child home from the hospital. This new law brings our state in line with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics which include: always place babies on their backs for sleep; use a firm sleep surface covered by a fitted sheet; have the baby share the parent's room but not the parent's bed; and keep soft objects, including pillows and loose bedding, out of a baby's sleep area. These simple recommendations can help parents with their newborn and possibly save a child's life.



## Protecting Your Privacy



News stories about data breaches have become too common. That is why my colleagues and I unanimously passed one of the strongest cybersecurity laws in the nation. The law requires health insurance companies to ensure that customers' most private data is kept secure by developing comprehensive security programs to safeguard the personal information of their enrollees and insureds. For tips and resources on protecting your identity, use the links provided by the state Department of Consumer Protection at [www.ct.gov/dcp](http://www.ct.gov/dcp) under "Awareness & Prevention."

## Supporting Family Caregivers



Nearly 500,000 Connecticut residents act as caregivers and many of them feel unprepared to provide the care needed to keep their loved ones healthy. I supported the passage of the CARE Act to ensure that caregivers are given follow-up care instructions when a patient is discharged from the hospital. It will also reduce costly hospital readmissions.

The CARE Act requires hospitals to:

- Provide patients with the opportunity to designate a caregiver during their admission;
- Make reasonable attempts to notify the designated caregiver if the patient is to be discharged; and
- Provide the caregiver with instructions on how to perform medication management, wound care, injections or other medical tasks when the patient returns home.

## Helping Seniors Connect with their Advocates



I hosted my ninth annual Senior Fair at Cromwell Town Hall this fall which featured health screenings, giveaways, and a variety of information for senior citizens, families, caregivers and health professionals. There is much available for our seniors, but many are not aware of the resources that

are out there. I hold this Senior Fair annually to put these organizations in one place and help seniors in my district connect with them and gather important information. Connecticut has a wide variety of senior services available 24 hours a day: Call the state Aging Department at **860-424-5274**; the Connecticut AARP at **1-866-295-7279**; or the state Consumer Protection Department at **860-713-6100**.

## Student Loan Borrowers

Students across the country are accruing crippling amounts of student loan debt. Often, students sign loan agreements without fully understanding language relating to interest, principal, or the difference between subsidized and unsubsidized loans. We passed legislation to establish student loan education courses at institutions of higher education. The Department of Banking will oversee the implementation of these new courses and provide guidance to student borrowers. These courses will help students better navigate the funding sources available and ensure they are equipped to become responsible borrowers.



## Easing the Burden of Testing on High School Students



Until this school year, 11th-graders were overburdened with duplicative tests. In addition to taking the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test, many high school juniors also took the SAT, ACT and Advanced Placement Exams. Senate Democrats led bipartisan passage of legislation to eliminate the requirement that 11th-grade students take the SBAC test and require instead that they take a nationally recognized test such as the SAT at no cost to the students and their families.

This not only reduces over-testing, it also provides a free college readiness exam for Connecticut's high school students, making college more accessible to all students.

## Helping Children with Dyslexia

Thousands of Connecticut children struggle with dyslexia, a learning disability that impacts reading. Our state statutes did not provide guidance to school systems about how to detect and assist students with dyslexia. Families with children facing this learning challenge had nowhere to turn. Senate Democrats led unanimous passage of important legislation that requires the State Department of Education to help parents and boards of education detect and intervene for students with dyslexia.