

## Vocational-Technical Evening Trade School Classes



I have been a strong advocate for increasing awareness of the opportunities that learning a trade provides financially. Through an afternoon and night school program I worked to establish, A.I. Prince Technical School has been training approximately 75 adults and older youth

a year in manufacturing, cement masonry and weatherization programs. Seventy-five percent are projected to be placed in employment and apprenticeship programs this year.

This session we were successful in dedicating an additional \$5 million in funding for night school classes throughout the state.



## Street Bike Confiscation

Many cities and towns in Connecticut, including Hartford and Wethersfield, are experiencing increasing amounts of lawlessness as manifested by illegal street bike use on our streets and sidewalks. Because of no-chase policies, law enforcement has been unable to make much progress in deterring this activity. A new law, which my colleagues and I wrote, will enable municipalities with populations of 20,000 or more to confiscate and auction illegally operated street bikes.

YOUR STATE SENATOR

Representing  
Hartford & Wethersfield

# JOHN FONFARA



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## Quality of Life Programs in Our Capitol City



The quality of life of Hartford's residents and neighborhoods has always been a focus of mine. This year I was able to secure funding for initiatives that can help to enhance neighborhood safety and security.

Working with your neighborhood NRZ, Mayor Luke Bronin, the Hartford City Council and the Hartford legislative delegation, we

will seek neighborhood input regarding the deployment of speed tables and security cameras and the deployment of police officers (under a pilot program) who will respond only to quality of life calls such as drug activity, loud music and illegal street bikers. I was able to secure:

- \$1 million for expansion of cameras
- \$1 million for quality of life policing
- \$500,000 for speed tables and speed bumps

## Neighborhood Security Fellowship Program

Like so many cities, Hartford has its challenges with violence involving guns. During this legislative session, in an effort to help address some of the root causes of this problem, my colleague Senator Eric Coleman and I created and successfully funded a program to identify individuals who have the potential to engage in gun violence. These individuals will participate in programs including anger management, life skills training, dispute and conflict resolution, and remedial education.



Funds will be used to leverage additional dollars to identify and coordinate the rehabilitation of commercial and residential properties in the Promise Zone, located in Hartford's North End. A nonprofit subcontractor will hire individuals who successfully complete the program. Any contractor who successfully bids for the work to be done on the properties must agree to hire the nonprofit subcontractor.

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## LANDMARK PROPERTY TAX REFORM LAW TAKES EFFECT



In the land of steady habits, the State of Connecticut limits our cities and towns to one significant option to raise revenue—the property tax. This tax is anti-growth for all property owners, whether you own a home, a car, or a business. If you make improvements in your business or your home, or buy a new car, you will pay more in property taxes. In addition, many towns, Hartford and Wethersfield in particular, are limited in their ability to grow land-

wise as a way to increase revenue.

As of this July 1, the first major change in how municipalities raise revenue went into effect. Now each time you make a purchase and pay sales tax, a 1/2 percent of the sales tax portion will go to our municipalities to begin to reduce each town's reliance on the property tax. We accomplished this by not raising the sales tax rate.



Many states have for years used a portion of their sales tax to fund county and local government services. New York, for example, allows the counties to use up to 4 percent of their sales tax to fund local services.

The new sales tax revenue will now reimburse towns so that your car tax is now being reduced. It will increase funds to municipalities heavily burdened by tax-exempt properties owned by the state or colleges and hospitals. It will also provide increased general funding to towns.

This change in how towns receive revenue is groundbreaking, but if we are serious about helping businesses be more competitive, create more jobs, enable homeowners and car owners to make necessary improvements, and give town governments the ability to fund important services, we must continue the work that we began here to reduce our reliance on this punishing and counter-productive tax.

## CREATING AN INNOVATION-BASED ECONOMY



Much continues to be said about the State of Connecticut's economy: GE leaving for Boston; Aetna's impending decision to keep their headquarters in Hartford or move; young people going away to college and not returning; and state tax revenues continuing to underperform—leading to spending cuts and revenue enhancements last year and even deeper cuts this year.

Last fall, after months of negative reports of the type mentioned above, I felt we needed to change the conversation from taxes and spending to

that of growing our economy. We needed to understand why it is that places like Boston and Silicon Valley in California, which have similar tax and regulatory policies to that of Connecticut, have economies that are thriving and have young people moving to them, not away.

What we learned was those places and many others around the country (Pittsburgh, Boulder, Austin) have embraced the New Economy—technology-based innovation and entrepreneurship—as their path to compete not only nationally, but globally.

Connecticut has many of the ingredients necessary to compete in this New Economy. While we have strong research-based educational institutions (Yale, UConn, Trinity, and the University of Hartford), and other anchors such as The Jackson Lab, as well as a highly educated workforce, we still haven't developed the support systems necessary to turn enough of this research into job-creating businesses.

After months of discussions with entrepreneurs and investors from around the country, we developed legislation this session that will support the areas critical to growing an innovation based economy here in Connecticut. Specifically, we are committing:



- \$29.5 million for the establishment of 'Innovation Places'—dense, local networks of innovators and entrepreneurs—where new businesses such as Google, Uber, Amazon and Apple, were created
- \$10 million to help build a culture of entrepreneurship at our state universities and colleges so more students and faculty will pursue their businesses ideas here in Connecticut
- \$10 million to attract 'growth stage' companies from outside of Connecticut. These are companies that if given key assistance, such as additional capital or managerial support, are ready to hire many new employees
- \$10 million to increase the workforce in key growth areas such as software development and cybersecurity
- \$30 million for the establishment of an estate tax credit to encourage private investment in Connecticut startups

Rebuilding Connecticut's economy will not happen solely by the passage of one bill. But this new law is a major first step towards supporting an innovation and entrepreneurship based economy, creating exciting, new businesses and jobs, and keeping young people in our state.