

# 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) needs your help. Since the federal government terminated its program that helped many veterans pay for transportation to VA medical facilities, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) created a 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 their medical appointments. To volunteer, please contact Joseph Canzanella at 860-666-6951 ext. 6513.

## Supporting Veterans on Campus



We passed a new law requiring an examination of the 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

# Joan Hartley

Representing  
Waterbury, Middlebury & Naugatuck



Legislative Office Building, Room 3100, Hartford, CT 06106-1591  
Capitol: 860-240-0006 or 1-800-842-1420

[www.SenatorHartley.cga.ct.gov](http://www.SenatorHartley.cga.ct.gov)

 Facebook  YouTube  Flickr

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HARTFORD CT  
PERMIT NO. 3937

## Restoring Fulton Park's Warming Hut

Preserving our community's natural resources establishes a sense of pride for the place in which we live. As a founding member of the Fulton Park Conservancy, I worked to bring the warming hut, which is a focal point in the historic Frederick Olmsted park, back to life. The newly restored 3,000 square foot warming hut includes new plumbing, heating and electrical systems, insulated interior wood stud and beadboard partitions, and a concession area that was made into a kitchen for caterers. This renovation will enhance the park and ensure that it remains a well-utilized community center for many years to come.



## Helping Homeowners Become More Energy Efficient

The average U.S. household spends an estimated \$5,550 toward its energy bill each year. Becoming more energy efficient not only saves you money, it can also enhance your quality of life and improve the economy. I co-hosted an energy savings workshop for homeowners and renters with Representative Anthony D'Amelio and a specialist from the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). The workshop included a presentation on how consumers can make their homes more energy efficient. PURA representatives were also available to review individual utility bills.



## Practical Solutions to Cybercrime

I joined the nation's top information security professionals and business leaders for a two-day cybersecurity conference at UConn. The CyberSEED annual conference brings top security professionals and scholars together with public and private sector leaders to discuss emerging trends and formulate best strategies for tackling current and future threats. The program is an ideal example of an industry-university-government partnership that teaches students by using practical applications that will make a difference in the marketplace. Integrating the best minds in academia, industry and government is an important component of addressing evolving cyberthreats.



L-R: Ramesh Sepehrad, Vice President, Cybersecurity, Risk & Governance, Comcast; Senator Hartley; Bruce Schneier, Fellow, Harvard Law School; Charles Hudson, Chair, Comcast Security Innovation Center

## 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."

## Transparency & Fairness for Electricity Pricing

Growing numbers of electric consumers reported being coaxed, through the lure of low rates, into signing variable-rate contracts. Many testified that, soon after the contracts were signed, and without warning, their rates increased significantly and they were charged costly fees to terminate their contracts. Electric customers deserve stable, predictable rates. That is why we passed 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).

## 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. The CARE Act will help 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.

## Promoting Wellness for Waterbury Seniors



I recently hosted a senior fair in Waterbury which featured dozens of state and local vendors that provided important resources to our seniors. Organizations including St. Mary's

Hospital, the Connecticut Commission on Aging and the Waterbury Visiting Nurses Association were on-site to offer flu shots, free blood pressure screenings, nutrition tips and safety information to seniors and their families. Providing these services ensures that senior citizens are able to live longer, healthier lives and remain valuable members of our communities.

## 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.



## 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.

## Student Loan Borrowers



Students across the country are accruing crippling amounts of student loan debt. Often, students sign contracts 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 is required to oversee

the implementation of the courses and provide guidance to student loan borrowers. These courses will help students better navigate the funding sources available and ensure they are equipped to become responsible borrowers.