

Protecting Waterways from Plastic Pollution

As Senate Chair of the Environment Committee, I led a unique coalition of Democratic and Republican legislators, clean water activists and industry representatives to ban the sale or manufacture of toothpastes and other personal care products that contain microbeads.

Microbeads are small, non-biodegradable plastic pellets commonly added to cosmetic products that are ultimately washed down the drain into Long Island Sound, where they are consumed by aquatic life, injuring numerous fish species and contaminating our food supply. Working in a bipartisan fashion, Connecticut was able to pass the strongest microbeads law in the nation, while also ensuring that manufacturers and businesses aren't negatively impacted.



Protecting The Sound

Long Island Sound is the most important environmental asset in our state and a clean Sound is critical to our region's economic future. That's why I fought to pass the Long Island Sound Blue Plan to ensure that our state has a coordinated strategy for future use of the Sound. We require the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and relevant stakeholders to study and compile an inventory of the Sound's natural and human resources. The Blue Plan is a critical step in protecting Long Island Sound for generations to come.



Keeping Playgrounds Free of Toxic Pesticides

My hometown of Branford has effectively maintained its fields without pesticides for over 20 years, proving that pesticides are not necessary for effective lawn care. Leveraging this knowledge and experience, I led passage of a bipartisan law that bans the use of pesticides and herbicides on municipal playgrounds throughout the state. This new law provides greater transparency of the way that our schools use toxic pesticides by notifying parents before they are applied on school property.



Your State Senator

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Meeting with Patrick Kral at the Capitol during ARC's Family Action Day.

Listening to You

Serving the needs of my constituents is my number one priority. Over the past year, I have held over 15 open office hours in the six communities that I represent and have had hundreds of conversations with local residents. My office has also received thousands of phone calls and emails. These conversations have given me important insight into how I can better represent you and have led to several legislative proposals. I will continue to keep an open door as we work together to make Connecticut an even better place to live and work.



Working Across the Aisle

When I ran for the Senate in 2014, I pledged to serve in a bipartisan manner in order to protect Connecticut's fiscal health, ensure a positive business climate and address critical social service needs. During my first year in office, I have worked hard to keep that promise. As Senate Chair of the Environment Committee, I worked closely with my colleagues from both parties to ensure the passage of significant environmental reforms during the 2015 legislative session. All 24 environment bills signed into law this year were passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. Additionally, I collaborated in a bipartisan fashion to expand services to citizens with disabilities as a member of the Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Caucus. I also serve as a member of the bipartisan Working Group on Smoke Exposure to Minors in Vehicles in an effort to prevent smoking in cars when a minor is present.

Supporting Family Caregivers

Nearly 15,000 of my Senate district 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. Learn more at tinyurl.com/CT-CAREAct. As a longtime health care regulatory lawyer, I know that there is much more that we can do to make health care less costly and more user-friendly.



Expediting Home Health Services for Seniors

Our residents need better access to more cost-effective home care options. Over the summer, the Connecticut Department of Social Services launched a pilot program to help seniors receive prompt approval of applications for home care services and avoid costly nursing home or hospital stays. This program is modeled after Senate Bill 271, a bill I introduced to streamline applications, promote timely home care accessibility and reduce taxpayer spending on more costly institutional care. The pilot program has been in effect for only a few months, but has already helped hundreds of Connecticut seniors receive prompt approval for home health care.

Supporting Small Businesses

Small businesses are the sparkplugs of our local economy. I recently visited CASMED, a Branford business that designs and manufactures equipment that delivers reliable patient data to doctors. Branford became home to its first bioscience startup company in 1987. Since then, more companies came to town, making Branford a major hub in Connecticut's bioscience industry. I will continue to work closely with local business owners to eliminate unnecessary regulations and other barriers to growth for these companies.



Bringing Financial Literacy to Connecticut Classrooms

I championed the bipartisan, unanimous passage of a law that brings a comprehensive financial literacy curriculum to Connecticut schools. The law took effect this fall, giving teachers the ability to educate students on banking, investing, savings, handling of personal finance matters, and the impact of using credit and debit cards. Nationwide studies show that young adults who receive financial literacy training have increased credit scores, lower debt and are less likely to be compulsive buyers. These students are more aware of their own credit history and scores and are less likely to engage in risky spending and borrowing practices.



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.



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. With bipartisan cooperation we passed 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 Dyslexic Students



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. As a lifelong advocate for people with disabilities, I was pleased to join my Senate colleagues in unanimously passing important legislation that requires the state Department of Education to help parents and boards of education detect and intervene for students with dyslexia.

Lower Taxes for Veterans



This past session, I fought for a tax cut for our military veterans. Veterans will no longer pay Connecticut income tax on their military retirement pay. State law used to provide for a 50 percent exemption to retired members of the Armed Forces; now there is a 100 percent exemption. Not

only is this the right thing to do for those who fought to defend our freedoms, it also helps keep veterans in our state to build our skilled workforce. Many of today's growing businesses are looking to hire highly skilled workers with strong leadership abilities, qualities that most veterans possess.