

Helping Students With Disabilities



As an attorney, amputee and bone cancer survivor, I have spent my life fighting for fairness and equal opportunities for people with disabilities. That is why I led passage of a new law to ensure that our state's teachers have the tools that they need to engage and educate students with dyslexia, a learning disability that impacts reading for thousands of Connecticut children. Educators will now receive instruction on

the diagnosis and remediation of dyslexia, aligned with strategies proven to help students become better readers.

True Equity in Mental Health

I have heard from countless families across my district that insurance companies are still refusing to pay for mental health services. While most health plans now claim that they reimburse mental health and addiction services in the same way that they pay for other forms of healthcare, strong anecdotal evidence points to continued denials for medically necessary treatments in ways that appear to violate recent parity laws. I led passage of legislation that will require better transparency on reimbursement data, which health plans already collect but do not always disclose. We will be able to determine if an unfair pattern of unreasonable denials actually exists. Without good data, parity laws are hard to evaluate and enforce.

Expediting Home Health Services for Seniors



Our residents need better access to more cost-effective home care options. Last year, 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 year, but has already helped hundreds of Connecticut seniors receive prompt approval for home health care.

YOUR STATE SENATOR

TED KENNEDY, JR.

FIGHTING FOR THE FUTURE

Representing
Branford
Durham
Guilford
Killingworth
Madison
North Branford



This year I passed a number of laws to support our local veterans like Costi Montone, commander of the American Legion Post #48 in Guilford, with property tax relief and small business assistance.

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Listening Today—Fighting for the Future

WORKING WITH SHORELINE BUSINESS LEADERS

Creating a more business-friendly environment is the most critical issue facing our state. Connecticut needs new ideas to build our economy. There is no group better equipped to generate these recommendations than area entrepreneurs and small-business owners—the sparkplugs of our region. That's why I joined with the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce to convene the first-ever Shoreline Economic Strategic Planning Summit this spring. Nearly 200 local businesses leaders shared their ideas about the key drivers of economic activity and job growth—and provided an honest appraisal of unnecessary red tape, regulatory unpredictability and taxes. We need to refocus our efforts on industries in which we already excel, such as bioscience, advanced manufacturing and health care. Conversations like these are critical toward finding actionable ways that government and business can work together. And when government works in concert with business, Connecticut wins.



I partnered with the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce to host the 12th District Business Summit. We discussed our region's economic climate with nearly 200 local business leaders. Together we identified our strategic assets, most promising opportunities, common bureaucratic barriers, and ways to improve our competitiveness.

Creating Jobs for the New Innovation Economy

We need to build a more business-friendly environment in Connecticut in order to jump-start faster economic growth. I believe that the solution to many of our economic challenges lies right in front of us: our top-tier research universities, a talented workforce, prime geographic location, and in our many businesses, large and small. That's why I championed a new law that focuses on promoting entrepreneurship, startups, and targeted investments in expansion-ready companies. This new initiative will:

- ▶ Help academic researchers connect with entrepreneurs and venture capitalists so that scientists can better commercialize their ideas and inventions,
- ▶ Establish "Innovation Places"—dense, local networks of innovators and entrepreneurs—where new, similar businesses can grow faster together, and
- ▶ Encourage greater collaboration between government and business in order to streamline regulations and develop know-how in sectors where the demand for skilled labor is expected to increase.



Cutting Spending & Streamlining Government

Understanding and acknowledging our state's tough fiscal challenges and new economic reality, I recently supported a new budget plan that reduces state spending by \$1.5 billion, reinstates prior cuts to hospitals and critical social services, and provides important tax incentives to the business community. This budget:

Sends a Strong Message to Taxpayers & Businesses

- ▶ Does NOT RAISE income taxes, business taxes or sales taxes
- ▶ Reflects spending reductions and operational efficiencies supported by both political parties

Implements Spending Cuts & Structural Changes

- ▶ Cuts made in 2016 will also carry forward for an \$820 million spending reduction next year
- ▶ Reduces spending on nonunion state employees by capping pensions and increasing how much legislators and nonunion employees pay for our health care premiums and co-pays

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 term 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. All 38 environment bills signed into law these past two years 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.

A "Farm-to-School" Initiative



Although Connecticut has a deep and proud agricultural economy, only 5% of food purchased by Connecticut school districts is spent on local farm products. Recognizing the importance of our local farms, I recently spearheaded a "farm-to-school" legislative initiative that gives a preference for Connecticut-grown products when purchasing food for school cafeterias, without incurring any additional costs. This

creative solution is a classic "win-win"—Connecticut farmers will benefit from more locally purchased goods, and school children will have better access to fresh, nutritious food. If this program proves successful, I will seek to expand it to college and hospital food cafeteria vendors.

Financial Sustainability of State Parks

Our state parks are environmental treasures, important tourist destinations and economic engines. However, unlike most other states, our state parks rely completely on funding from the state, and are therefore much more susceptible to budget conditions. As Senate Chair of the Environment Committee, and in recognition of the need to help offset our state budget cuts, I recently led passage of a bill that looks to analyze the best and most successful funding ideas from other states and identify other alternative sources of revenue. The bill also asks food service vendors, camping operators, and other businesses to provide their thoughts and ideas about how to establish park-related businesses and improve amenities and other recreational offerings.



Saving Farms Through Pollinator Health

In just the last two years, Connecticut has experienced a major die-off of over 60% of its wild and managed honey bees, making pollinator death a major environmental crisis and putting at risk our agricultural economy and our state's ability to grow food. Working quickly with our state's leading agriculture scientists and bee experts, and in close collaboration with my Republican colleagues, I led passage of the nation's most innovative and comprehensive pollinator protection and restoration plan. This new law dramatically reduces bee exposure to toxic pesticides and expands the planting of pollinator-friendly vegetation along our highways and utility rights-of-way, all at no cost to taxpayers. Over 80% of the fruit and vegetables that we consume rely on pollination by these beneficial insects.



Preventing Animal Abuse

Violence against animals is one of our society's most despicable crimes, yet repeat perpetrators rarely face any punishment or consequences, and charges are frequently dismissed. I recently led unanimous, bipartisan passage of a bill that will establish increased penalties for animal cruelty so that individuals committing these acts will be held responsible for their actions. Many studies have also linked acts of animal cruelty to future incidents of domestic violence.