State Senator Cathy Osten was first elected in November 2012 and is now serving her fifth term representing the residents of the 19th state Senatorial District communities of Columbia, Franklin, Hebron, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Marlborough, Montville, Norwich and Sprague.

In recent years Cathy has helped write and pass such important legislation as increasing Connecticut’s minimum wage, a sex offender notification bill, the creation of senior safety zones task force, and creating a state version of “Erin’s Law,” which requires that children be educated in schools on sexual abuse in a child-friendly manner, for the purpose of informing and protecting them from sexual abuse.

A 1973 graduate of the Norwich Free Academy, Cathy heeded America’s call for volunteers during the Vietnam era by enlisting in the United States Army. After several months in the U.S., she shipped out to Japan as a translator-interpreter in Chinese Mandarin. After four years of active duty, Sergeant Osten returned to the United States, taking up residence in Norwich and attending Mohegan Community College before beginning her career with the state Department of Correction.

Cathy served in the Correction Department for more than two decades, first as a corrections officer and then as a lieutenant. For 21 years, Cathy experienced first-hand the issues surrounding Connecticut’s prison system, public employees, pension disputes and women’s rights in the workplace. In 2003, following a string of harassment cases against women which stemmed from inside the Connecticut prison system, Cathy joined with other female corrections officers to protest the treatment of women in the workplace. Bringing this fight to the State Capitol, Cathy was able to hold the Correction Department accountable for pervasive sexual harassment.

Understanding the need for more progress in the workplace, Cathy also began working toward the passage of new laws to allow corrections supervisors the right to organize. She was successful, and as president of the Correction Supervisors’ Council of CSEA/SEIU Cathy worked tirelessly to directly represent more than 600 professionals in the Corrections Department.

The mother of one and grandmother of four, Cathy is also an experienced public official; her passionate commitment to her community led her to become Sprague’s first-ever female selectman. In 2011, Cathy was appointed by Governor Malloy to the Two Storm Panel, giving small-town issues statewide attention by highlighting necessary changes by both the utility companies and the state in responding to recent emergencies.

Cathy’s continuous outreach to seniors, her fight for the middle class and her desire for open government and environmental integrity continually demonstrate that her focus is on improving communities.