

State Senator

John McKinney

*** Senate Minority Leader ***



2008 Legislative Report to the 28th District

Easton ★ Fairfield ★ Newtown ★ Weston

Senate Minority Leader John McKinney



Dear Friend,

Representing the people of Easton, Fairfield, Newtown and Weston is both an honor and a privilege. I hope you will take a moment to read about some of the important issues I am working on as your State Senator.

As always, I welcome your feedback and encourage you to keep in touch. If you have specific questions regarding issues outlined in this pamphlet, or any issue concerning state government, please feel free to call my office at 1-800-842-1421, email me at John.McKinney@cga.ct.gov, or write to me at: Senator John McKinney, Legislative Office Building, Room 3400, Hartford, CT 06106.

I also encourage you to visit my website at www.SenatorMcKinney.cga.ct.gov. There you can read news archives, watch video of Senate floor debates and press conferences, participate in an interactive blog, and sign up to receive email updates.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your representative in Hartford.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John McKinney". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John McKinney

Increasing Access to Quality, Affordable Health Care

So many of our state's social and economic problems are exacerbated by our nation's antiquated health care system. That is why I am working with Governor Rell to make sure every Connecticut resident has access to quality, affordable health insurance.

In December of 2006, Governor Rell introduced the Charter Oak Health Plan, aimed at providing low-cost health insurance to people who cannot afford private plans. Beginning in July, low income workers, recent college graduates and individuals who are self-employed, or do not have access to employer-sponsored health insurance, will be able to participate in the Charter Oak plan for about \$250 a month.

A Plan to End Homelessness

As many as 3.5 million Americans and more than 30,000 people in Connecticut experience homelessness each year.

Twenty years ago, my father, the late Congressman Stewart B. McKinney, crafted the first federal response to homelessness. He believed, as I do, that every American deserves a roof over their head and a place to call home.

I am working with housing advocates in Connecticut to make our state the first in the nation to end homelessness. Our plan provides a roadmap to end homelessness, highlighted by funding 10,000 new units of supportive housing by 2014. We have 7,000 units to go.

Supportive housing, which provides a permanent, independent and affordable home combined with social services and employment help, has proven to be one of the most effective ways to help the homeless population. By moving people out of homelessness and into housing stability, we are helping to lower crime rates, improve public health and make it easier for children born into homelessness to receive a quality education.

Cleaning up State Government

Protecting Taxpayers from Waste, Fraud and Abuse

In the June special session, the legislature passed laws to give judges the power to revoke or reduce the pensions of corrupt public officials and state and municipal employees. We also established a criminal penalty for elected officials who fail to report a bribe. I supported both of these laws, but believe they are just one step toward restoring public confidence in our elected officials.

For the past six years, I have proposed the creation of a Connecticut Inspector General to combat waste, fraud and inefficiency in state government. An Office of Inspector General would provide a place where state and municipal employees could safely and confidentially bring allegations about corrupt practices. It would also help protect taxpayer dollars and assure Connecticut residents they are getting what they pay for.

The federal government has inspector general offices in all executive branch departments and most small agencies. In 2006, with a combined operating budget of \$1.9 billion, the 57 federal inspector general offices achieved \$17 billion in savings. Imagine what that sort of return on investment could mean to the State of Connecticut.



Senator McKinney meets with supportive housing advocates to introduce his plan to end homelessness

Making a Difference for Easton, Fairfield, Newtown and Weston

Recent state funding for the 28th District (2006 – 2008):

- Animal Control Facility, Easton
\$200,000
- Bisceglie-Scribner Park, Weston
\$75,000
- Easton Little League Field
\$35,000
- Easton Senior Center
\$400,000
- Fairfield Hills Campus, Newtown
\$575,000
- Fairfield Museum & History Center
\$150,000
- Fairfield Downtown Streetscape Program / Center for Arts, Film & Cultural Activities
\$450,000
- Ferris Farm, Newtown
\$500,000
- Newtown Technology Park
\$125,000
- Operation Hope, Fairfield
\$250,000
- Penfield Pavilion, Fairfield
\$400,000
- Route 59 Streetscape Program
\$150,000
- Kevin's Community Center, Newtown
\$500,000

Fighting Global Warming

Reducing Our Dependence on Foreign Oil

One of the major bipartisan successes of the 2008 legislative session was passage of the Global Warming Bill – a new law that requires total greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced to 10% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% below 2001 levels by 2050.

As ranking member on the General Assembly's Environment Committee, I have been a chief proponent of this legislation. In the absence of a sound federal energy policy, Connecticut is again setting a positive example for the rest of the country. By capping greenhouse gas emissions, we will reduce our carbon footprint, conserve energy, improve air quality and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Protecting Long Island Sound

Governor Rell, the legislature, and our neighbors in New York scored another victory for local preservation efforts when we defeated a proposal by Broadwater Energy LLC to build what would have been the world's largest floating liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in the middle of Long Island Sound. Broadwater proponents had given energy consumers in New York and Connecticut a false choice between either building the LNG facility or facing a regional energy crisis. The fact is, there are several viable ways to meet the energy needs of our region without harming Long Island Sound.

A Balanced Budget for Connecticut

Providing Relief for Working Families and Small Businesses

Connecticut is facing an economic environment that has changed significantly since we passed the biennial budget in 2007.

The state surplus we enjoyed a year ago has turned into a growing deficit and the prospect of \$5/gallon gasoline is affecting Connecticut residents not only at the pump, but also in the rising cost of food, medicine and other necessities.

More than ever, state government must prioritize spending and find a way to live within its means – protecting against future budget deficits, while at the same time providing tax relief to working families and small businesses.

To that end, I introduced a balanced budget proposal in April that cut state gas taxes without jeopardizing transportation funding, provided tax incentives to small businesses that create new jobs, and reduced the size of state government. This budget also made important investments in education and seniors, renewing our commitment to the state-funded Early Reading Success Program and increasing funding for nursing homes and private providers of social services.

In my opinion, addressing our budget problems is absolutely necessary in these difficult economic times. I understand that families and small businesses are faced with making difficult choices, and that you expect government to do the same. I am disappointed the majority chose not to address our budget deficit. As your State Senator, I will continue to fight for more accountability and fiscal discipline in state government.

Highlights of our balanced budget proposal include:

- Cuts and Caps State Gas Taxes
- Creates a Job Creation Tax Credit for Small Businesses
- Keeps the Promise to Reduce the Conveyance Tax Rate Without Reducing Municipal Aid
- Increases Funding for Private Providers & Nursing Homes
- Increases Funding for Affordable Housing
- Funds the Early Reading Success Program
- Phases out the Business Entity Tax
- Phases out the Estate Tax Cliff
- Reduces the Size of Government Through a Voluntary Early Retirement Program
- Protects Our State's Rainy Day Fund
- Provides Additional Municipal Aid Through the Town Aid Road Program



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S T A T E S E N A T O R

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