



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Governor Ned Lamont
Connecticut State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

February 19, 2019

Dear Governor Lamont:

As we begin the 2019 Legislative Session of the Connecticut General Assembly, we are eager to work with your office along with our colleagues in the Senate and the House to tackle the many difficult issues that are facing our state. The most significant problem we must confront is certainly the State Budget and closing our deficits. In recent years the General Assembly has managed to work in a bipartisan manner, and as we start to see the rewards of that collaboration we are hopeful we can continue that trend during your term in office.

Many solutions for closing the budget deficit have been proposed, some that have merit and some that would be politically difficult. We felt that former Governor Malloy's plans to zero-out education funding for dozens of towns all over Connecticut, as well as foisting a third of teacher pension costs onto our municipalities were counter to the mission of providing the opportunity for quality education to every child in every community.

The people within our legislative districts, and we as their representatives, made clear that using these kinds of "cost shifts" would be an unacceptable burden on our towns and cities. We agreed that it was important to ask for your consideration during your budget prioritization process to maintain current funding levels for the communities we represent. We remain resolute in strong opposition to any proposal that would cut or reappropriate education funding for certain towns, or other proposals that may force

towns to raise more revenue to cover any increased costs as a result of lost state assistance.

There are three areas related to Municipal Education Funding that are concerns for us: Education Cost Sharing (ECS), teachers' pensions, and school construction reimbursement. Any change or cut to Connecticut municipalities will dramatically affect their overall budget and may result in increased local property taxes to fill those deficits.

ECS FORMULA

The State of Connecticut has a brand new Education Cost Sharing formula. It is fair, it is equitable, and we should continue to use it to allocate municipal education funding. It is our constitutional obligation to fund public education in our state to a "minimally adequate and equal education" standard. This ECS formula meets that standard, and we should not forsake it in favor of picking winners and losers.

TEACHERS PENSIONS

In addition to fulfilling our obligations to fund public education, we believe it is also necessary for state government to keep the promise we made to teachers without pushing that cost onto municipalities. We cannot balance the budget simply by forcing others to pay for what we promised.

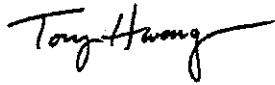
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION REIMBURSEMENT

Municipalities cannot afford the full expense of upgrading or building new facilities that benefit Connecticut students. If we want our students to have the quality of education people expect from Connecticut, the state must continue to maintain school construction reimbursement rates, regardless of where the school is located.

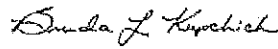
The State Budget is certainly a difficult issue to tackle. However, it cannot be solved by gimmicks and cost shifts that put undue pressure on municipalities and the people who live in those communities. We must stand by our constitutional obligations and promises made, while creating true reforms that will help bring the State Budget into balance.

We sincerely hope that you take our concerns into consideration, and we look forward to working together to put Connecticut on a path to fiscal stability and economic growth without jeopardizing the things that make our state great.

Sincerely,



Senator Tony Hwang
28th District



Rep. Brenda Kupchick
132nd District



Rep. Laura Devlin
134th District



Re. J.P. Sredzinski
112th District



Rep. Mitch Bolinsky
106th District



Rep. Raghieb Alie- Brennan

cc: Melissa McCaw, Secretary, Office Policy and Management
Ryan Drajewicz, Governor Lamont Chief of Staff
Jim Marpe, Westport, 1st Selectmen
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