

**2017 Legislative Agenda**



**Change the business culture of the State of Connecticut by creating a pro-business climate to foster job creation and business growth.**

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## Priority Issues & Recommendations

### **Budget**

- Adopt and implement a plan to reduce Connecticut's long term indebtedness without additional borrowing. Bonding must be done responsibly and efficiently.
- Encourage structural changes that affect levels of public sector employment and public employee pay and benefits.
- Increase and index Prevailing Wage thresholds to reduce the cost of state and local projects and to create jobs.

### **Business**

- Adopt sensible unemployment benefit reform in lieu of tax increases to protect the unemployment trust fund.
- Oppose mandates and regulations that hinder businesses and municipalities.
- Look to solve the fiscal crisis by implementing an aggressive plan to attract and retain businesses in the state of Connecticut.

### **Workforce Development & Education**

- Promote a skilled workforce and STEM programs at Northwestern Connecticut Community College and in public schools.
- Achieve efficiencies in education. Mandate relief and consolidation must be addressed in areas such as administration, minimum budget requirements, binding arbitration, and special education.
- Support the growth and expansion of Oliver Wolcott Technical High School, which is a vital lifeline to the business growth in Northwest Connecticut and serves the largest geographic region of any technical school.

### **Regional Economic Development**

- Support cost effective culture and tourism initiatives and the Convention and Visitors bureau which generate a return on investment.
- Assist the Northwest Hills Council of Governments, Northwest Economic Development Commission, and the Chamber in efforts to encourage economic growth in the region.
- Support Northwest CT's companies that create fuel cell, wind, solar, bio-heat and other alternative energy innovations and employ hundreds of highly skilled employees.
- Create policies that will result in a pro-business environment to encourage growth.

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## Priority Issues & Recommendations

### Healthcare

- Establish a date to sunset the onerous hospital provider tax and provide adequate funding through Medicaid to ensure financial viability of our hospitals, which are our major employers and major economic drivers.
- Encourage mental health and opioid abuse programming that is critical to residents.
- Oppose the consolidation of health districts which will increase costs dramatically for municipalities.

### Representation of Northwest Connecticut Needs

- Appoint a resident of Northwest Connecticut to the Board of Regents.
- Maintain the Community Investment Act and Public Act 490 as intended.
- Support access to high speed internet which is vital to the growth of rural areas.
- Support high tech manufacturing in the renewable energy field which is positioned for growth and is vital to companies in Northwest Connecticut.





## Recent Successes

### **Brownfield Redevelopment**

- With state assistance, Torrington and Winsted have made great strides in assessing and creating a plan to address brownfield properties to return them to productive use.
- Brownfield Area Wide Revitalization grant obtained by the City of Torrington.

### **Workforce Development**

- Northwestern Connecticut Community College has grown their manufacturing and nursing associates programs. This has helped to fill a void of skilled employees for local manufacturers and healthcare organizations.

### **Collaborations**

- New collaborations between Northwestern Connecticut Community College, business community, and local towns to promote and develop an entrepreneurial center.
- Chamber Manufacturers' Coalition working to make connections, make recommendations on business policy, and grow their labor force.

### **Growth of Cultural and Visitor Attractions**

- Success and expansion of area attractions such as Whiting Mills, KidsPlay Children's Museum, Arethusa Farm and Dairy, American Mural Project, and the American Tort Museum of Law.

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