

HELP LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

- Support the development of a regional permanent cold weather shelter.
- Ensure the northwest corner receives adequate funding to maintain our roads and bridges.
- Promote the sharing of resources and regional solutions through the Council of Governments.

ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH ARTS, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

- Fund initiatives that enhance the region as an arts, culture, and entertainment center, (including destinations such as The Warner Theatre, Five Points Center for the Arts, Five Points Gallery, KidsPlay Children's Museum, Nutmeg Conservatory, The New England Accordion & Museum Company, American Mural Project, the American Museum of Tort Law and local historical societies.)
- Support arts and culture grant programs and initiatives that provide more equitable access to funding for the 70+ arts and culture organizations in the region.
- Recognize regional cultural districts as assets that contribute to the economic viability and quality of life for all businesses and residents.
- Ensure the Western Regional Tourism District and statewide marketing efforts present a more enriched picture of regional culture, focusing on the arts, food, creative businesses, entertainment, and outdoor recreation.
- Support environmental conservation efforts to enhance the region as a place of world-class natural beauty to explore, live, and work.
- Subsidize affordable arts and culture programming initiatives to ensure access to the arts for residents at all income levels.
- Ensure adequate support for the infrastructure-building efforts of the Northwest Connecticut Arts Council, the region's Designated Regional Service Organization.

Government Relations Committee

President & CEO: JoAnn Ryan

Chairman of Board and Government Relations: Jacque Williams



2024 Legislative Agenda

LIVE, WORK, PLAY GROW CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMY

Our Mission: To promote economic growth while enhancing the quality of life in Northwest Connecticut.

BUILD A SKILLED WORKFORCE THROUGH

- Investing in a public education system prepares the region's youth and promotes various sound life choices suited to students' skills and interests, including college and career paths.
- Promote shared resources and funding between traditional middle and high schools, technical schools (vo-tech and vo-ag), apprenticeship programs, and the community college system.
- Develop educational opportunities in the vocational trades to provide students with more options for career choices suited to their skill sets, culture, and interests.
- Support regional institutions of higher learning, specifically CT State Community College Northwest, to prepare students for various careers, emphasizing in-person classes and apprenticeship programs.
- Provide sufficient resources for an early childhood system that optimizes children's development and well-being to lay the foundation for future educational achievements.
- Encourage employers to lead and participate in northwest regional sector partnerships.

INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE

- Pursue any and all rural health designations and funding in support of rural hospitals and providers.
- Support our regional hospitals and healthcare providers to treat all regional patients with high-quality, affordable healthcare.
- Recognize and address the need to improve mental health services throughout the region.
- Acknowledge the presence and accomplishments of first responders, healthcare workers, and essential staff, including educators and nonprofit providers of social services.
- Invest in the systems that provide healthcare for our aging population, including aging in place.
- Allow employers to group together to form an association of healthcare plans addressing healthcare costs for small businesses.

FOSTER BUSINESS GROWTH

- Ensure that future legislation (mandates, fees, programs) impacting employer cost is predictable, fair, and simple enough to ensure compliance and ease of administration.
- Support legislation to hold employers harmless for Unemployment Compensation Rates due to an employee's Family & Medical Leave Status.
- Support continued use of tip credit for service workers in restaurants.
- Protect and implement tax cuts to begin 1/1/2024.
- Continue to implement fiscal guardrails.
- Repeal the 6.35% state sales tax on employment training and safety apparel, including personal protective equipment.
- Restore the pass-through Entity Tax credit to its original 93%.
- Reinstate the R&D Tax Credit to attract entrepreneurs, foster start-up businesses, and promote private sector investment.
- Move forward with AI opportunities while protecting individuals and businesses.
- Find ways to reduce the burden on businesses by opposing taxes, fees, mandates, and regulations that increase the cost of doing business in Connecticut.
- Either repeal the additional 1% sales tax that the restaurant industry is mandated to collect OR allow the 1% additional sales tax to be sent to the municipality that the

STRENGTHEN THE NORTHWEST REGION INFRASTRUCTURE

- Expand high-speed internet access with the investment designated infrastructure funds to secure and improve Broadband and Fiber Optic networks throughout the northwest region.
- Increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare through immediate stabilization funding, and regulatory and administrative reforms. Invest in an improved and sustainable system focusing on a well-supported workforce.
- Increase access to and availability of transportation for residents and the workforce, including investments in public transportation and private alternatives.
- Increase the inventory of workforce housing to retain and attract the necessary employees to drive the workforce needs of the northwest corner.
- Address Connecticut's solid waste issues in environmentally friendly and cost-effective ways.
- Promote car choice without mandates, only incentives. Build an infrastructure for EVs as the market demands.