

Transportation & Infrastructure

- **Broadband:** Continue to expand high-speed internet access to improve connectivity.
- **Transportation:** Increase access to transportation, including public and private alternatives, to support workforce mobility and quality of life.
- **Childcare:** Make necessary investments in the state's childcare industry to stabilize the system, support its workforce, and optimize children's development. Or work with the business community to create incentives and investments to improve the childcare industry in Connecticut.
- **Licensing:** Reduce and cap occupational license fees to remove barriers for workers and businesses.

Childcare

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Education & Workforce Development

- **Vocational Education:** Expand vocational education (vo-ag and vo-tech) and career pathways to meet workforce needs.
- **Higher Education Support:** Support CT State Community College Northwest, the region's only higher education institution.
- **Apprenticeship Programs:** Strengthen apprenticeship programs to enhance career readiness.
- **Second-Act Professionals:** Create a task force to develop bachelor's degree equivalents for second-act professionals who want to teach trade courses.

Economic Development

- Promote regional resource collaboration that will increase development of locally owned small businesses and multi-sector industry recruitment.
- Continue to support regional industry sector partnerships & workforce development initiatives in Northwest CT that include training programs and streamlining certification requirements. Help make Connecticut employers more competitive and able to attract and retain employees. Increase funding and subsidies for early child care and education.
- Further investment in the Arts, Cultural Districts, Tourism & Hospitality economy.
- Continue to monitor the development of a regulatory framework of artificial intelligence that balances innovation and consumer protection.
- Support vocational and higher education CT State Community College Northwest. Create incentives to attract and retain college & trade students upon graduation. Tax incentives for CT STEM students to accept employment in CT.
- Work to reduce the number of administrative mandates, fees and taxes on business.

Fiscal Policies

- **Fiscal Guardrails:** Protect fiscal guardrails.
- **Cost of Living:** Lower the state's cost of living to make Connecticut more affordable for residents and businesses.

Call to Action

The Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce will continue to advocate for these priorities with state and local leaders. Your feedback and engagement are critical to shaping our advocacy efforts. Together, we can create a stronger and more vibrant Northwest Connecticut.



Legislative Agenda 2026-2027

Make Connecticut Affordable

Our Mission:

To promote economic growth while enhancing the quality of life in Northwest Connecticut

Municipality Support

- **Solid Waste Costs:** Address the rising costs of solid waste refuse disposal in an environmentally friendly manner.
- **Municipal Revenue:** Eliminate the 1% restaurant/food tax or allocate it directly to municipalities.
- **Special Education:** Help school districts address significant increases in special education costs.
- **Infrastructure Funding:** Ensure adequate funding to maintain the region's roads and bridges.

Arts, Culture, and Tourism

- **Cultural Investment:** Fund initiatives that enhance the region as an arts, culture, and entertainment destination and recognize the importance of Cultural Districts.
- **Tourism Funding:** Ensure the Western Regional Tourism District and statewide marketing efforts appropriately feature the assets in the Northwest Connecticut.
- **Environmental Conservation:** Support efforts to preserve the region's natural resources as a world-class place to explore, live, and work.

Healthcare

- **Expand Access to Regional Healthcare Services:** Increase access to regional health services and resources to help locate providers. Provide reliable internet access to rural communities.
- **Support Healthcare-Related Small Businesses:** Improve access to resources that support healthcare-related small businesses. Establish pilot programs for primary and mental healthcare in Northwest CT.
- **Address Healthcare Workforce Shortages:** Reduce regulatory barriers to increase the healthcare workforce, including reciprocity between states, and address the shortage of primary care physicians.
- **Improve Health Insurance Access & Provider Reimbursement:** Improve small business access to affordable, high-quality health insurance options. Reimburse providers fairly for services provided, including increasing HUSKY reimbursement rates.
- **Reduce Regulatory Barriers to Practice at Full Scope:** Promote legislation that allows providers to practice to the top of their education and training, such as adding APRNs as collaborators to their practice authority.
- **Invest in Aging & Long-Term Care:** Invest in "aging in place" initiatives and nursing homes.
- **Healthcare Transparency:** Work with the business community to create incentives for childcare.



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Energy

Energy Costs: Pursue policies that lower energy costs and lower electric bills.

Alternative Energy: Explore alternative energy sources like nuclear power for potential long-term savings despite higher short-term costs. Explore expanding natural gas, nuclear power, and the development of hydrogen power.

Business Growth

Tax Relief:

- Restore the pass-through entity tax credit to its original 93%.
- Allow corporations to reduce a greater percentage of tax liability through credits.
- Reinstate the R&D Tax credit.
- Repeal the 6.35 % sales tax on employment training and safety apparel.

Administrative Burdens:

- Work to reduce the number of mandates, fees, and taxes on businesses.

State Cost Management:

- Lower the cost of state government by reforming overtime practices.
- Consider "sub minimum wage" for underemployed 16 to 17-year-old's and individuals with disabilities.

Taxes & Spending

- Oppose new business tax increases.
- Responsible management of budget surpluses.
- Support tax policies that encourage investment in job creation & apprenticeships.
- Reduce and cap occupational license fees.
- Protect fiscal guardrails.

Housing

Housing: Work with the business community to develop incentives and public/private partnerships to build housing the workforce can afford.

Homeownership Incentives: Implement first-time homebuyer tax incentives to attract new residents and workforce members.