



February 9th, 2018

Welcome to In the Loop!

From Paddi's Desk



Man oh man what a week...

It was kickoff for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games, and kickoff for the 2018 CT Olympic "Political Events (Games)" this week as well! Around the world, folks were tuning in to the fascinating sport of curling, and in my case last night, they were enthralled by the team figure skating contest. In CT, they tuned in on Wednesday to the Opening Day gavel and to the Governor's "budget

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The Real Scoop

As the political sphere has become more polarized, the generational differences between American voters has become more apparent.

Our national demographics are changing. The millennial generation has brought their voice to the forefront in recent election cycles, pushing the ideologies of a more diverse and inclusive agenda.

Will the millennial generation change America's future, a

presentation," which turned into his legacy speech. The key words? "Connecticut Fairness."

While not much at all was said about the current status of the state budget, Governor Malloy - in his last State of the State address - spent 95% of his time outlining all the things important to him, complete with controversial solutions for many concerns shared across the aisle. It was not an agreement on the things CT should stand for; rather, it was a statement on how to address them and when to address them.

Republican leaders were fast to note that there was hardly a mention of Connecticut's economic state in the Governor's address, given the \$245 million deficit as of now, as well as a forecast that it may still grow after the April tax payments flow into the state treasury. There were allusions to challenges ahead, but after he released his proposed fixes to the second year of the two-year budget, he moved on to create a story about what CT should be. Such as:

- Affordable housing in every city and town;
- A CT-only Affordable Care Act to fill the voids left by Washington's actions;
- Paid medical leave and a 45% increase in clean energy standards;
- A coastal climate control sustainability program;
- Mail-in and no-excuse absentee voting;
- Paid sick leave;
- A raised and renewed second chance for young adults;
- An increase in CTs minimum wage;
- A "can't ask - don't have to tell" compensation law for new hires in CT, topped with an equal pay for equal work system.

Surprisingly, there were different reactions from the House and Senate Democratic leaders. Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney praised the Governor's initiatives and somewhat pledged to shepherd them through the Senate. Speaker of the House Joe Aresimowicz seemed to take a step back and acknowledge that many of the initiatives mirror the Democratic caucus platform that was released a few days earlier, but added that the caucus would be the final arbitrator of which initiatives move to the Governor's desk.

Smart move, given the six vote margin in last year's budget battles. And that wasn't even an election year!

In the halls, folks were somewhat taken back by the Governor's progressive turn. Just a few months ago, Malloy was determined to turn the CT economy around by supporting business interests and delivering moderate-to-conservative spending speeches. If you get the chance, take a look at the on-demand recording of the Governor's State of the State speech on CT-N, and take particular note of some of the scans of the House chamber when the Governor hits on his initiatives. With certain passages I watched the Republican side of the chamber (to the viewer that would be the left hand side of the screen), and

more inclusive change than ever before?

Read more [here](#).

S&L Interns 2018

These are the Class of 2018 Sullivan & LeShane interns, and they are here to help!



Dave Shultz



Conor Mayers



Murtaza Zaidi

then glanced over to the right hand side of the chamber where the Democratic caucus sits. And on that side, it was surprising to see many sitting there and just politely clapping, while others were jumping from their seats and wildly approving of the Governor's message and ideas.

Oh my.... it's going to be a long "short session," with only 65 remaining "working days" to solve a budget problem that's been haunting the legislature since early in 2016, sort of like the movie "Groundhog Day." They must tackle both the Governor's aggressive initiatives as well as the fairly progressive Democratic caucus's legislative agenda, which includes everything from raising the minimum wage to free community college education.

I will say, it was a well-written and well-delivered speech. I just wonder about the content and if the legislature can tackle it all while figuring out how to plug the growing gaps between revenue and expenses. On Thursday, all four caucus leaders - House Democrats, House Republicans, Senate Democrats and Senate Republicans - met together, without the Governor's team, to start discussing how they hope to work together to find another historic bipartisan budget before the clock runs out on May 9th. No one wants to stay after school this year, particularly as they seek re-nomination for their legislative seats and raise local funds to qualify for public financing immediately after the session is mandated to close.

So, while some folks tune into NBC-CT to watch the Winter Olympic Games, many of us will be tuned into CT-N TV to stay tuned in to the ups and downs of this "Olympic Team" of 187 legislators. We will have the Senate (S) games and the House (H) games with two teams - the red team of S18/H72 and a blue team of S18/H79. Don't turn those channels! Or you're sure to miss the medal count!

Municipal Roundup

by Ryan Bingham

This week, as reported in this edition, we saw the legislature come back into session and the Governor give his budget and State of the State address.

One of the major focuses for municipalities this week and going into this session is the budget; specifically the revenue that they receive in municipal aid, education funding, and a variety of other revenue sources divided to the 169 communities across the state. The 2019 budget adjustment that the Governor released this week has a variety of winners and losers as far as municipalities are concerned. We see an overall cut of about \$32 million in municipal aid, which eliminates education grants to the 33 communities that happen to be considered the most affluent in CT. \$91 million in municipal funding has already been cut in the 2018 fiscal year budget, so this cut is in addition to that.

The larger urban and poorer communities see slight increases in total revenue, but over it is still largely flat.

Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) Executive Director Betsy Gara said, "The proposed cuts in municipal aid will force steep increases in property taxes at a time when homeowners are already frustrated about rising property tax levels." She added, "Changes in federal law which cap the amount of state and local taxes residents can deduct from their income taxes are shining a spotlight on Connecticut's property tax levels."

Lawmakers, after seeing the municipal cuts proposed by the Governor, were quick to respond from both sides of the aisle. Speaker of the House Joe Aresimowicz said, "The reality is that starting Wednesday the legislature takes over, and we

CT Agency Corner

CT Agency Corner - Free Parking at State Parks a Sign for Parting the Political Divide?

by Mike Johnson



The state announced a new solution this week, allowing residents to park for free at state parks.

This announcement could mean more than saving a few bucks going to the beach during the summer.

The initiative, called "Passports to the Parks," institutes a \$10 fee per vehicle registration to allow fee parking at

state parks for Connecticut registered cars. The program itself gained support during the legislative session last year, but was offered as a top priority by the House and Senate Republicans. This and a few other top priorities of the caucus led to the first bipartisan-passed budget in over a decade last session, but there is still concern that the election season will retire the ability for legislators to reach across the aisle.

Legislators this year have a top priority of holding the majorities in both the House and Senate. The House is three seats shy from swinging to a Republican majority, and the Senate is only one seat away from it. With another deficit looming for next session, the question remains a three-headed monster. The legislature can work together to amend the budget, mutually agree to not make any far sweeping changes to the budget until after the election or partisanly pass changes to the budget along party lines.

One can only hope that the "Passport to the Parks" is a sign of good faith for legislators to work together, but it's difficult to determine what it will take for that to happen.

all know some of those ideas will likely survive and many won't." Minority leader Themis Klarides suggested, "We will put forth our ideas and see where there is common ground. We have a lot of work to do."

Behind the Scenes

By Chelsea Neelon

This week, I had the pleasure of speaking with with Representative Pam Staneski of the 119th House District to hear more about her time as a legislator and some thoughts on the upcoming session.



What are some of your legislative priorities for the upcoming session?

- As a ranking member on Higher Education, one of the large issues this session is the consolidation of the community colleges. I want to make sure that the plan put in place is a "students first" plan. If there is a class a student wants to take at different community college than the one they're currently enrolled, the student will not have to file additional paperwork or pay extra fees. Financial applications will all be processed at one central point, so that the applications and needs will be accessible to the student. Consolidation will also lead to a streamlined data port where counselors at all schools can see and assist all students.

- As for Appropriations, Connecticut has a deficit of

Did You Know?

This Week in History



New England Dig Out after the Blizzard of '78

A classic "Nor'easter" storm that brought a severe blizzard to New England finally subsides on this day in 1978, and the region begins to dig out from under several feet of snow. Over the previous 72 hours, some areas of Rhode Island and Massachusetts had received as many as 55 inches of snow.

As the storm moved northeast, it stalled over Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, catching many of the region's residents by surprise. It is estimated that 3,500 cars were abandoned on Massachusetts streets and highways.

On February 6, the blizzard whipped up powerful sustained winds of up to 50 miles per hour with gusts of nearly 100 mph. Fifty-foot waves on the Massachusetts coast wiped out seaside homes, while further north, in Maine, waves destroyed three lighthouses and an amusement pier.

One of the hardest-hit communities in New England was

Providence, Rhode Island, where travel became nearly impossible and Governor Joseph Garrahy ordered all businesses except grocery stores closed. Few of these stores had any food in stock, and eventually, supplies had to be airlifted in to Providence College. Similar conditions were found in areas of Boston, and looting broke out in some spots. Governor Michael Dukakis banned all cars from the roads because stuck vehicles were making it impossible for snow plows to clear the streets.

This was the worst blizzard to hit New England since 1888. Hopefully we can see winter wrapping up soon to sunny skies ahead!

\$244 Million and it needs to be addressed. We're going to have to swallow hard for the next 5-10 years before we can start seeing a turnaround. In Appropriations, we need to set our priorities, take care of our most vulnerable, and provide public safety.

What legislation are you most proud of getting passed?

- I am proud of a piece of legislation that impacted our intellectually disabled, the IDD community. My first year as a legislator, I joined the IDD Caucus, I was listening to wait we needed to do in terms of waiting lists and levels of need, and how people are confused about where they are in the process. This bi-partisan legislation, was the first piece of large legislation that I worked on through the process to get all of the signatures for the bill. The Senate trying to take the bill out, and Senator Fasano was meeting with families of the IDD community and DHMAS. He wanted me to be a part of the process, and we were able to get the bill passed. To see the joy on the faces of the members of the IDD community when that bill got passed, it felt amazing.

What is your favorite memory as a legislator?

- My favorite memory is relates back to one of my first constituent cases. Before I became a legislator, you don't realize how you can truly impact the lives of people. There was a very elderly gentleman, who was also responsible for his elderly wife, who was having a serious insurance issues. We were able to get him in front of an Insurance Department liaison. This gentleman made a personal visit to my house to thank me and told me that you helped me and how much it meant to him. It is when you get to impact people's lives. There are lots of little favorite things like these instances.

What is your favorite late night session snack?

- That's an easy one! I am hooked on Reese's peanut

butter cups, the little ones.

Upcoming Events:

No upcoming events!

**Check back for updates
soon!**

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