



2026 Legislative Priorities

- 1. Increase state aid to municipalities and promote local property tax relief by:**
 - a. Increasing the municipal share of Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Fund from current \$51 million to \$139 million.
 - b. Increase PILOT funding for statutorily mandated tax-exempt properties and modify the MV reimbursement grant to reduce the impact from revaluation and to encourage reductions in local mill rates.
 - c. Allow towns and cities a portion of the sales tax and dedicate 1% of the meal and beverage tax to municipalities.
 - d. Enhance local revenue streams by increasing the municipally retained percentage of traffic citations and license fees.
 - e. Alleviate the burden imposed by unfunded mandates by increasing funding for early voting and reducing the number of days of early voting.

- 2. Increase the level of special education funding provided to towns and cities and enact measures that provide meaningful relief from existing mandates:**
 - a. Specifically, fully fund the Special Education Expansion Development (SEED) Grant from the current \$30 million appropriation to the required \$191 million.
 - b. Modify the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) related to special education costs so that expenditures above the base student cost, deficit spending by local school districts and funding provided through the SEED Grant are not included in the calculation of the MBR.
 - c. Increase the foundation amount and weighted ECS funding for public schools of choice such as magnet schools and Agriscience schools. Currently the ECS weighted funding for students attending public schools of choice provides 42% of their full weighted funding. Increasing the funding will alleviate the burden of increased costs on sending and receiving districts.

- 3. Provide more funding to support mass transit such as rail, bus service and highway improvements.** Ensure mass transit policy is consistent with the state's goal of more transit-oriented development projects and continue to invest in mass transit throughout the state, which is vital for its sustainability and success. Expand the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Micro-transit Grant Program, which has been filling voids in public transportation in municipalities that have been utilizing the grants.

4. **Increase Housing Opportunities and Development of Affordable Housing by:**
 - a. **Enacting a state tax credit on local property tax payment to facilitate conversion of nonresidential properties to residential units.** Seek property tax abatements for developers or individuals who develop affordable housing units to incentivize and make projects more economically viable due to an increase in construction costs and high interest rates.
 - b. **Eliminating the deed restriction on accessory apartments in Sec. 8-30g (k).** Many accessory dwelling units are affordable within a community, but are not counted as affordable units because they are not deed restricted.
 - c. **Establishing a forgivable loan program for the development of a certain amount of affordable housing.** This will reduce barriers to building affordable housing by providing incentives to the developer and make it financially feasible for them to build these units
 - d. **Increasing state funding for supportive housing.** This investment will provide the necessary resources to provide stability and housing for those who are at risk of losing housing or are currently homeless.

5. **Streamline the Permitting Process for Solid Waste Management Projects.**
 - a. Make the regulatory process easier for solid waste management projects by promoting a more investment-friendly environment. The permitting process for anaerobic digesters and other projects has been delayed due to stringent and time-consuming procedures involving multiple agencies.
 - b. Allow Licensed Environmental Professionals (LEPs) to serve as third-party intermediaries to help expedite the process.

Legislative Issues of Importance

- **Require a fire marshal inspection of a bar or restaurant prior to liquor license approval and renewal.** This requirement was removed in previous legislative sessions, as a result some owners are not compelled to provide the fire marshal with the opportunity to complete a proper inspection.

- **Amend Paid Sick Days Statute** by modifying the Paid Sick Leave changes made in Public Act 24-8 to allow employers to request reasonable documentation for employees using paid sick leave taken for the purposes permitted under the act.

- **Improve Organic Recycling by supporting and expanding organic recycling to help reduce the amount of solid waste throughout the state.**
 - a. Support and expand organic recycling programs by encouraging towns to participate voluntarily, while keeping the possibility of mandatory collection in the future, develop regional collection sites to improve transportation efficiency by improving state financing options for regional solid waste management facilities.

- **Add Local Representation on the Siting Council**
 - a. Legislative concerns include the rotating nature of the council's membership and the need for consistency. CCM suggests adding language that ensures the appointment of a member with municipal experience - such as a former CEO, mayor, or first selectperson.
 - b. Require a public hearing on a Siting Council application at the request of a municipality.

- **Assist local fire marshal inspections of 3+ family dwellings by:**
 - a. Allowing these inspections to occur every two years, rather than annually, unless there is a history of violations;
 - b. Allow a qualified third party to conduct these inspections since the inspections of these properties have become time-consuming, difficult to schedule with unknown property owners, and exposed municipalities to liability.

- **Establish a Municipal Liability Cap**
 - a. Capping any municipal negligence claim at \$250,000
 - b. Amending the highway defect statute for municipalities (CGS 13a-149) to cap damages (both economic and non-economic damages) at \$20,000 per occurrence. Approximately 1/3 of municipal liability claims are associated with this statute and damages are ballooning into six-figure settlements. There needs to be a balance to ensure individuals receive proper compensation without undue financial impact on taxpayer funds.
 - c. Amending CGS 46a-60 (CT Fair Employment Practices Act) to cap damages based on employer size, specifically cap damages:
 - For employers with 15-100 employees - \$25,000.
 - For employers with 101-200 employees - \$50,000.
 - For employers with 201-500 employees - \$100,000.
 - For employers with more than 500 employees - \$150,000.

- **Target one percent of the meals and beverage tax revenue to go to towns and the Connecticut Tourism Office in order to provide resources and promote tourism.** 50% of the meals and beverage tax would be distributed to the municipalities where the consumption was generated and 25% would be allocated to the Connecticut Office of Tourism and the remaining 25% would be set aside for workforce development opportunities in the hospitality industries. Tourism is an economic driver in Connecticut and in towns and cities. These monies would be used to enhance tourism efforts within communities.

- **Use brownfields and greyfields funding to develop new housing opportunities.** In order to address Connecticut's housing shortage from 0-30% of area median income (AMI) to market rate, the redevelopment of contaminated property and vacant commercial properties with state funding will allow for an adaptive reuse of these properties to help meet Connecticut's housing needs.
- **Convene a task force to study regionalization of fire services.** By consolidating smaller and often understaffed departments into a unified regional system, communities can share resources and explore opportunities to streamline and lessen training costs and collaborate on procurement, leading to better coverage and quicker response times.
- **Long-Term Goal: Expand Nuclear and Alternative Energy**
 - a. Engage in discussions with DEEP to explore the expansion of nuclear and alternative energy sources due to the projected increase in energy demand - especially due to data centers - will place significant strain on the electrical grid.