

From The House

The 2019 legislative session gavel in on Wednesday January 9. I am proud and humbled to serve my second term as the Majority Leader in the House of Representatives.

Every legislative session we review and debate hundreds of bills and policies. I've outlined just a few that are already getting media attention - the "hot issues" that people may be talking about.

Jobs - Ensuring CT's Economy Doesn't Leave the Middle Class Behind

Connecticut has taken important steps to invest in businesses - large and small. We have also prioritized training the next generation for the jobs of the future. We will continue to focus on developing the state's workforce pipeline to ensure students have the skills employers are looking for. But we also want to ensure that if you work, you earn a living wage. If you have a family member who is ill, you can take time off to care for them. Issues like the minimum wage and paid family leave will certainly be debated this session.

Transportation - Investing in infrastructure

Members of Governor Malloy's Transportation Finance Panel estimate the state's Special Transportation Fund (STF) will be insolvent by 2022 - that is a scary prospect. The STF is an appropriated fund, separate from the General Fund that is dedicated to transportation purposes; investing in our roads, bridges and public transportation. Voters approved a Constitutional lockbox to require that the fund be used exclusively for transportation purposes. Most legislators agree that we need to continue to invest in our infrastructure...but will it be through bonding (the state's credit card) or by actually increasing revenues to the STF.

Governor-elect Lamont has been very straightforward that tolls are on the table and I would be surprised if a proposal for high-speed electronic tolls is not debated in the Legislature's Transportation Committee in the next several months.

Sports Betting and Marijuana - New Streams of Revenue

We have seen Massachusetts legalize recreational marijuana. New Jersey and Rhode Island are cashing in on sports betting. Both of these issues provide states with new revenue streams and both come with social costs that must be seriously considered.

Like tolls, I expect that there will be legislation on sports betting and marijuana that come before multiple committees. I want to ensure we have open conversations with the public, advocates and experts. These issues deserve to be heard in the light of day. And there will be hundreds of other issues tackled as well...plus the state budget. Please contact me at Matthew.Ritter@cga.ct.gov, or by phone at (800) 842-1902, if you have any questions or concerns about any issues that arise during the 2019 legislative session.