



Michelle welcomes Torrington student inventor Shelby Howe to the State Capitol.




Michelle testifies on her proposal to restructure the municipal jeopardy tax.

## Putting Connecticut Back To Work

One of the best ways to pull Connecticut out of the recession is through job creation. Working with the Governor, we passed a significant new jobs bill that will help put Connecticut on the road to economic recovery.

The new law creates jobs in Connecticut with:

- » Up to \$500,000 in loans and lines of credit for small businesses and nonprofits
- » Student loan reimbursement and training grants for education and careers in green technology, life sciences and health information technology
- » Personal income tax credits for investments made in new technologies
- » Sales tax exemptions for machinery, supplies, and fuel used in renewable energy industries
- » Tax credits for small businesses of up to \$200 per month per new employee
- » A Community-Technical College advisory board to assess the training needs of unemployed residents
- » Up to \$150,000 in pre-seed financing and technical services to businesses developing innovative concepts
- » Reformed environmental rules that speed up the business permitting process and maintain environmental protections

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Pace  
Stamp  
Here



State Representative

# Michelle Cook

Proudly Serving Torrington | 65<sup>th</sup> District

STATE REPRESENTATIVE of the CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY



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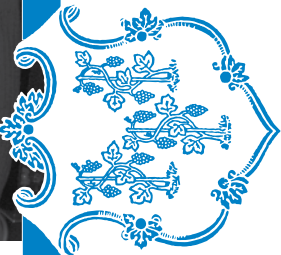
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State Representative

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE of the CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## Capitol Update

Thank you for giving me the honor and privilege of representing you at the State Capitol. Working within the constraints of our ongoing budget crisis, 2010 was a much more productive and bipartisan year than 2009. I am happy to say that the legislature, in cooperation with Governor Rell, reached an agreement in May that eliminated our budget deficit in 2010 and 2011. This agreement was reached without a single increase in state taxes or cuts in state aid to Torrington. Of course, much work remains as Connecticut continues to climb back from the nationwide recession.

I was extremely active this session on domestic violence, medicaid overhaul and special education issues. I am proud to have passed worthwhile legislation that will protect some of the most vulnerable populations in Connecticut.

I heard from many of you this session through phone calls, e-mails and letters. You make me a better legislator through your advocacy. Thank you for trusting in me. Have a safe and happy summer!



State Representative

# Michelle Cook

Proudly Serving Torrington | 65<sup>th</sup> District



## Protecting Families

### Responding to Domestic Violence in our Community

I was a member of the Task Force on Domestic Violence, which authored some of the most sweeping changes to domestic violence laws in the past 25 years. The new laws provide for:

- » Improvements to educator training and the enforcement of protective orders
- » Employment and housing protections
- » GPS monitoring for high risk offenders
- » Additional domestic violence court dockets
- » Increased staffing at existing 24 hour emergency shelters, including the Susan B. Anthony Project in Torrington

### State Representative Michelle Cook

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## Aiding Children

### Personalizing the Classroom Experience

I authored legislation this session which will work to fix our broken Individualized Educational Program system for special needs students and save money on special education services. The current system is incomplete and poorly implemented. The resulting confusion only hurts special needs students and teachers.

Over the next several months, a committee of state officials, educators and parents will meet to decide on a comprehensive package of reforms to be introduced next session.

### Helping Children Through the Recession

The recession has plunged tens of thousands of Connecticut children into poverty. I am honored to have served this session on the Children in the Recession Task Force. Through this work, we passed a law designed to meet the most pressing needs facing children and their families. The legislation:

- » Works to improve hunger, housing and employment services
- » Creates a state leadership team to respond to children's issues
- » Seeks to ensure that Connecticut takes advantage of all available federal dollars
- » Seeks to make government more efficient, cost-effective and customer friendly for children and families during tough economic times
- » Helps families in the Care4Kids program by changing restrictive rules so that parents can get back into the workforce



Michelle works to finalize a bill on Primary Care Case Management.

## MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK SMARTER

### A Balanced Budget: On Time and On Target

By working hard and reaching across party lines to create a compromise, we were able to balance this year's state budget with:

- » No tax increases
- » No cuts in municipal aid
- » Maintained funding for hospitals, schools, libraries and courthouses
- » Funding for dental care and prescriptions for seniors and the disabled
- » Lower co-pays for home care services by up to \$300/month (AARP endorsed)
- » A \$60 average annual reduction to your electric bill

### Tax Fairness for Torrington Residents

I introduced a bill which would have changed the way a town tax collector requires tax payments in advance of their due date.

Currently, any municipal tax collector who believes they might not be paid on time has the right to demand payment up front.

My proposal would have required the tax collector to spell out in writing the rationale for collecting payment early to both the effected resident and town officials.

In this economic climate, residents should not have to suddenly make tax payments for no good reason.

The bill passed the House and Senate, but both versions were not merged into one. I am looking at reintroducing a similar concept next session.

### Torrington Saves by Working with Neighboring Towns

Torrington can now team up with other towns to save money while delivering necessary town services

The blue ribbon commission on Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (MORE) was charged with initiating a new approach to state and local government making our state more economically competitive.

Over the coming year, opportunities for cost savings will be discussed with local government officials and business leaders – all working together to encourage more cooperation between towns.

This year we worked for:

- » Cost savings by allowing municipalities to join the state in bulk purchasing of prescription drugs
- » Saving money on school transportation by giving money to towns that work together to provide transportation services
- » Health insurance savings by allowing two or more municipalities or boards of education to purchase employee health benefits
- » Getting local taxpayers off the hook for storing the belongings of evicted tenants while protecting tenant's rights



Michelle receives the Legislator of the Year award for her advocacy from the CT Association of Homecare and Hospice.

## Good News for Seniors Saluting our Veterans

### Reducing Homecare Costs

Seniors using the CT Homecare Program for Elders will soon see a reduction in their monthly costs for critical in-home services, such as meal deliveries and personal care assistance. The budget reduces the percentage seniors pay for these services from 15% to 6% – saving the average client nearly \$100 each month.

### Supporting Patients and Families with Alzheimer's

Last year's budget protected the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, which provides small grants to family members caring for people with Alzheimer's to fund personal care, home health and adult day care services. Governor Rell closed the program in 2009. The legislature was able to re-open the program, allowing Connecticut families to receive these important services.

We passed reforms this year to both honor those who choose to serve – and save them some real money as well.

- » Veterans in nursing homes can now use the VA as their pharmacy, saving money for veterans and taxpayers
- » Honorably discharged retired veterans with 30 years or more of service can now apply for "retirement promotions" and move up one grade in rank
- » Active duty service members out of state will get an extension for 30 days to renew their expired driver's licenses after their return to Connecticut
- » March 30th is now designated as the official Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Commemoration Day
- » Veterans can now use their military service experience and training as academic credit for certain technical certificates and licenses

State Representative

## MICHELLE COOK

To receive more information on any of the following issues, e-mail, call or mail me the completed form. Make sure to give your name, address and e-mail, and indicate which issues you're interested in.

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2010 Major Acts  | <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business         | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy    |
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