



Legislating During a Pandemic

Connecticut in Transition



The Governor's Emergency Declarations

The Governor declared a public health and civil preparedness emergency on March 10, 2020

Emergency declarations have been extended through September 30, 2021

2020 Election



Democrat Joe Biden elected President

Democrats Larson, Courtney, DeLauro, Himes, and Hayes re-elected to Congress

Democrats Increase Majorities in the General Assembly

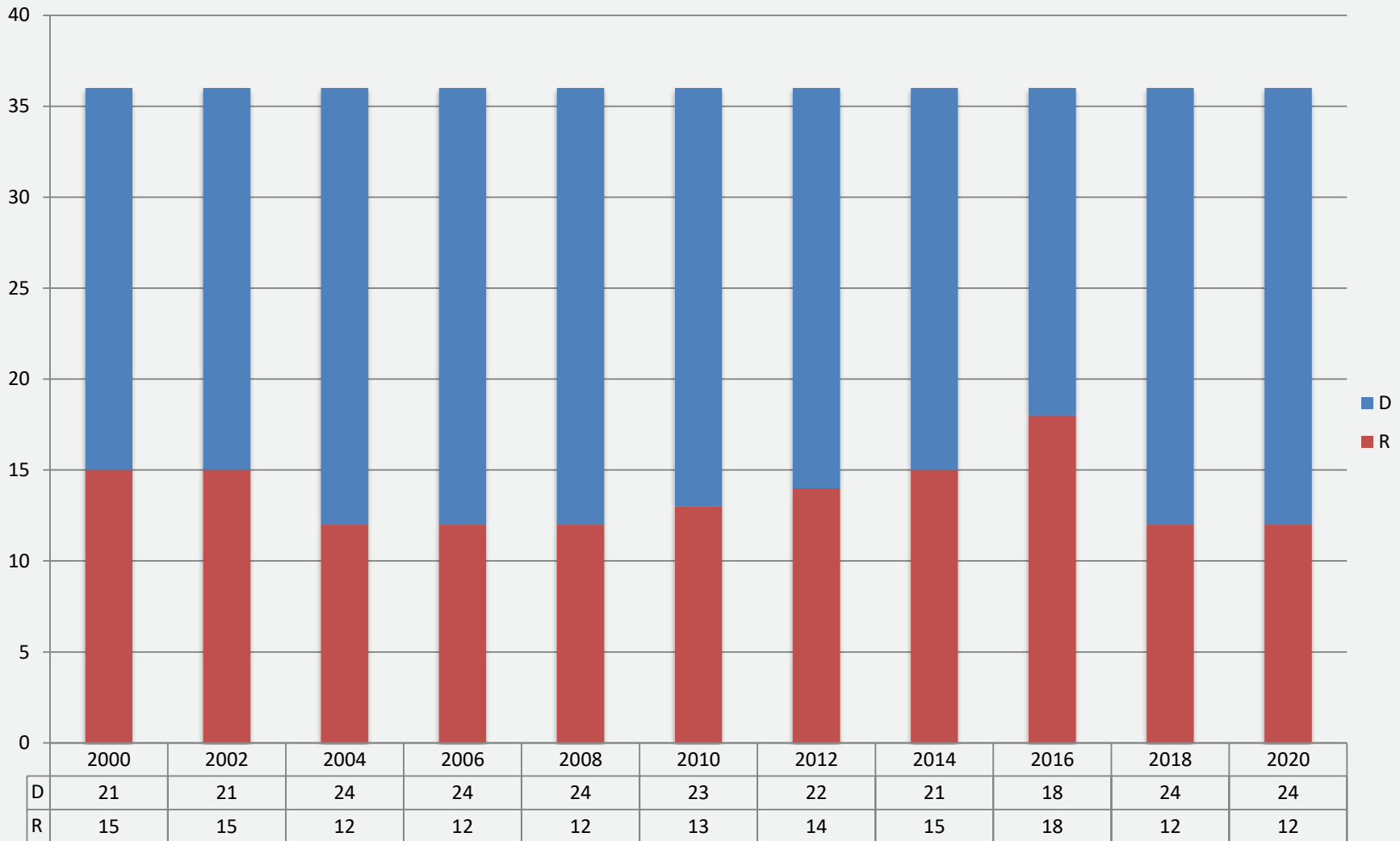
Democrats pick-up 5 seats in the State House, for a 97-54 majority

Democrats pick-up 1 seat in the State Senate, for a 24-12 majority

HOUSE CONTROL



SENATE CONTROL



Legislative Leaders

Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney (D-New Haven)

Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff (D-Norwalk)

Senate Republican Leader Kevin Kelly (R-Stratford)

Speaker of the House Matt Ritter (D-Hartford)

House Majority Leader Jason Rojas (D-East Hartford)

House Republican Leader Vin Candelora (R-North Branford)



January 6, 2021: Regular Session Convenes Under COVID-19 Precautions

Swearing-in ceremonies held outdoors on the north portico of the State Capitol

State Capitol and Legislative Office Building are closed to the public

Sessional activities to be held virtually

Fiscal Outlook 2021

The Office of Fiscal Analysis projects a budget deficit of **\$900 million in FY 2022**

\$3.8 billion deficit projected in next biennium

Fitch Ratings places Connecticut second only to Illinois in the amount of state debt compared to personal income

Governor Lamont's Budget Priorities



Marijuana, sports betting, Internet gaming, housing, broadband access, transit-oriented development, school choice, workforce development and small business growth

February 10, 2021: Governor Releases 2022-2023 Budget

Governor delivers a prerecorded budget address

\$46 billion biennial budget:

- Increases spending by 2.0% and 3.5%
- Purports to address the biennial budget deficit

Governor Thanks Healthcare Workers

“I want to express my most sincere gratitude to the nurses, doctors, caregivers, National Guard, teachers, and the many other essential workers who are on the frontlines of our fight against COVID. You have all stepped up in ways we and you never would have imagined necessary or possible. On behalf of a grateful state: thank you, thank you, thank you.”

Highlight For Hospitals

Reflects the hospital settlement with respect to:

- Supplemental payments to hospitals
- Increase in Medicaid rates
- Reduction of the hospital tax

Governor Applauds Hospital Partnership

“Two years ago, we repaired our frayed relationship with our hospitals and the state immediately partnered with them in managing the pandemic, making sure that nobody was denied COVID-19 treatment. Testing was made available at no cost to all of our diverse communities, helping Connecticut provide more testing per capita than almost any other state in the country. And today, we are using that same testing model to make COVID-19 vaccinations widely available at hospitals and clinics, stadiums, as well as bringing the vaccine to our hardest hit communities.”



An Item Of Interest to CtHIMA Members

Supports the Health Information Exchange
(first year that HIE costs are fully
incorporated into the budget)

Other Proposals

- Legalize recreational cannabis
- Legalize sports and online gaming
- Increase funding to municipalities
- Impose a mileage-based highway tax on large trucks
- Cancels previously approved tax relief for retired teachers and businesses

Advocacy During The Pandemic

Hospitals embraced virtual approaches to advocacy, including

- Weekly virtual meetings with caucus leaders
- Virtual meetings with key committee chairs
- Constant digital interaction with caucus staff
- Testifying virtually at public hearings
- Submitting written testimony
- More interaction between legislators and the hospitals serving their districts

Senate Bill 1 and Nurse Staffing Ratios

- A top priority bill for Senate Majority Democrats
 - _ A comprehensive proposal on access to care
- Included a proposal to impose nurse-to-patient ratios in hospital Intensive Care Units (ICUs)

June 7, 2021: Biennial Budget Enacted

The \$46.3 billion budget relies on \$1.75 billion in federal coronavirus relief funds to balance the budget

Increases spending by 2.6% (\$572.9 million) in FY 2022 and by 3.9% (\$878.2 million) in FY 2023

Fully funds the “Rainy Day” Budget Reserve Fund at \$3 billion, reaching its statutory cap

Biennial Budget Highlights

- Reflects the hospital settlement
- Funding increases for non-profits health and human services providers
- Increases the earned income tax credit
- Provides financial relief to the restaurant industry

June 16, 2021: Recreational Cannabis

Legalized starting July 1, 2021 with retail sales projected to start in May 2022

- Allows hospitals to prohibit a patient from having or using marijuana in a hospital
- Addresses medical staff privileges, credentialing, and discipline
- Exempts medical and research uses for FDA-approved drugs



State Capitol Reopens to the Public

On July 6, the State Capitol and Legislative Office Building were reopened after being closed for 17 months



Emergency Declarations Extended

On July 14, the legislature approved the Governor's extension of the public health and civil preparedness emergency through September 30, 2021

Key Healthcare Bills That Passed

- Health equity measures
- Telehealth
- Behavioral health
- Repeal the religious exemption from school immunizations
- Coverage for undocumented women and children
- Dental and vision coverage for young adults
- Nursing home changes
- Deceptive practices at pregnancy centers

Key Healthcare Bills That Failed

- Minimum nurse staffing ratios
- Public option for health insurance
- Assessment on health insurers
- Aid in dying

How Did Hospitals Fare?

- Preserve hospital settlement – success
- Oppose nurse staffing ratios – success
- Expand telehealth coverage - success
- Oppose public option - success
- Promote gun violence prevention - success
- Resist other restrictive proposals - success

Governor's Priorities: How Did He Fare?

- Recreational cannabis - pass
- Sports betting - pass
- Broadband access – pass
- Workforce development - incomplete
- Small business growth – incomplete
- Housing - incomplete
- School choice - fail
- Transit-oriented development - fail

Other Major Issues

- New fee on large commercial trucks
- Criminal justice reforms
- Bottle bill
- Crumbling foundations
- Workers' compensation for COVID-19
- Voting access

Federal Money Comes to Connecticut

- Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act
- Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act
- Consolidated Appropriations Act
- American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

How Strong is Connecticut's Economy?

On the positive side:

- Current budget in surplus
- Budget reserve fully funded
- Credit rating upgraded
- Companies relocating or opening offices

How Weak is Connecticut's Economy?

On the negative side:

- Economy trailing U.S. and other states
- Growth rate 34th among 50 states
- Impact of federal government assistance
- Personal income growth “dead last”
- Affordability issues

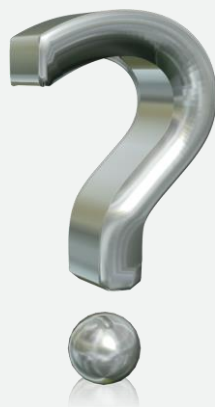
Predicting the Future

- How quickly do cities bounce back?
- Impact of remote work
- Traffic flows and commercial activity
- Changes in commercial office market
- Higher commodity costs
- Higher energy costs

Looking Ahead

- 3-month “short session” begins in February 2022
- November 2022 elections for governor, state legislators, U.S. Congress and one U.S. Senate seat (presently held by Sen. Blumenthal)

Questions?



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