

SHE LEADS JUSTICE

Let's Get Loud!

**A Legislative Change Toolkit
For Connecticut's 2026 Legislative Session**



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WHO WE ARE

She Leads Justice is a statewide, nonprofit that uses a justice and equity lens to advocate for under-resourced, marginalized women and girls in Connecticut. We work to close the civil legal justice gap and to create policy that advances women's economic security.

WHAT WE DO

Legal Education

Public Policy & Advocacy

Community Organizing

WHO DO WE DO IT FOR?



SCAN HERE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE!!

Use your phone's camera or app to scan! or visit

Are you a woman living in Connecticut who needs help with employment discrimination or family law?

She Leads Justice provides **FREE** bilingual legal information and referrals to attorneys and community agencies.

CALL OUR INFORMATION AND REFERRAL LINE:
(860) 524-0601

EMAIL US: INFO@SHELEADSJUSTICE.ORG

Open Monday-Thursday: 9AM-2PM
Friday: 9AM-1PM



THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IS YOURS TO SHAPE.

ADVOCATE AND ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY!

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT:

- We designed this toolkit with inclusivity in mind and pulled from practices cultivated and led by marginalized groups.
- To counteract the erasure of women from history, this guide highlights important women across time in CT to inspire your work.
- Key terms you'll see throughout this guide are defined on page 5.

SHE LEADS JUSTICE IS COMMITTED TO OUR LEADERSHIP IN ADVANCING ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR ALL WOMEN. JOIN US!

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT:

She Leads Justice’s Legislative Change Toolkit is designed to get you thinking about how to advocate and organize in your community this legislative session to get loud and ensure Connecticut women are one step closer to economic security.

TIPS AND IDEAS INCLUDED IN THIS TOOLKIT:

Advocacy suggestions are in this blue.

Community organizing suggestions are in green.

These are just a start. Fill us in on your actions and share your events, stories, and your work with us at stories@sheleadsjustice.org

HOT TIP 🔥 Hot tips are insider knowledge that help you advocate and organize better!

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HEY YOU! GET LOUD & VISIT OUR WEBSITE!



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WHY DO WE FOCUS ON CONNECTICUT POLICY? A MESSAGE FROM JANÉE WOODS WEBER

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Dear Connecticut Women,

While She Leads Justice is nonpartisan and does not endorse specific candidates, we proudly live by the words of Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley: **"policy is our love language."**

We designed this guide for all the women who lead, advocate, organize, or wish to do so for policy change. The guide and our accompanying workbook share wisdom collected by our staff and colleagues with the hope that they give you the confidence and tools you need to own your power.

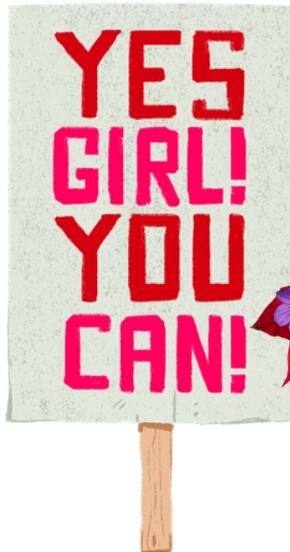
Connecticut women, if no one has extended an invitation yet, consider this your formal invitation into your movement. Your participation is important and necessary.

Making our voices heard at the legislature and State Capitol is one more step in that process. Each year when our elected officials go into legislative session, they pass policies that impact ourselves, our families, our workplaces and communities.

Your voice and your story are powerful tools to influence legislative change. Together, we can help create the world that all women and girls deserve.

Truly,
Janée Woods Weber
Executive Director, She Leads Justice

A COMMUNITY OFFERING: HOW TO USE A QR CODE & HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN!



We have a lot of know-how at She Leads Justice and we are fans of sharing our wealth. Here is an easy tool that can help facilitate your change work. QR codes are pictures that hold a link. Have fun and keep us in the loop!

To access with an iPhone:

- Using an iPhone? Open your camera app and aim it at the QR code.
- A box will pop up with the link. Click on it.

To access with another device:

- Download a QR reader application.

To make your own:

- Create an account on [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) or [Bitly.com](https://bitly.com)
- On Canva: QR Code can be generated once you begin a new project.
- On Bitly.com: QR codes can be generated with the QR generator on the dashboard.

SHE LEADS JUSTICE DEFINES: COMMON LANGUAGE IN LEGISLATIVE CHANGE WORK

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At She Leads Justice, we know that language is often used to exclude people from political spaces and to discourage them from participating. Here is a list of words we commonly use and their definitions:

THE BASICS

CIVIL-LEGAL JUSTICE GAP

the difference between the civil legal needs and the resources available to meet those needs

INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM

a movement that challenges oppression specifically impacting women of color

ANTI-RACISM

actively opposing racism by pushing for changes in political, economic, and social life

POLICY CHANGE

process of advocating and organizing to change laws

SYSTEM

an organized framework or method

POWER

the capacity or ability to direct or influence decisions

COMMUNITY

a group whose members have something in common



MOVEMENT

a group of people working together to advance shared ideas

LEADERSHIP

process of social influence towards the achievement of a goal

ADVOCATE

to publicly recommend or support

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

The practice of using our community's assets to create systems that help your community stand in their power

MAIN ACTORS

ADVOCATE

influences policy decisions on behalf of individuals and organizations



ORGANIZER

brings together community power by operationalizing theory and turning it into a community practice

ACTIVIST

works to bring about political or social change



CONSTITUENT

a person who is represented politically by an elected official

ORGANIZATION

an organized body of people with a particular purpose



LOBBYIST

participates in organized attempts to influence elected officials

LEGISLATOR

a person who is elected to represent an area of the state in order to make laws

LEGISLATIVE AIDE

staff person who provides support to a legislator



COALITION

a group of people organized around a specific action or goal

GOVERNOR

the highest state office and chief executive officer of CT



STATE SENATOR

1 of 36 elected members of the State Senate



STATE REP.

1 of 151 elected members of the State House of Representatives

CGA

Short for the CT General Assembly, which what we call the legislature



The term "intersectional feminism" was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw & is key to all of our organizing & advocacy.



HOT TIP:

Find your State Legislator and how to contact them at cga.ct.gov.

SHE LEADS JUSTICE DEFINES: COMMON LANGUAGE IN LEGISLATIVE CHANGE WORK

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STRUCTURE & TOOLS OF THE SYSTEM

COMMITTEE

the first step for a bill: group where legislation is crafted and public hearings are held

AMENDMENT

a change or addition to a proposed bill

DISTRICT

a region or area of the state where you live

PUBLIC HEARING

meeting held by CGA to receive testimony from the public on a proposed bill

VOTE

a formal expression of opinion used to stop or advance bills

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

time when the government meets to create laws

BULLETIN

a document on the CGA website that provides info on upcoming meetings, public hearings, etc.

COSPONSOR

when a legislator signs on to publicly support a bill

BILL

a draft of a proposed law

FISCAL NOTE

a bill's "price tag" or estimate of how much it will cost the state

CAUCUS

informal group meeting of legislators, often based on political party

LAW

a set of rules that regulates the actions of people

STATE BUDGET

a bill that lists revenue and expenditure of the state in a year

VETO

to reject a bill by refusing to sign it into law

HOT TIP: There are 26 legislative committees, including: Housing, Public Health, Appropriations, and more. She Leads Justice's policy priorities like paid sick days and fair work week begin in the Labor & Public Employees Committee.

TESTIMONY

The written statement that explains where your story meets the proposed bill. This gets filed and becomes history! This is the main line of communication from the community about bills.

TOOLS OF ADVOCATES & ORGANIZERS

COMMUNITY FORUM

An event where people exchange ideas and discuss issues

PRESS CONFERENCE

Event that communicates news

FACT SHEET

a document or paper giving information about an issue/bill

RALLY

a larger meeting showing support for a cause

SURVEY

a way to collect data or information or stories

LOBBY DAY

an event where people talk to legislators about an issue

PHONE BANK

make calls asking for support

PROTEST

an action expressing disapproval

AN ADVOCATE'S JOURNEY TO LEGISLATIVE CHANGE USING SLJ VOCAB

COMMUNITY FORUM

RALLY PROTEST

STATE BUDGET

SHE LEADS JUSTICE DEFINES: KEY TERMS TO KNOW FOR THE 2026 SESSION



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FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

A measurement of income, issued yearly, which is used to determine someone's eligibility for certain government benefits. In Connecticut, an estimated 13% of children live below the FPL. However, an additional 29% live above the FPL but still in hardship and unable to afford basic needs (ALICE).



ALICE

ALICE is an acronym which stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE families are ones who earn below the cost-of-living threshold. This includes families who earn below and above the federal poverty level. Simply put, ALICE families struggle to make ends meet.

REGRESSIVE TAX STRUCTURES

This occurs when policies are in place where tax rates decrease as a person's income increases. Meaning, individuals with higher incomes pay a smaller percentage of their earnings.



BENEFITS CLIFF

A sudden drop off of public benefits after a small wage increase. This can leave families who are on the cusp of better economic security, in a precarious and unfair situation.

RACIAL/ETHNIC WEALTH GAP

The disparity of typical assets between races and ethnicities. In CT this gap can be seen by observing median income: In white households this is just over 95k, whereas in Black and Hispanic households it is closer to 54k and 51k respectively.

FISCAL CONTROLS (AKA FISCAL GUARDRAILS)

A type of spending cap on the state's budget. Our newest spending cap, established in 2017, was paired with annual limits on bond issues, a revenue cap and a volatility adjustment. Together these create fiscal controls. You may also hear them referred to as fiscal guardrails.

FISCAL CONTROL TERMS EXPLAINED:

BOND ISSUANCE CAP

Connecticut borrows billions of dollars annually by issuing general obligation bonds on Wall Street, and the bond issuance cap limits the amount it can sell in a given fiscal year.

REVENUE CAP

The revenue cap requires that the state budget have a built-in cushion of, at a minimum, 1.25% of the General Fund, which is the fund that accounts for general operations in the state

SPENDING CAP

The state's spending cap limits the annual growth in state spending by restricting the legislature's authority to make appropriations. It generally bars the legislature from authorizing an increase in general budget expenditures for any fiscal year that exceeds the greater of the growth in personal income or increase in inflation.

VOLATILITY ADJUSTMENT

The volatility cap is tied to two state revenue sources: estimated and final income tax revenue and Pass Through Entity (PE) tax revenue. Estimated and final income tax payments generally come from investments, such as capital gains realized in the stock market, and thus fluctuate with economic booms and busts. The PE tax is an entity-level income tax on most pass-through businesses and is similarly volatile due to these fluctuations. The volatility cap functions as a limit on the amount of this revenue that may be used to balance the budget.



WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

Connecticut's fiscal controls (guardrails) were originally enacted in 2017 as part of a new budget compromise to address the state's fiscal crisis. Today, nine years later, CT is far from crisis; amassing billions of dollars in surpluses, even after making large contributions to long-term debt every year. Due to the fiscal controls, lawmakers are unable to allocate huge portions of the surplus money to invest in our communities. It is time to make adjustments to these fiscal controls so CT can reverse its underfunding and disinvestment from critical state programs, resources and institutions.

SHE LEADS JUSTICE EXPLAINS: LEGISLATIVE CHANGE AKA POLICY CHANGE



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WHAT IS LEGISLATIVE CHANGE?

Legislative change is a process of advocating and organizing to influence policy decisions at the State Legislature.

WHERE DOES IT HAPPEN?

Formally? At the LOB or the Legislative Office Building. For advocates and organizers, it starts at home.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

While there is no set schedule, it helps to break it down into 3 phases.



3 PHASES OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

LISTEN, LISTEN DO YOU HEAR? WE HAVE A GAME PLAN DEAR!



PRE- CAMPAIGN PRE-SESSION

1

Identify problems and talk to your community and organize them to find a potential solution. Connect with organizations, leaders and issue experts to ask for their support. Begin to form relationships with elected officials that can be your champions!

ACTIVE CAMPAIGN/ LEGISLATIVE SESSION

2

Time to execute your organizing and advocacy strategies throughout the legislative session! Meet with legislators and get buy in from your community.

POST SESSION

3

Didn't win? Regroup, strategize, and prepare for the next session!

Did you win? It's time to inform your community and hold your elected officials accountable!

CT WOMEN IN ORGANIZING: EDNA NEGRON ROSARIO

Edna Negron Rosario is an educator, consultant and community organizer. Negron began her teaching career in 1974 and as principal of the Ramon E. Betances School in Hartford, she founded the Family Resource Center, which became a national model for family-based, multi-generational social services housed in public schools.



SHE LEADS JUSTICE EXPLAINS: HOW DOES LEGISLATIVE CHANGE HAPPEN?



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Here is an overview of how a bill becomes a law in CT and tips to advocate and organize along the way.

ADVOCATE!

PRE:

- Meet with coalition partners to measure their support
- Educate legislators on your problems and the bills that solve them to find your champions

DURING:

- Meet with legislators in the House and Senate and ask for their support
- Keep track of legislators' support or opposition to know if you have enough votes for the bill to pass
- Monitor potential amendments
- Lobby the Governor and staff



HOW LEGISLATIVE POWER MOVES: AKA "THE SYSTEM"

PRE SESSION:

Legislators make plans with their colleagues and advocates on what bills to raise

1 Bills are introduced in committees



2 Bills are drafted and available on the CGA site



3 Public hearing is scheduled and we get 5 days notice

4 Committee debates & votes on bill

5 Bill receives a fiscal note, or an estimated cost, and a summary

6 Bill is sent to House or Senate & waits for a vote

HOT TIP
If necessary, bill is referred to another Committee



8 Bill dies

7 Legislators in the House and Senate caucus, or discuss, the bill & take a vote count of who supports or opposes

8 First chamber debates and votes on the bill

HOT TIP
If a bill dies it might start over next session!

9 While bill is debated, legislators file amendments



BACK TO THE START!

10 Second chamber debates and votes on the bill

POST SESSION: Legislators re-group with leaders

11 Legislators caucus the bill again to determine if they have the votes to pass

HOT TIP
If the bill does not pass before session ends, it starts over the next year.

12 After passing the House and the Senate, bill heads to the Governor's desk

13 **FINISH**
Bill is signed into law by the Governor

13 Governor vetoes bill.

BACK TO THE START!

HOT TIP
The House and Senate can override the Governor's veto with a 2/3 vote, making it law.

ORGANIZE!

PRE:

- Notice the problems.
- Map out all the current efforts and learn how to join; help others
- Gather other advocates in your community and co-create a strategy.
- Develop relationship with potential allies; Consider creating a coalition.
- Identify, contact, meet with, & educate legislators to champion your bill!

DURING:

- Create systems to communicate real time with your community
- Coordinate lobby days at the Capitol and create fact sheets for advocates
- Prepare your community to share their story and stand in their power
- Help create systems that help your community access important meetings.

POST SESSION

Help your community understand the new law or program!



SHE LEADS JUSTICE SUPPORTS: SPEAKING UP FOR YOURSELF AKA SHARING YOUR STORY

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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SHARE YOUR STORY?

DEEPER UNDERSTANDING:

Legislators are people with families and communities too. Sharing your story helps them understand an issue.



INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN:

There are many reasons your community can hesitate to share. When you share your story, you help others be brave.



HOW TO BUILD YOUR STORY SO OTHERS WILL LISTEN

HEY GIRL, HEY! WE HAVE A WORKSHOP FOR THIS!



If the bill is drafted:

- Make a list of what leading advocates, organizers and trusted leaders are saying about the bill you support.
- Share experiences that help support what those leading are proposing as a solution.

If there is no bill drafted:

- Write down a brief description of the problem in your own words.
- Make a list of how the problem impacts your life; think work, income, health, etc.
- Make a list of how the problem impacts your community.
- Answer: What do you wish was different when you were interacting with the problem? What went well?



HOT TIP

- You don't have to share painful memories in an attempt to make a difference.
- Instead, focus on impact and solutions!

“BE SOFTER WITH YOU. YOU ARE A BREATHING THING. A MEMORY TO SOMEONE. A HOME TO A LIFE.”

NAYYIRAH WAHEED

ADVOCATES

- Have a goal in mind of how advocates can support you to share your story publicly.

ORGANIZERS

- Figure out how your story connects to a bigger strategy and movement.

COMMUNITY

- Share your story and solution and hear theirs.
- Who do they know that is working on this issue?

FAMILY/ FRIENDS

- Tell trusted friends and family your story and your ideas for a solution.

YOURSELF

- You are the first person you have to convince.
- Write your story down.
- Collect all your research and map out leaders.

STAND IN YOUR POWER AND MAKE A PLAN TO BE HEARD! WE BELIEVE IN YOU!



LEGISLATOR

- Connect your story to a specific current bill.

MEDIA

Answer questions related to your bill and issue.



Use your phone's camera or app to scan!

SHE LEADS JUSTICE EXPLAINS: FORMALIZING RELATIONSHIPS

BUILDING A COMMUNITY GROUP:

1. Tap into friends and community members who are affected by the issue and make a plan to meet.
2. Discuss skills, resources, connections and set a schedule of times to meet.
3. Make an online account for the group to post information and invite others to join.



Use your phone's camera or app to scan!



HOT TIP

Working in a coalition is a way to maximize resources, knowledge and power with other communities, people and organizations that share your values.

HOW WE PARTNER TO MAKE LEGISLATIVE CHANGE: BUILDING AND WORKING IN COALITIONS

BUILD:

1. Bring together community members, organizations, etc. to address a problem
2. Establish your values as a group and develop a solution to the problem
3. Set clear roles and expectations
4. Create a strategy to pass legislation
5. Re-work the strategy whenever necessary

WORK IN:

1. Make sure the Coalition aligns with your values and priorities
2. Be clear about what you can contribute
3. Activate your own network
4. Share updates and actions on social media
5. Lift up and support the leadership of others in the Coalition doing the work



Transformative policy change happens when we work together. She Leads Justice is a member of coalitions and supports the leadership of our partners:

COALITIONS:

Child Tax Credit

We are proud to help United Way of CT lead the CT CTC Coalition that aims to establish a permanent and fully refundable statewide child tax credit in CT.

Abortion Rights & Reproductive Health Care

We are a member of the Coalition for Choice and support PPSNE and Pro Choice CT in advocating for policies to increase access to reproductive freedom and abortion care.

Domestic Violence Survivor Justice

We support the DVSJA coalition in their work to attain justice for DV survivors in CT.

CT for All

We support the CT For All Coalition's efforts to create greater transparency and build equity into our state's current tax structure.

Husky 4 Immigrants

We are proud members of the H4I coalition that aims to ensure health care access for all, regardless of age or immigration status.

Medicaid & SNAP Defense

We are members of statewide coalitions dedicated to protecting Medicaid and SNAP benefits for qualifying families.

ADVOCACY SUPPORT:

Housing

We support more inclusive housing opportunities for families where they want to live, led by groups like the CT Fair Housing Center, Partnership for Strong Communities & CT Tenants Union.

Universal School Meals

We support the work to led by End Hunger CT! which aims for every child to have access to free school meals.

LGBTQIA+ Rights

We support policies to advance and protect the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community and follow the leadership of advocates & organizers including Equality CT.

Sexual & Domestic Violence

We support the leadership of the CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) and the CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence to advocate for increased protection for victims and survivors.

Civil Rights

SLJ proudly follows the lead of the CT ACLU in their work to preserve and protect the civil rights of everyone in CT.

Worker's Rights

SLJ remains steadfast in our dedication to promoting and expanding legislation that aims to ensure the rights and protections of workers in CT.

SHE LEADS JUSTICE EXPLAINS: THE CONNECTICUT STATE LEGISLATURE AKA CGA

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WHAT: The **Connecticut General Assembly** (CGA) is the state legislature of Connecticut. Its main responsibility is to pass laws.

WHO: **Legislators** are elected to 2 year terms to represent their district. The number of representatives elected to serve each town or city depends on population size.

WHERE: The **Legislative Office Building** (aka the LOB) is the building where most of the business of the legislature takes place, like committee meetings and public hearings.

The **State Capitol** is next to the LOB and it's where the legislature debates and votes on potential laws. The Governor's and Lieutenant Governor's offices are also located in the State Capitol Building.

151 State Representatives

36 State Senators

2 Year Terms

ADDRESS:

300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT
The entrance is on the left.

ADDRESS:

210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT
The entrance is on the left.



HOT TIP



- Park for free at the LOB or Capitol parking lots and garages.
- Parking outside of the LOB/Capitol is NOT free. Follow street signs.

ADVOCATE!

- Make sure to center the needs of people in your group who have been kept out of power in the legislative process by making educational materials like this toolkit accessible to all!

ORGANIZE!

- Make sure everyone knows the location, why, and the strategy of your meeting.
- Alert your members and participants of how to maneuver police presence.
- Have you taken a marshal training?
- Make sure your coalition, group, or organization knows our hot tips!

HOW MANY WOMEN ARE IN OFFICE?



11 of 36 Senators are women



56 of 151 Reps. are women



HOT TIP

Do you menstruate? Bring your own menstrual products or quarters to buy items from the bathroom machines.



Use your phone's camera or app to scan!



**CT WOMEN IN ACTIVISM:
MARY TOWNSEND SEYMOUR**

Mary Townsend Seymour co-founded and served as the Vice President of the Hartford NAACP. In 1920, she became the first African American woman in the U.S. to run for state office. Throughout her career, Townsend Seymour was a vocal activist, organizer and leader for labor rights, voting rights and more.

SHE LEADS JUSTICE SUPPORTS: HOW TO MANEUVER THE CGA WEBSITE

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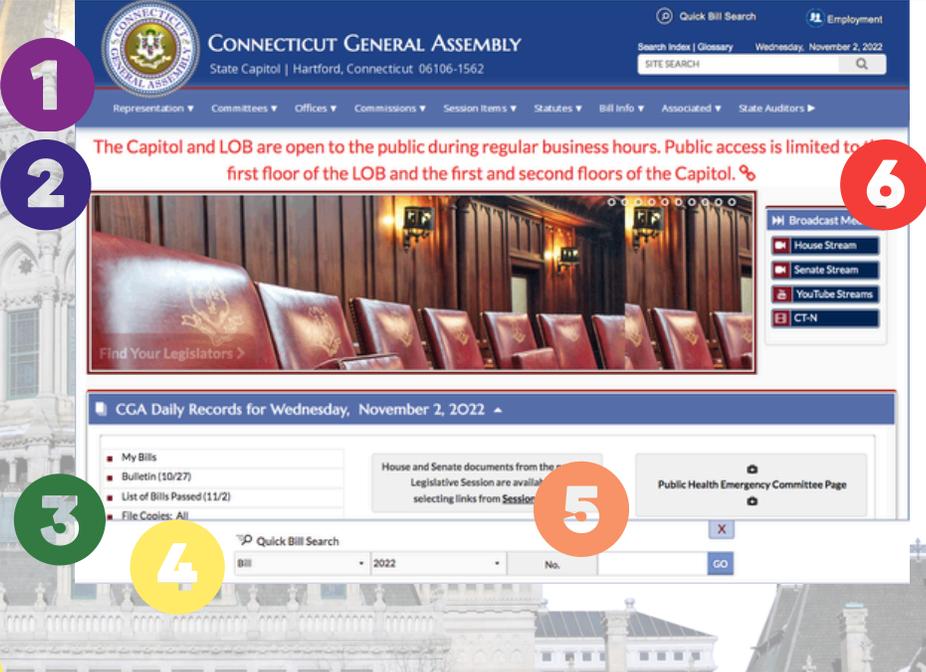
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The CGA website is your connection to the CT legislature, whether we are in person or virtual. Use the key below to know how to navigate the website's most important tools.

YOUR KEY TO: CGA.CT.GOV



- 1 Use this menu to find your legislator, explore different Committees and more
- 2 The CGA website tells you what parts of the Capitol and LOB are open to the public
- 3 Read the daily Bulletin for information on upcoming public hearings, committee meetings, etc.
- 4 Select "Session Items" for a page with resources about the current legislative session
- 5 Use "Quick Bill Search" to search a bill by its number, including bills from years past
- 6 Watch what's going on the Capitol on CT-N and YouTube



HOT TIP

The Bulletin (#3 on the key) provides all the info you need on public hearings like where and how to sign up.

ADVOCATE!
Use the CGA website to learn more about bills being debated. Who supports the bill? Who opposes? How did your legislator vote?

ORGANIZE!
How will you help your community navigate this website? Or will you create an information pipeline for your community?



CT WOMEN IN POLITICS: ELLA T. GRASSO

Ella Grasso was the first female Governor of Connecticut (1975-1980) and the first woman to be elected governor in the United States in her own right. Grasso's career in politics started in 1952 when she was elected to the State Legislature. She served as Secretary of State from 1958-1970 and in Congress from 1970-1974.



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SHE LEADS JUSTICE NEEDS YOU TO: CONNECT WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

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Your legislators work for you. They are important people to include in your strategy if you have a bill you are working on and a resource for getting your voice heard. Keep reading for tips on connecting with your legislators.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR:

The email and phone number of your legislator can be found on CGA website. Expect to schedule a meeting 2-4 weeks out.



Since COVID-19, most meetings are virtual. You can sometimes talk with them if you see them at the LOB or Capitol when they are free and not in the bathroom.

ORGANIZE!

- Help everyone practice their script and know the points.
- Coordinate rides and activities for your group.
- Help others schedule their own meetings.

MEETING YOUR LEGISLATOR



BEFORE

- Do your research to learn about them and what committees they are on.
- Prepare your story.

DURING

- Tell your story.
- Use facts to support your solution or policy.
- Ask for their support.
- Thank them for the meeting.

AFTER

- Follow up with an email highlighting key points or provide answers to any questions.

ADVOCATE!

- Create fact sheets to bring to the meeting.
- Prepare to answer questions about the bill.

4 TIPS FOR CALLING YOUR LEGISLATOR

1. Share your name, town and why you are calling.
2. Share your position on a bill. Ask theirs.
3. Follow up as soon as possible with more information.
4. Say thank you!

Example:
**Hello Representative,
My name is Ashley and I
live in Hartford. I support
_____ because
_____. Please support
this bill.
Thank you.**

3 TIPS FOR EMAILING YOUR LEGISLATOR

1. Share name, town/address, bill or cause.
2. Share your position and add resources.
3. Ask for support.

CT WOMEN IN CIVIL RIGHTS: RACHEL TAYLOR MILTON

Rachel Taylor Milton was a distinguished educator and civil rights crusader who co-founded the Urban League of Hartford in 1964, which today provides a variety of important services to the community. Milton was the first African-American woman to graduate from the Hartford Seminary School of Religious Education.



SHE LEADS JUSTICE EXPLAINS: PUBLIC HEARINGS

Use your phone's camera or app to scan!



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WHY PUBLIC HEARINGS ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR LEGISLATIVE CHANGE STRATEGY

Public hearings are opportunities to weigh in on a specific issue in support or opposition. They are ways to show its strength in numbers in support of an issue and for experts to state why a bill is important or harmful to a community.

2 WAYS TO TESTIFY:

1. Submit written testimony if you can't attend in person
2. Provide verbal testimony in person or remotely

3 BASICS OF PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. They are scheduled 5 days in advance
2. All information related to the hearing is available in the Bulletin on cga.ct.gov
3. The first hour is reserved for state officials



HOT TIP

- Each member of the public is given 3 minutes to testify.
- When called to testify introduce yourself with your name, town, bill number and title, and your position

How to Testify Remotely via Zoom

- Use the link on the Bulletin to sign up. After signing up, you'll receive an email with the Zoom link
- A lottery process determines the speaking order which is found on the Committee's page
- You'll be placed in a waiting room until your name is called
- Using your computer? Make sure you have a microphone on your computer if you need to talk. If not, use the call-in feature on a cell phone or a landline

How to Testify In Person

- Read the Bulletin for where to sign up in person at the LOB to testify
- When you sign up, note where you are in the order of speakers
- Legislators will call out your name when its your turn
- Walk to the table in front and make sure the microphone is on to begin your testimony
- Committee members may ask you questions. Answer what you can follow up with what you can't.



Submitting Written Testimony:

- Information on where to submit is in the Bulletin
- Write your name, town, bill number and title.
- State your position on the bill and why.

ORGANIZE

- Distribute testimony guides
- Make sure your community has working computers, internet, and/or phone for virtual testimony
- Provide interpretation if necessary and notify the clerk of the Committee
- Have someone follow the order of speakers to alert members when their turn is coming up
- Organize care for the group like food, water and other support



ADVOCATE

- Collect testimony
- Create a one pager about the bill and your position
- Coordinate expert testimony from other advocates
- Talk to legislative allies before the hearing - how can they help?
- Take notes on questions asked and what the opposition says
- Send follow up information to members of the Committee if necessary



HOT TIP 

SESSION BEGINS FEBRUARY 4TH 2026

The 2026 session ends on May 6th 2026

AN OVERVIEW OF SLJ'S POLICY PRIORITIES

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SLJ advocates for legislation at the State Capitol that advances women's economic security. Our key priorities for 2026 include,

Page Guide: Below are actions you can take to **advocate** and **organize** in your community on each issue. True to organizing practices, we've provided a script to help you advocate. Share with us how it goes!

1 CHILD TAX CREDIT

A permanent and refundable child tax credit in CT would provide flexible and dependable income to approximately 250,000 households and 550,000 children. This would give families much needed help to cover basic necessities which many of them struggle to afford.

Script: With costs of living continuously increasing, many families in CT struggle to make ends meet. CT is the only state that taxes families' incomes and doesn't offer a tax policy that offsets the cost of raising children. Implementing a child tax credit would reach 75% of families across every zip code in our state and help them provide basic necessities for their children. Investing in our children is a responsibility, not a handout.

Think about how a child tax credit would help you and your household and reach out to your legislator to tell them today!

2 HUSKY 4 IMMIGRANTS (MEDICAID DEFENSE)

All Connecticut residents, regardless of immigration status or age, deserve access to healthcare

Script: Investing in the health of ALL Connecticut residents, helps the state as a whole. Health coverage means preventative care, which translates into lower uncompensated care costs for hospitals, lower costs for the state, and most importantly, it helps us all be healthier!

How has the presence or lack of adequate healthcare affected you and the people you care about? How would it impact you if that were to change?

3 AN ECONOMY FOR ALL

Connecticut's budget and policies are a reflection of our state's morals and values. We need to adopt policies that require our wealthiest residents to pay their fair share and allocate CT's surpluses to critical agencies, programs and institutions.

Script: Poverty and economic suffering are a policy choice. It is essential that CT stops underfunding critical programs and starts investing in the communities who need it the most. We demand the ultra-wealthy pay their fair share of taxes, common sense changes be made to CT's fiscal guardrails, and surplus funds be not only used to pay off long-term debt, but also invested in public education, health care, and other critical and safety net programs.

Are you or your family going to be impacted by the recent federal cuts? How would it change your life if CT fully funded our public institutions/programs?

Need to check your voter registration, help to engage voters, or other voting resources? Check out the Voting is Social Work website!



CT WOMEN IN POLICY: DENISE NAPIER

Denise Nappier of Hartford was the first African American woman elected to statewide office and the first African American woman elected as State Treasurer in the nation. As Treasurer, Nappier advocated for better corporate governance and saved taxpayers billions of dollars. Prior to her election to statewide office Nappier served as Hartford City Treasurer from 1989-1998.



SLJ POLICY PRIORITY CHILD TAX CREDIT



SCAN HERE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Connecticut is the only high cost of living state with a broad personal income tax that does not adjust for the costs of raising a child or the number of children. Data shows that almost 40% of CT households are living below the ALICE threshold, generally meaning they are struggling to make ends meet or within poverty levels. A permanent and refundable child tax credit would provide flexible and dependable income to over 550,000 household in CT.



Scan QR code to learn more about Child Tax Credit!



WHY A CHILD TAX CREDIT?



Raising a family costs money! CT is an expensive state to live in; 40% of families need help making ends meet to provide their family with necessities.



CT is the ONLY high cost of living state with a broad personal income tax, that does NOT adjust for costs of raising children OR the number of children in a household. This does not make sense for CT families!



Single women and women of Color with children in CT are especially impacted by the costs of raising a family and providing basic necessities! No child should go without what they need to thrive!

THE SOLUTION



A permanent and fully refundable CT child tax credit of \$600 per child would provide flexible and dependable income for 75% of families, including 550,000 children, in our state!

GET TOGETHER TO DEMAND A CT CHILD TAX CREDIT!

Tackling an issue alone can feel overwhelming! Organize family members, friends, co-workers, or people from church or school. Scan the QR code to find your legislators and write them a letter explaining why a child tax credit matters to you!



GET LOUD! ASK YOUR CANDIDATES:

- ? Do you support a CT child tax credit?
- ? What policies are you championing that will benefit women, workers, and families?



SLJ POLICY PRIORITY HUSKY 4 IMMIGRANTS



SCAN HERE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Almost 60% of the roughly 113,000 undocumented individuals in Connecticut do not have access to health insurance coverage. After our world's experience with a global pandemic, we know that everyone having access to healthcare and health insurance is essential. Although the CT legislature has made progress in the last few years, too many people are still being left behind, especially young people under the age of 26.

WHY?



People are unable to take part in crucial preventative healthcare



Our state's economy suffers because of uncompensated care costs



CT loses out on the positive fiscal impacts of a healthier state.

THE SOLUTION

Over the last few years Connecticut has expanded HUSKY coverage to children age 0-15, as well as to undocumented pregnant people for prenatal and postpartum care. BUT She Leads Justice knows that we have not gone far enough. We need to pass a policy for everyone in Connecticut to have access to HUSKY regardless of their immigration status or their age!



HOT TIP!

CT has already passed laws allowing undocumented children up to age 15 and pregnant & postpartum mothers to access HUSKY

GET LOUD & ASK YOUR CANDIDATES:



Do you support HUSKY 4 Immigrants?



How will you work to ensure our immigrant communities are safe and healthy during the 2026 session?

THE TIME TO ORGANIZE IS ALWAYS NOW!

Start conversations to get you friends, family, colleagues, and fellow parents involved in this important issue! Call your legislators or write them a letter to tell them why it's important for all people to have access to health insurance in our state!



SLJ POLICY PRIORITY AN ECONOMY FOR ALL



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Connecticut's current tax code and budget allocations do not reflect a state government that values and invests in their working class. Working class earners pay a larger portion of their income in taxes than the wealthiest among us, massive yearly state surpluses are restricted from being used to fund essential programs and services, and corporations continue to prioritize profit over worker safety and economic stability. We must take meaningful steps to make robust changes in CT's tax and budget systems.

WHY?

When we disinvest in our working class they cannot:



Afford or access basic needs and services



Save or plan for the future



Fully participate in and help grow local economies

THE SOLUTION



We support legislation that:

- Makes adjustments to CT's overly strict fiscal constraints.
- Works to address our regressive tax structure
- Prioritizes the funding of critical state programs, services & institutions.
- Is pro-worker & pro-union, making CT safer and more affordable for all.

GET LOUD! ASK YOUR CANDIDATES:

- ? Do you support legislation that addresses CT's regressive tax structure?
- ? How do you plan on being a champion for working people and families while you are in office?



HOT TIP

A regressive tax system means working class people contribute more of their income to taxes than the state's wealthiest residents.

CT WOMEN IN HISTORY: Edythe Gaines

Edythe Gaines was the first woman and first African-American to serve as superintendent in Connecticut. She went on to serve as commissioner to the State Department of Public Utility Control and in 1992 was named to the Board of Governors of Higher Education. She was inducted into the CT Women's Hall of Fame in 1996.



Her son, Richard, is quoted as saying his mother "believed in kids, even when they didn't believe in themselves".

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HEY YOU!
ADVOCATE
WITH,
ORGANIZE
FOR AND
FUND US



Use your
phone's camera
or app to scan!

REACH OUT FOR LEGAL INFO:

IF YOU NEED LEGAL INFORMATION:

CONTACT SHE LEADS JUSTICE'S INFORMATION &
REFERRAL (I&R) LINE:

(860) 524-0601 OR

TOLL FREE: 1-800-479-2949

MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY: 9 AM - 2 PM

FRIDAY: 9 AM - 1 PM

