



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

Governor Daniel P. Malloy
2013 Legislative Session Closing Remarks
Hall of the House, State Capitol

June 6, 2013

Lt. Governor Wyman, Speaker Sharkey, President Williams, Leaders McKinney and Cafero, distinguished legislators. It's always an honor for me to address you in this great chamber.

I want to thank you for all of the hard work you've done over these months in service to the people of Connecticut. The chance to make change for the better, to help our communities and our state in challenging times is one of the greatest privileges our fellow citizens can bestow on us.

You have lived up to the trust they placed in you, and I want to thank you for your service.

It seems hard to believe that more than five months have passed since this legislative session began. I think back to that cold day in January when we came together to begin our work, all of us still reeling from the worst tragedy we could imagine.

Every one of us would give anything to go back to December 14 and prevent what happened that day. But we can't. The best we can do is to go forward in a way that honors those we've lost. And in the halls of the Capitol this session, we've seen that commitment to push forward.

We saw it in the Newtown families, whose continued presence here has been an inspiration to us all. We saw it in the survivors of urban violence, who came here to push for change so that others would not have to feel the pain that they carry.

Through each and every meeting, during each and every debate, all of us worked to make our state a better, safer place.

Make no mistake about it – the bipartisan gun violence prevention bill that we passed will make our state safer. The funding we secured for Project Longevity and other violence reduction efforts will help cities fight senseless violence on our streets.

The debate on gun violence in America is by no means over. We still have much work to do. But we did make progress here in Connecticut. We accomplished these things. And by and large, we did it together on a bipartisan basis.

We knew coming into this session that there were many debates on the horizon, challenges that needed to be dealt with if we were going to continue the progress made in our state over the past two years.

We knew that we had to build on our unprecedented economic development agenda, and we did – by passing an historic investment in our state’s flagship university. Next Generation Connecticut will usher in a transformational era for the university, one where we get the best and brightest in our state prepared to compete for 21st Century jobs.

We knew we had to continue the hard work of reforming our public schools, and we did. The actions we took this session build on last year’s remarkable work.

Think about this – at a time when it would have been easy to cut and run on education, we went in another direction and invested nearly half a billion dollars into our public schools, most of it going to chronically struggling districts.

Is it enough? When it comes to our public schools, it’s never enough. But working together, I know that our kids will have access to great public schools, no matter what city or town they live in.

We knew that we had to tackle our state’s energy challenges, and we did. Working together, we took great steps toward our goal of cleaner, cheaper and more reliable energy.

We knew we had to continue to help the hardworking men and women of our state, and we did. By raising the minimum wage and beginning to restore the clothing tax exemption, we will help families struggling make ends meet.

We knew we had to keep our commitment to our cities and towns, and we did. For the third year in a row, we are holding cities and towns harmless, so that nothing we do here will add to their property tax burden.

We knew we had to find ways for local governments to cooperate, and thanks to your work, we did. The M.O.R.E. Commission has put forward a clear path toward increased government efficiency and savings.

We wanted to continue our push to improve public awareness, and we did. Thanks to your activism, we are the first state in the country to pass legislation that will ultimately require the labeling of GMOs.

And we also knew there would be a hard fought battle on the budget. The agreement we reached was forged through honest debate, tough choices and compromise.

No budget is perfect, but let's be clear – this budget gets the big things right. This budget was done on time. This budget refuses to kick the can down the road and properly funds our state pension obligations, saving us billions of dollars over the next twenty years.

This budget invests in jobs and education and complies with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. This budget does all that, and contains no new taxes.

We have much to be proud of.

As we work to reinvent ourselves, we have created more than 26,000 private sector jobs – the highest rate of private sector job growth over a two-year period since the late 1990s.

We still have a long way to go, but we are making progress.

In a time when partisan gridlock has brought progress to a halt in Washington – and too many other places for that matter – we've done some great things together.

Your dedication to the people of this state is the reason progress is being made.

Working together, we can and will reinvent our state.

Thank you. May God bless you, may God bless the great State of Connecticut, and may God bless the United States of America.

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