



## *Winter 2020 – 2021 Issue Updates*

*During this time of crisis, we hope you are safe! At CCAG we continue to push action on the issues you care about. The following are some highlights of what your support makes possible*

### **ECONOMIC RELIEF** - Updates

Congress finally passed a much needed bi-partisan \$900 billion stimulus relief package in December- which includes direct payments of \$600 to most Americans, extends sorely needed federal unemployment insurance, provides additional loans under the Paycheck Protection Program, funds vaccine distribution and increases food stamp benefits. This legislation also provides much needed funds to prevent massive evictions that hundreds of thousands of Americans faced by the end of 2020. In spite of significant bi-partisan support, coupled with a fierce urgency to get relief to hundreds of thousands of Americans, President Trump threatened to veto the bill, bringing us close to the precipice of economic disaster. In the end, the pressure applied for both sides of the aisle forced Trump to drop his veto threat, and ironically has laid groundwork for subsequent calls for even greater relief and resources for 2021.

Meanwhile, income inequality, and the continued concentration of wealth for the 1% continues to explode at alarming rates, both nationally and within Connecticut. Since the pandemic began, the collective wealth of 17 Connecticut billionaires has jumped \$2.1 billion, the same as our entire operating budget, while ordinary workers have faced economic insecurity, job losses, reduction of hours and loss of much needed benefits.

While State and local government services predict a continuation of deep cuts and austerity measures, working people wonder how they will pay bills, feed their families and keep a roof over their heads. Meanwhile, Governor Lamont and some legislative leaders have thrown cold water on common sense proposals for expanded health care coverage, increased resources for schools, investment in affordable housing and bold proposals for investing in job creation and climate resiliency projects. These dynamics are articulated eloquently in a recent [CT Mirror Op-Ed](#) authored by Courtney Bourns, member of the Fair Share CT coalition.

Here is what we know, now more than ever: this pandemic has shown us that we pull through by pulling together, no matter what we look like or where we live. Communities from across Connecticut are determined to help each other and leave no one behind.

In 2021, CCAG looks forward to joining with members, faith, labor and community allies to ensure that every resident - no matter their race, gender or zip code - can enjoy the basic qualities of life that our wealthier neighbors take for granted: a living wage, affordable health care, high quality education, and saving a little for a rainy day.

### **Key priorities of the People's Recovery include:**

- Financial support and training opportunities for working people in Connecticut who have lost jobs or have been economically harmed by the pandemic.
- Increased funding for public services, good jobs, health care, affordable housing, education, small businesses, and infrastructure. No more cuts and forced austerity.
- Compelling billionaires and wealthy corporations contribute their fair share to the financial health of our state.
- Attention to racial and gender equity in all recovery programs and policies. Recovery is an opportunity to right historic and systemic wrongs that have persistently left these groups behind.

### **HEALTH CARE:**

There is a health care crisis in Connecticut. Workers and families are losing coverage due to the pandemic. Small business owners are finding it too expensive to offer health care to their employees. Expensive, high-deductible plans make health care inaccessible, while racial and ethnic disparities have gone unaddressed, worsening the long-standing inequities in our state. CCAG is joining forces with a diverse and growing coalition of advocates, law makers and health care policy experts to propose transformative solutions to make health care more affordable, accessible, and equitable. This coalition is demanding relief for residents, small business owners and non-profits by opening public health plans that prioritize affordability and quality health care, including and expanding our Medicaid program so parents and caregivers will have access to the same health care their children receive. The proposed 2021 legislation will rely on data and research to combat the continuing health care crisis, and will embrace a myriad of solutions that expand access to care.

Health care costs are a key driver of Connecticut's high cost of living. Reducing health care expenses, especially for low and middle income families, will expand the state's economy and ease the financial burden of families and small business owners.

This is good policy. It is also good politics. A recent study by Altarum Health Care Hub found that 92% of Connecticut residents believe there need to be more affordable health care options, 52% say they fear they won't be able to afford COVID 19 treatment when and if needed, and 24% struggle to pay their medical bills.

It's time to take action to create a more accessible, affordable and equitable health care system in Connecticut.

### **DEMOCRACY:**

**Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) & Early Voting.** Important voting reforms that would have increased participation, would have saved towns money, and would have eliminated the nightmares we saw in some municipalities on election day in 2018 were never voted on in the Senate in 2019. Then, due to the pandemic, another opportunity for passage was lost but the importance of these reforms became even more painfully clear. In 2021 CCAG will be pushing AVR and early voting in order to ensure that our democracy becomes stronger and more vibrant than ever.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE:**

CCAG, in partnership with our friends and allies, continues to make important advances in our fight against climate change.

Through the [Insure Our Future campaign](#), we put public pressure on decision makers at insurance companies to realign investments in fossil fuel projects, and instead focus on the movement towards a global transition to a low carbon economy. Together we led actions against The Travelers, WR Berkley and The Hartford, which all currently have billion-dollar policies with fossil fuel companies, such as coal and tar sands plants.

Through the actions and support of members like yourself, the insurance industry is listening and we are winning on this issue. [Visit our website for updates and current action.](#)

CCAG is also working to ensure that Connecticut state policies on climate change are bold and ambitious, and help to advance a more just, equitable and sustainable Connecticut.

This summer, we launched our CT Renews policy platform and established policy groups to expand our coalition of activists, community leaders and game-changers. Through these groups, we established policies under Clean Energy, Housing, Transportation, Clean Air and Water, Food Justice, and Green Justice Zones. With your help, we identified key legislative champions for each policy area.

Over 40 statewide advocacy organizations are actively engaged in the CT Renews effort, with CCAG leading the effort on holding community visioning events, organizing legislative meetings and actions, and creating opportunities for a diverse alliance of leaders and activists to join together for a common vision and purpose.

If you have not already, please sign-up to be a part of our Climate Justice work, either through CT Renews or the [Insure Our Future Campaign](#).

*None of us can anticipate what the days, months and beyond will bring. CCAG is as committed as ever to building a more just society. We thank you for your role in achieving this!*

**These are just a few highlights. For more information on these or other issues, please visit our website, [join our email list](#) to be kept updated, or contact:**

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