



CCAG 2022 Legislative Wrap Up

5/23/22

Phew! For a short session, CCAG and our allies accomplished a lot, and laid the groundwork for even more progress in coming years. We adopted many powerful measures to help mitigate climate change, protect our voting rights, address the mental health crisis in education, and ensure CT remains a safe haven for women and women's health providers. There is far more to do – but we saw real progress..

This session ended May 4 at midnight – just after the leaked Supreme Court decision on Roe offered a painful and powerful reminder of the power of dark money nationally, and the need for all of us to raise our voices for equity and justice.

CCAG has much more in store for 2022, 2023 and beyond. First of all, mark your calendars for **September 22, from 5:30 - 8:30 pm, to join us in celebrating 50 years of citizen action.** Details coming soon! Please also stay in touch via social media and check our website frequently for updates.

It is thanks to you that CCAG and our allies were able to blanket the sea, air and land with demands for climate justice last summer, which we believe helped set the stage for many of these legislative victories. We have more bold climate actions planned, and are redoubling our efforts to ensure Connecticut continues to lead the nation in progressive actions. Our members make this possible. Thanks for all you do!

[CLIMATE JUSTICE](#)
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CLIMATE JUSTICE

VICTORY! [SB 10](#) AAC CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION passed out of both chambers. This is the Governor's climate change mitigation bill. It sets a zero-carbon electricity goal by 2040 and codifies steps in his earlier executive order. It's a pathway to a clean energy future, with improved climate emission targets. Much work remains but this is a positive step. CCAG E.D. Tom Swan's [Testimony is here.](#) This bill has been signed by the Governor.

VICTORY! [SB 176](#) AAC SHARED CLEAN ENERGY FACILITIES passed out of the Senate and House. This increases caps on shared energy facilities. We support this but would like changes. Two last-minute amendments to the bill corrected an error in the definitions of low- and moderate income levels referenced in the (Shared Clean Energy Facilities) SCEF program, and require the Office of Policy Management to address the problem raised by members of our coalition of inconsistent property tax treatment of commercial solar. CCAG E.D. Tom Swan's [Testimony is here](#). This bill has been signed by the Governor.

VICTORY! Climate Change Education. Climate change is an emergency posing current and future threats to every human and the places we live. Education in schools and for the public is critical to build a base of knowledge and to support a just transition to a clean energy future for all, and to provide equal opportunities for careers. We are pleased this was voted out of the Education Committee as part of [HB 5285](#). CCAG Organizer Alberto Cifuentes Jr.'s [Testimony is here](#) and CCAG Organizer Angel Serrano's [Testimony is here](#) This was included in the budget implementer bill.

VICTORY! On transportation Pollution, two positive bills [HB 5039](#) and [SB 4](#) were combined and passed as Public Act 22-25! This applies California's emissions standards to heavy and medium trucks and has other positive measures. Transportation pollution in Connecticut is a serious problem for public health, environmental justice, and our climate. The transportation sector accounts for 38% of greenhouse gas emissions, and it disproportionately impacts Environmental Justice communities dealing with cumulative impacts of pollution. CCAG E.D. Tom Swan's [Testimony is here](#).

VICTORY! – FOOD JUSTICE: [SB 243](#) AAC CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES, provides for reimbursement or payment of agricultural restoration plans that include climate-smart practices, as defined by the United State Department of Agriculture, and is included in the budget. Stay tuned for a summer project that will address this critical issue!

MORE TO DO – [HB 5041](#) CONCERNING HOME ENERGY AFFORDABILITY FOR HOME RENTERS passed in the House but did not make it to the Senate floor.

SETBACK - [HB 5202](#) AN ACT EXEMPTING EXISTING NUCLEAR POWER GENERATING FACILITIES IN THE STATE FROM THE NUCLEAR POWER FACILITY CONSTRUCTION MORATORIUM, is a win for the nuclear industry, by removing the moratorium on new facilities until they have handles the existing waste. We thank Rep. Tercyak for offering an amendment which would have restored the prior law.

HEALTHCARE

PARTIAL, BUT SIGNIFICANT, VICTORY! HUSKY for Immigrants: Health care is a human right. Currently, people who are not documented cannot be covered by HUSKY insurance. Last year we won coverage for children up to age 8, beginning in 2023. The implementer raises that age to 12, and - importantly! - *ensures that those children covered will remain covered until they turn 18*. It also moves up implementation by a few months. It is still not enough - but a significant victory, especially in a short session, and considering that the Department of Social Services Commissioner opposed the bill on the grounds of its cost. CCAG and our allies will continue to fight until ALL people have coverage. As State Sen. Derek Slap and others have pointed out, the legislature has

been granting tax breaks to dozens of interest groups. We DO have the money! Health care is a human right, and no child should lose coverage.

PARTIAL VICTORY! We also developed significant momentum around **CERTIFICATES OF NEED (CON)**. [HB 5449](#) would have built off of our efforts around the maternity ward of Windham hospital and our recent work assisting in bringing a class action lawsuit against Hartford Healthcare. We have also been asked to help to develop a strategy around Yale New Haven Hospital's proposed acquisition of three hospitals, as well as consumer protections against out-of-pocket expenses that have been proposed by the Healthcare Advocate. The budget implementer, HB 5506, defines termination of services, increases the application fee, and establishes a Task Force to study and make recommendations on many elements of the Certificate of Need process. We will continue to focus on this issue.

NEAR VICTORIES: [SB 416](#) PROMOTING COMPETITION IN CONTRACTS BETWEEN HEALTH CARRIERS AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS Prohibiting anti-competitive provider/payor contract clauses is a promising legislative measure to help curb some of these skyrocketing costs, did not pass. We also did not see victory this year on **Prescription Drug Costs**. We are working with a coalition of groups including AARP, Universal Health Care Foundation, and Insulin for All to push for a prescription drug affordability board. **Hospital Community Benefits:** We worked closely with Health Equity Solutions and allies to demand greater community benefits from hospitals that meet the needs of the communities they serve. This year's bill would have established important criteria for future evaluation to hold hospitals accountable. While this did not succeed it garnered important support and we will continue to build on this momentum. We will keep pushing to end the commodification of health care, and for coverage for all, in coming years.

DEMOCRACY

We will be working towards this fall's election for the Constitutional Amendment to permanently secure early voting, and for future work to permanently secure absentee voting.

VICTORY! [HB 5262](#) AA REVISING CERTAIN ABSENTEE VOTING ELIGIBILITY STATUTES was voted out of committee. It allows qualified voters to vote by absentee ballot if during the hours of voting they are unable to appear because of sickness or physical disability other than their own sickness or physical disability. Additionally, the bill authorizes qualified voters to vote by absentee ballot on a primary election, general election, or a referendum if the voter will be absent from the town of their voting residence. HB 5262 also makes technical corrections regarding expired provisions of absentee ballot voting during the 2020 and 2021 elections. This would NOT give access to universal absentee ballot voting. The bill has been signed by the Governor!

VICTORY! [SB 184](#) AA EXTENDING THROUGH NOVEMBER 8, 2022, SEVERAL CHANGES REGARDING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION AS A RESULT OF COVID-19 AND CONCERNING ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT. Would extend through November 8, 2022, several changes regarding election administration as a result of COVID-19, and (2) specify "illness" as grounds for claiming eligibility to vote by absentee ballot. This was folded into HB 5262.

NEAR VICTORY - [SB 431](#) AAC REFERENDA, INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES AND CERTAIN OTHER POLITICAL SPENDING, would ban foreign money in ballot initiatives, clarify reporting requirements and improve transparency. Passed the Senate but did not get a vote in the House. While ultimately not successful this developed significant momentum. [SB 471](#), AA ELECTIONS AND STATE VOTING RIGHTS, would have afforded mechanisms for the challenge of certain election administration laws, practices or procedures that may impair the electoral rights of certain protected classes of individuals. Did not get a vote in either chamber. We supported.

EDUCATION EQUITY

We are working to help advance greater support for students' mental and emotional health in schools.

SIGNIFICANT VICTORY! [SB 1](#), [SB 2](#) and [5001](#) collectively address behavioral and mental health in schools with more funding and important new standards for school social workers and other needed resources. Elements include requiring districts to conduct student trauma needs assessments (which will help identify needed resources); requiring certain health plans to cover two mental health wellness examinations per year without a requirement for prior authorization; creation of a grant program to provide for student mental health specialists; grants for hiring and retaining additional school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, or school nurses; school-based health center expansions; minority teacher recruitment scholarships; expansion of preschool and mental health and behavioral services; requiring Boards of Education to establish policies limiting the withholding of recess as a form of student discipline; and establishing an annual student mental health day (May 26) "Get Outside and Play for Children's Mental Health Day." CCAG Special Projects Coordinator Liz Dupont-Diehl's [Testimony is here](#). CCAG Organizer Mykah Knight's [Testimony is here](#). These bills are awaiting the Governor's signature as part Public Acts 22-80, 22-81, and 22-47.

PROGRESS: [SB 274](#) AAC MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, was a study bill that made it out of committee. We will continue to work with allies on this critical issue.

PARTIAL VICTORY - [SB 423](#) AA IMPROVING INDOOR AIR QUALITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM, would require local and regional boards of education to maintain healthy indoor air quality in their schools. It passed out of committee. CCAG Organizer Mykah Knight's [Testimony is here](#). Language from the bill is [included in the budget](#) as an ongoing grant program, with funding for the first year, but not in the school construction bond program, which would have been preferable. Still it is progress and we will work to strengthen it. Many thanks to CEA for its work creating and leading a coalition to fight for this.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

VICTORIES! The budget implementer increases the state's **Earned Income Tax Credit** from 30.5% to 41.5% of the federal credit for one year. Additionally, it establishes a one-time **child tax credit** of \$250 per child for up to three children.

[SB 443](#), AACC THE TAX INCIDENCE REPORT, TAX INCIDENCE ANALYSES AND THE DISCLOSURE

OF RETURNS AND RETURN INFORMATION, would prioritize transparency by making sure the Department of Revenue Services provides comprehensive, uniform, data to drive tax policy decisions and report on how much is paid by each category of taxpayers - including the ultra-wealthy and mega-profitable corporations. Elements of this are included in the budget.

Various measures from, Governor Lamont's revenue proposal - including increasing the property tax credit from \$200 to \$300 and expanding it to property owners aged 65 and older; expanding the student loan tax credit for employers who pay down workers student loans; and lowering the mill rate cap on motor vehicle property taxes and reimbursing local governments for lost revenue - are included in the budget implementer..

These are just a few highlights. For updates on these or other issues, contact:

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