



## *2024 Legislative Wrap up and More Work to do*

*The 2024 legislative session lived up (or down) to all who may have read or heard about it. Governor Lamont and legislative leadership opted not to open the budget and to maintain spending constraints renewed in February. The legislature also failed to pass the “Big Green Monster” and numerous other climate and healthcare measures. With your help, we did prevent some very bad bills, and made modest gains with many good ones. Some highlights are detailed below. We are already building strategy and strength for the critical fights ahead.*

*Please reach out with feedback and ideas, and thanks for all you do!*

### **CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**We are very happy to report that SB 292 AAC Concerning the use of PFAS in Certain Products passed and will help to prevent these toxic chemicals from entering our bodies and water by banning them from use in more consumer goods such as apparel, homewares, furniture, children’s products, and personal hygiene products.**

More good news is that the bill ended up including firefighting "turnout gear", meaning protective clothing worn by firefighters and emergency medical services personnel during firefighting and post-fire operations which will keep our heroes from PFAS contamination while they are saving lives.

**HB 5232 Expanding Solar Projects.** This bill will allow for expansion of caps on non-residential solar projects, which have been severely limiting the ability of farmers, among others, to install solar to produce energy to benefit their farming operations. It will also simplify the process for putting up solar canopies (over parking lots, walkways, driveways, etc.)

**One of the biggest bills on climate change was HB 5004 known as the Big Green Monster.** The bill contained legislation that would have offered measures to advance Connecticut’s goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, phase out the use of natural gas, invest in renewable energy, incentivize sustainable purchasing by local governments, and enhance nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change. The bill passed the house but was never called for a vote in the senate due to republican opposition. Over the summer we will be pushing for federal protections where our state failed.

**CCAG and Insure Our Future continue to work to hold insurance companies accountable for climate destruction.** As many of you know, the Connecticut legislature was not able to accomplish any regulatory policies for insurance companies in our state who invest in and underwrite fossil fuels. Once again we find we must continue to take this issue into our own hands and directly to the insurance companies.

On May 15th activists from CCAG and Third Act CT attended the Travelers insurance company stockholder meeting in Hartford. Travelers is one of the top fossil fuel insurers in the world. We presented our list of demands, including that they stop insuring fossil fuel projects. Visit <https://bit.ly/CCAGClimate-Environment> for the full story and press.

Over the summer we will continue to keep pressure up on these companies. If fossil fuel projects can’t be insured or underwritten, they can’t exist. Stay tuned.

For questions or to join in this campaign, please contact Helen Humphreys: [helenh@ccag.net](mailto:helenh@ccag.net), 860-202-3731.

### **HEALTHCARE**

Our healthcare supporters will recall the unprecedented failure of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee to vote out ANY bill, left much for us to continue to work on in the future. In spite of the IRE committee failure, we were all still able to get a few significant wins.

**CCAG and allies fought against Association Health “Plans” (AHP’s),** which are not even actually insurance and are not legal in Connecticut. They have been shown in other states to result in discriminatory pricing based on age, race, or disability, and destabilize the health insurance market. We presented highly public opposition against this horrible concept with hundreds of calls from the public, and we are happy to say that any bill that would have included AHP’s failed to pass.

**SB 181 AAC Emergency Department Crowding** will begin to address this growing issue by following the recommendations of a working group to provide detailed information to the state on numerous factors including boarding, which leaves admitted patients in the ER and is contributing to the problem.

**SB 395 AAC the Reporting of Medical Debt** passed and prohibits health care providers and hospitals from reporting a patient's medical debt to consumer reporting agencies (CRAs) for their credit report on and after July 1, 2024. It also voids any portion of such medical debt that is reported to the CRAs.

**SB 5005 AAC Expanding Paid Sick Days in the State** passed and will expand coverage in three phases by lowering the threshold to qualify from companies with 50 or more employees to those with 25 or more on Jan. 1, 2025; to 11 in 2026; and to one in 2027. The benefits will apply to nearly every worker in the state by 2027.

Special thanks to She Leads Justice, Working Families in Connecticut, AARP CT, as well as other organizations, individuals and legislative champions who fought for and won passage of this expansion, which goes into effect Oct. 1, 2024.

**The Stop HUSKY Discrimination Coalition** won a first-in-the-nation mandate for timely wheelchair repairs, and a mandate for hospitals to begin to acquire certain diagnostic equipment.

Negative changes to HUSKY A were adopted - despite being voted down by the Human Services committee after a public hearing.

HUSKY4Immigrants did not succeed in raising the age of coverage for people who are not documented up to age 18, but did garner significant support, and built momentum for expansion next year.

For more information on CCAG's healthcare work, please contact Liz Dupont-Diehl at [LizDD@ccag.net](mailto:LizDD@ccag.net).

## **DEMOCRACY**

**HB 5498 AAC Election Security and Transparency and Various Other Revisions.** This bill passed and is very comprehensive but doesn't go far enough, and there will be more work to do next year.

Major provisions would revamp several aspects of the state's absentee ballot rules and would require the following:

Video recording of absentee ballot drop boxes, and for municipalities to retain those recordings; Town clerks to record the method of receipt for absentee ballots and to track absentee ballots in a statewide voter registration system, and; Limit who can request additional absentee ballots as well as when voters can submit absentee ballot applications. The bill also includes several other provisions that serve to clean up other aspects of Connecticut's voter laws.

**SB 253 AAC Foreign Political Spending** passed and will prevent foreign interference in state referenda and elections and allow for greater enforcement of violations, including by allowing the State Elections Enforcement Commission more time to investigate foreign political spending cases.

**CCAG also testified on a bill to provide critical support to local journalism.** HB 5408 would have required state agencies to allocate 15% of their advertising spending to Connecticut-owned news outlets that produce local journalism. Had it passed the bill would have been important support for the journalism that democracy needs to survive.

**These are just a few highlights, for more information and upcoming action on this or our other work, please visit our website, join our email list or contact:**

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