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Senate and House Democrats Announce 2019 Legislative Priorities

HARTFORD, CT—Today, Democrats in the Connecticut General Assembly announced joint priorities for the 2019 legislative session. The legislative package focuses on establishing a paid family and medical leave program, raising the minimum wage, investing in job training and the state's workforce pipeline, supporting small businesses, making prescription drugs more affordable, creating a Green New Deal for Connecticut and increasing access to the ballot box.

"I am proud to stand here today to unveil the Democrat's public policy priorities for 2019," said Senate President Pro Tempore Martin M. Looney. "These are important quality of life and vital economic policies for our state. The proposals outlined here will build upon the critical policy work we have accomplished in past years and will respond to the priorities of the people of our state."

"Helping to improve the lives of Connecticut's working families is a priority for our caucuses, and issues such as our workforce pipeline, earned family leave and minimum wage are important parts of the equation," Speaker of the House Joe Aresimowicz (D-Berlin/Southington) said. "This is a time of opportunity for our state and this legislature has a great combination of new faces to go along with the experience necessary to make positive change."

"One of the great things about going door-to-door during campaign season is every member of the House and Senate Democrats has had hundreds of conversations with their constituents and local businesses," House Majority Leader Matt Ritter said. "Our legislative agenda is a product of actively listening to the people we represent."

"The people of Connecticut spoke loud and clear that we need to move our state forward," said Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff (D-Norwalk). "These legislative proposals will build a stronger, more prosperous Connecticut for the middle class and our families. That means paying our residents a fair wage for a hard day's work, helping them with training to get a new job, giving them access to affordable prescription drugs and helping them if they must take time off from work to care for a sick family member."

The legislative package includes the following proposals:

Paid Family and Medical Leave

Senate Bill 1: An Act Concerning Paid Family And Medical Leave &

House Bill 5003: An Act Implementing A Paid Family Medical Leave Program

Paid family and medical leave is necessary and beneficial to our modern workforce. Connecticut families should be able to care for loved ones or themselves in their time of need. No one should have to face the prospect of economic ruin when presented with serious family needs such as caring for a newborn, a spouse, or their parents.

Increasing the Minimum Wage

*Senate Bill 2: An Act Increasing The Minimum Fair Wage &
House Bill 5004: An Act Raising The Minimum Fair Wage*

Raising the minimum wage is long overdue in the State of Connecticut. Numerous large corporations and other states have already taken steps to increase their minimum wage so workers can earn a fair, adequate and ‘livable’ wage. We must do all we reasonably can to help workers support themselves and their families.

More Affordable Prescription Drugs

Senate Bill 4: An Act Concerning The Affordability And Accessibility Of Prescription Drugs

Democrats stand united in the belief that health care is a right not a privilege. Left unchecked, the pharmaceutical industry raises costs on consumers and limits access to prescription drugs. When a person is sick they should be able to get the prescription drugs they need, and this legislation will reduce prescription drug costs.

Job Training & Workforce Pipeline

*Senate Bill 5: An Act Concerning A Workforce Pipeline And Job Creation &
House Bill 5001: An Act Ensuring That Students In This State Receive High-Quality Skills Training*

Building upon the success of the workforce pipeline initiatives from last year, Democrats will expand these workforce development programs. It is critical we have an efficient, effective workforce pipeline to meet the growing needs of Connecticut employers.

A Green New Deal for Connecticut

House Bill 5002: An Act Concerning The Development Of A Green New Deal

Our “Green New Deal” will look to encourage economic growth and job creation through programs focused on improving energy efficiency, expanding renewable energy, ensuring long-term sustainability and strengthening infrastructure resiliency. This will help us transition to a much-needed climate-safe economy and move us closer to the ultimate goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Support for Small Businesses

House Bill 5005: An Act Supporting Local Businesses

We aim to continue to step-up our support of local businesses by streamlining government services and expanding access to capital for small businesses. This will build upon the recent work we did implementing one-stop shopping and a dedicated business hotline at DECD.

Early Voting

SJ 14: Resolution Proposing A State Constitutional Amendment To Permit Early Voting

Democrats believe the more people who are able to vote, the stronger our democracy. Creating early voting in Connecticut will ensure that everyone has the ability to vote and will modernize our voting system.