

House Republican Press Release

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Capitol Commentary By State Rep. Mary Ann Carson



Health-Related Legislation Under Consideration

With the first month of the 2008 Legislative Session now complete, legislative committees have held public hearings on many bills expected to move forward in the coming weeks. The following are several noteworthy bills that have recently been included in public hearings held by the Legislature's Public Health Committee.

Senate Bill 283, An Act Concerning The Availability Of Hospice Services Under The Medicaid Program, would require the state Department of Social Services to amend Medicaid plans to include the full array of hospice services.

House Bill 5631, An Act Concerning An Income Tax Deduction For Expenses Associated With Organ Donation, which I have introduced with State Senator David Capiello, would provide a tax deduction not to exceed \$10,000 to individuals who are living organ donors. Donating an organ while still alive is a truly noble act and this legislation would make these donors eligible for tax deductions to cover expenses such as lost wages, out-of-pocket medical expenses, travel, etc. incurred for this purpose.

I am pleased to have coproduced House Bill 5448, An Act Concerning Tobacco Education Programs For Minors, which would establish a grants for tobacco education programs to discourage smoking among students in grades one to eight. Recent news reports noted that Connecticut holds the dubious distinction of ranking at the bottom of the 50 states in spending funds from the national tobacco settlement fund on cessation and prevention programs. This legislation represents a way to begin addressing that situation by reaching young children before they start smoking.

Senate Bill 246, An Act Establishing A Loan Forgiveness Program For Historically Underrepresented Students Pursuing Careers In Nursing, would establish a program for the forgiveness of loans provided by the state to students of racial or ethnic minority groups who are pursuing a degree to become a registered nurse.

House Bill 5037, An Act Concerning Methamphetamines, would establish new limitations at retail stores regarding access to medicines containing ephedrine, pseudoephedrine or phenylpropanolamine, which are often the ingredients used to create

methamphetamines. It would also establish new fines for using drug paraphernalia to create methamphetamines.

One controversial topic under consideration involves House Bill 419, An Act Prohibiting Smoking In Regulated Areas Of Casinos, which would prohibit smoking in the state's two casinos.

I look forward to providing updates on additional legislation that will be moving forward in the legislative process in the coming weeks.