



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

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2018 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

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Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Lt. Governor Wyman, and my fellow state officials, ladies and gentlemen of the General Assembly, members of the clergy, and all the people of our great state: thank you for the honor of inviting me once again into the people's House.

I want to thank the best Lieutenant Governor in the world, Nancy Wyman.

As always, let us thank Connecticut's brave men and women serving our nation here at home and around the globe.

And finally thank you to my wife Cathy, our children, and for the first time our granddaughter Grace Elizabeth for their love and support.

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Historically, when I come before you to begin a new session, I spend much of my time focusing on our state budget and my ideas for keeping it in balance. This year, I began that conversation a little early.

On Monday I put forward a proposal to keep our budget in balance this fiscal year and next. And last week, I issued a detailed plan to shore up our Special Transportation Fund to the benefit of every business and every family in Connecticut. Those plans and their supporting legislation are now before you.

As always, there will be plenty of time throughout the session for us to continue our conversations about responsible stewardship of state resources. I plan to work with you on all those things. And to be sure, we have quite a lot of work to do.

But for this day, with this opportunity, and with this honor to address you once again, I'd like to do something different. I'd like to begin the 2018 legislative session by focusing our attention on just one thing. Something that is a simple concept, but also a bold aspiration.

I'd like to talk about *fairness*.

Fairness lies at the very center of our national origin, and our national purpose. It is part of the American promise – that if freedom means anything, it means a fair shot at a decent life for all people.

Fairness is also the compact we make with one another – in our homes, in our neighborhoods, and in our workplaces. It's the golden rule we teach our children: to treat others as you wish to be treated.

No matter your creed or culture, no matter when or how you or your ancestors arrived in this country, fairness is a common sensibility we all hold dear. It is a touchstone of what it means to be American. And here in Connecticut, the pursuit of fairness has been a constant throughout our history.

After all, Connecticut is the birthplace of John Brown, and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Fairness inspired our state heroine, Prudence Crandall, when in 1832 she defied unjust laws by inviting black women from around the country here to Connecticut to be educated.

In 1869 fairness drove Frances Ellen Burr and Isabella Beecher Hooker to form the *Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association*, helping lead the way nationally in the fight to allow women to vote.

Here in Hartford, restaurant cooks and waiters sought fairness in 1902 when they formed Connecticut's first black labor union, fighting for their declared principles of 'living wages, justice, protection, and equal rights.'

And in 1943, fairness was demanded by the inmates of our Danbury prison, when they staged a 135-day hunger strike to protest racial segregation in their dining hall. Because of their efforts, Danbury became the first federal prison in America to have integrated meals among its inmates.

This common thread of fairness has woven its way through Connecticut's history, all the way to present times. In recent years, we have worked hard to ensure that when it comes to equity, justice, and basic compassion for one another – our actions have lived up to our rhetoric.

We've been driven by *Connecticut Fairness*.

Connecticut Fairness recognizes that love comes in all forms. It's why in 2008 we became just the third state in our nation to legalize gay marriage.

Connecticut Fairness means fighting discrimination wherever we see it. It's why in 2011 we ensured that all people's rights were protected – regardless of their gender identity or expression.

Connecticut Fairness means that people should be valued in their place of work. It's why we were the first state in the nation to raise our minimum wage over ten dollars.

Connecticut Fairness means that we protect survivors of domestic violence. It's why in 2016 we prohibited the possession of a firearm for anyone who becomes subject to a temporary restraining order.

Connecticut Fairness means we don't punish children for the actions of their parents. It's why we passed the Connecticut DREAM ACT – to make sure that kids brought to this country by their parents still have access to affordable higher education.

And Connecticut Fairness means we help those most in need. It's why we've welcomed vulnerable people when other states would not – from our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico, to those fleeing war and poverty around the globe.

Simply put, Connecticut Fairness means we take care of one another – especially our most vulnerable. We reach out to one another across our great cities and towns, across our neighborhood streets, and across the aisle here in state government.

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This year, I urge you to consider Connecticut's rich tradition of fairness in the context of a national and global landscape that is changing by the hour, leaving many of our constituents feeling anxious about their future, and about the future of their state and nation.

Too many people are falling behind financially, even as they work harder and harder. The gap between the rich and the working poor continues to grow.

Too many historically marginalized groups are still subject to harassment, oppression, and unequal treatment.

Too many of our fellow citizens are denied a real chance, let alone a second chance, at a good and productive life.

Too many people are embracing a newfound disregard for truth; it's a bizarre reality where facts are called fake, and the free press is mocked and maligned in a way that we have never seen before.

We find ourselves at a defining moment in our history, as a state and as a nation. We can no longer afford the luxury of silence, or the alluring comfort of the status quo.

This year, in the face of growing national inequity and unfairness, I want to begin a conversation about a series of commonsense changes we can adopt to advance our proud tradition of Connecticut Fairness.

I'm going to touch on a number of diverse topics that reach across the spectrum of services we offer our citizens. As I share them, I want you to keep in mind that each of these proposals builds upon work we have already begun together during the past seven years.

We won't be able to solve every problem or right every wrong, but together we can send a signal to the rest of the nation – and indeed the rest of the world, that Connecticut leaders will always recognize injustice and inequity, and that we will meet it head on with compassion, with love, and with fairness.

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Let's start with a basic human right that should never be out of reach for anyone. Let's talk about healthcare.

When the federal government finally gave Connecticut the chance to provide affordable healthcare to more of our citizens, Nancy Wyman got to work. Under Nancy's leadership, Connecticut has built one of the most successful healthcare exchanges in the nation. We've cut the number of uninsured people in half. Just this year, over 100,000 residents found their health insurance through our exchange.

But now, affordable healthcare is under assault in Washington. If we fail to act, premiums will rise, and lifesaving treatments will be put out of reach for more and more families.

Connecticut Fairness should mean keeping health insurance affordable for everyone. We must take action to ensure stability in our insurance marketplace and to contain premium costs for consumers. We can do something our neighbors in Massachusetts have already done on a bipartisan basis and under a Republican governor.

Together, let's pass a bill that preserves the most vital elements of the Affordable Care Act – including the individual mandate. Let's make it clear that in Connecticut, *healthcare is a fundamental right*.

And while we're working on health care, we can do one more thing: we can pass a law that ensures that, irrespective of what happens in Washington, birth control for Connecticut women will remain cost-free.

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Connecticut Fairness also means that hard-working people should know that they will not lose their job just for getting sick. It's why in 2011 we passed the first 'paid sick' law in the nation. Since then, eight states and Washington DC have followed our lead.

A person should not worry about losing wages when they catch the flu.

A working parent should not need to choose between lost pay and taking care of a sick child.

And customers should not worry about being served by a sick employee.

This year, the opportunity is before us to improve our paid sick leave laws. Let's catch up with states that have now surpassed us on this front.

Together, let's pass a bill that closes loopholes, protects even more of our workers, and makes Connecticut a healthier place to live and to work.

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Connecticut Fairness also means that as we worry about the health of our residents, we also need to worry about the health of their environment.

The science is indisputable. Our climate is changing – temperatures continue to rise, the ice caps continue to melt, and our weather is more severe than at any time in modern history.

In 2008, Connecticut set ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2020, and to the credit of many people in this chamber, we hit that goal eight years early.

In recent years, we've diversified the kinds of energy we use, bringing in more than a billion dollars in new investments in fuel cells and other green energy and creating 13,000 new jobs along the way.

But we have to do more, because Connecticut Fairness means caring not just about our own immediate interests, but also about the interests of future generations. And the truth is, future generations face an undeniable threat: sea levels in Connecticut are now set to rise nearly two feet by the year 2050.

To help communities up and down our beautiful shoreline, we need to create a new comprehensive resiliency plan – one that gives Connecticut towns the tools and the resources they need to protect their residents.

And we can't stop there. We have to lower carbon emissions everywhere. We have to once again make Connecticut a national leader in green energy.

Together, let's create a new, more aggressive target for clean air. Let's mandate that by the year 2030, 75 percent of *Connecticut energy is clean energy*.

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Connecticut Fairness also means that people across our state should have access to safe, affordable housing.

For too many working families, the cost of housing dominates their monthly budget. The simple truth is that no one should have to choose between a roof over their head or health care; a roof over their head or warm clothing; a roof over their head or nutritious food for their children. These are choices that no family should have to face.

It's why over the past seven years we've funded nearly 20,000 new units of affordable housing in Connecticut. It's why we worked so hard to make Connecticut just the second state in the nation to end homelessness among veterans, and why we have led the nation in the fight to end chronic homelessness for all of our people.

We know that a diverse mix of housing creates better neighborhoods. It enables young people graduating college to move back to their hometowns. It allows seniors to remain in their communities. It lets teachers and police officers and firefighters actually live in the towns that they serve.

Unfortunately, there are still too many places in Connecticut where the supply of affordable housing is simply not keeping up with demand. We need to take action this year to build more housing. We need to incentivize cities and towns to develop more inclusive options for their residents.

We can do it by building upon the efforts of the bipartisan Fair Housing Working Group that has been focused on recommitting Connecticut to this important endeavor.

Together, let's pass a bill that ensures that all people have a place to live, regardless of their income or their zip code.

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Connecticut Fairness also means that the wellbeing of our constituents always takes precedence over the desires of powerful special interests.

We've held true to this maxim before. During some of the darkest days in our history, in the aftermath of an unspeakable tragedy of senseless gun violence, state leaders emerged united and determined.

We passed bipartisan gun violence prevention laws that are among the strongest in the nation, and the people of Connecticut are safer for it. In fact, over the last four years violent crime has dropped faster in Connecticut than in any other state in the nation.

While Connecticut has done its part, Congress continues to capitulate to the demands of the NRA over the demands of the American people. It is not right, and it is not fair. We have a duty to build on our past work together, and to continue protecting Connecticut families.

After last year's horror in Las Vegas, Congress tried and failed to ban modifications that allow weapons to fire at machine gun-like speed. These devices are cheap, they are deadly, and they are completely and utterly unnecessary in our society today.

After all, it is only fair that small children not face terror in their schools; that churches remain places of worship, not scenes of violence; that concerts are venues for celebration, not carnage.

Surely, regardless of where each of us stands on the second amendment, we can all agree that no innocent person should know the terror of gunfire raining down on them at a rate of 90 bullets every ten seconds.

Together, let us do what Congress could not do. Let's close dangerous loopholes and ban bump stocks in the State of Connecticut.

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Here's something else Connecticut Fairness recognizes: everyone deserves a legitimate second chance. This includes our youngest adults who are just beginning to build a life of their own.

Unfortunately, all too often, a young person's opportunity at a genuine second chance is unfairly derailed before they're even old enough to buy alcohol or rent a car.

The research is clear: the brains of young adults are still developing well into their twenties. And the fact is, under current law the infractions of the vast majority of young adults in our court system do not result in even a single day of jail. And yet, simply appearing in adult court becomes an indelible mark on their record, potentially damaging them for life as they apply for college or a job.

In response, since 2010 Connecticut has twice raised the age for what constitutes a juvenile in our court system – not once, but twice.

The result has been less crime, fewer victims, fewer prisoners, and reduced cost for taxpayers. In fact, our efforts have been hailed as a national model for success. We know what works.

This year, it is time to take another measured, sensible step forward. We can ensure that young adults who have not fully matured are not branded for the rest of their lives for mistakes they made when they were young.

Together, let us pass a bill that offers Connecticut's young adults a real second chance. Let's give them classrooms instead of prison cells, and opportunity instead of incarceration.

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Another thing that Connecticut Fairness entails is protecting a person's right to vote. Our democracy depends on open and fair elections, and Connecticut has a track record of protecting and expanding voting rights.

In 2012 we passed 'same-day registration' so that eligible voters could sign-up on Election Day and cast their ballot in the town in which they reside.

In 2016 we implemented one of the country's most comprehensive "motor voter" programs, making registration easier and more convenient.

But still, our modern lives and busy schedules don't always align with a 14-hour block of time for voting. People who work hard and follow the rules should be able to express their most fundamental democratic right. That's why I will continue working with Secretary of State Denise Merrill and with everyone in this chamber to make voting more accessible.

Here's one simple but powerful way we can start. Together this session, we can pass a constitutional amendment that would allow all Connecticut residents to vote early *for any reason*.

And on this topic, let us not waste a moment in our effort to make voting easier and more accessible. Let's plan ahead. Let's look at best practices around the nation for increasing voter participation.

To that end, today I will issue an executive order directing my administration to explore and report on the feasibility and benefits of creating a 'vote by mail' system in Connecticut. Let's work together on this effort.

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The final few ideas I want to share with you today are all squarely focused on furthering the cause of fairness in the workplace.

We can start with fair wages.

Holding a full-time job should afford a person a standard of living that meets their basic needs. In 2014 we led the nation by raising our minimum wage to more than 10 dollars an hour. But the truth is, over time, the cost of living continues to rise. Basic necessities like rent, food, and utilities continue to increase. As a result, family budgets are more strained.

We should be leaders on this issue once again.

Senator Looney, you have been a stalwart champion for working people in our state. I am committed to working with you and members of both chambers this session. Together, let's pass a bill that ensures another January does not come and go without a raise in Connecticut's minimum wage.

I also want to focus for a moment on the more than 8,000 professionals caring for our loved ones who are elderly or disabled. These hardworking people do lifesaving work, and they do it 'in-home,' which is better for their patients and for Connecticut taxpayers. They deserve a livable wage, and to finally be covered for workers compensation.

A negotiated contract that will soon come before you for approval will do just that. It's the right and fair thing to do, and I urge you to support it.

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Connecticut Fairness also means that people should be paid according to their know-how and their skill, not their gender or their race.

We know that asking for salary history disproportionately impacts women and people of color. When a person begins their career underpaid, they are unlikely to ever catch-up. That's why Connecticut took a stand against unfair compensation practices. Together, we passed a law prohibiting employers from silencing workers when it comes to salary.

But we have more work to do. On average, women in Connecticut still only earn 82 cents for every dollar that a man makes. For women of color, the disparity is even more glaring. Our moral compass demands that we do better.

This year, we should build upon prior successful efforts to promote fair pay. We should encourage employers to base their salaries on the qualifications of an applicant, the demands of a given job, and the value of that position in the marketplace – not on how much someone was previously paid.

I know that legislative leaders of both parties – as well as Senator Bye, Representative Porter and others – are working hard on this topic, and I want to work with you. Together this year, let's pass a bill that helps make sure every person in Connecticut receives equal pay for equal work.

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Connecticut Fairness also means that everyone has the right to feel secure and free of harassment in their places of work.

The fact is, most Americans spend the majority of their waking hours at work. It is also true that our places of employment often come with an innate power structure that can leave too many people vulnerable and open to abuse.

Far too many people have been denigrated, intimidated, and violated in their workplace. I want to applaud the legions of courageous women across our nation who have come forward to share their stories of sexual harassment.

The reality is we are long overdue for an honest reckoning over harassment in the workplace. There is an immediate need to change workplace culture – from small towns to Hollywood, from the mailroom to the boardroom, and from the jailhouse, to the statehouse, all the way up to the White House.

Very often, men see women first and foremost as our mothers, our sisters, and our daughters. But women are not simply a reflection of the men around them. Their value isn't defined by something external, but rather something innate – a basic human dignity we all possess, and that we must all recognize in one another.

That's why we need to hear the voices of the victims, we need to believe them, and we need to act.

This session, let's have a conversation about respect, about boundaries, and about basic human decency. Let's improve and expand training in all workplaces, public and private. Let's empower bystanders to help stop harassment. Let's focus on changing our culture, not just changing compliance. And let's make sure these efforts endure beyond this year, and beyond this generation!

Together, let's pass a bill that moves this important conversation forward, because we know we can no longer wait.

Time. Is. Up.

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My friends, as we begin another session together, I am reminded of my mother's words. She told me every day that we have an obligation to leave this world a better place for our having lived in it.

That is the obligation we all feel. It is why we ran for office in the first place. It is what led us into this chamber. It's our shared belief in Connecticut Fairness.

Together, we have the advantage. We have strength in numbers. Good people are never outnumbered. Not in this state, not in this nation.

Again and again this past year, in the face of growing anxiety across our nation and around the globe, we saw clear examples of our common humanity.

As minority groups have been marginalized and harassed, and as the government deports law-abiding residents, communities are banding together to say "no" and to demand that Congress take action.

As gerrymandering and voter suppression have taken root in far too many places, people who just a few short years ago would never have considered running for office are now putting their names on the ballot – and winning. They are standing up and demanding to be heard.

And as women from every walk of life have faced degradation from the highest office in our land, they are now marching *en masse* in some of the largest single-day demonstrations in our nation's history.

Let us offer a beacon of hope to all these people fighting on the right side of fairness.

We can hold fast to our common humanity. We can strive to be evermore inclusive, and evermore compassionate. We can stop the tides of prejudice and hate from washing away our progress and drowning our ideals.

Our fight to build a more just and more equitable society can never be deterred.

History will judge us by our action this year, this session, to build a better, *fairer* Connecticut.

So let's get to work.

God bless you, God bless America, and God bless the great State of Connecticut.

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