



CCM Election 2012 Campaign
Connecticut's Hometowns:
Issues & Questions for U.S. Senate & Representative Candidates

Survey Results

CCM submitted a survey to all Connecticut candidates for federal office on issues of concern to Connecticut towns and cities.

This survey is divided into six issue areas: (a) Governmental Partners Working Together, (b) Infrastructure Support, (c) Public Safety, (d) Poverty Reduction & Economic Opportunity, (e) Community Revitalization & Affordable Housing, and (f) Education Reform.

Responses were received from candidates Joe Courtney, Paul Formica, Jim Himes, John Larson and Andrew Roraback (responses are below (responses are verbatim).

The following candidates did not respond to the survey: Linda McMahon, Chris Murphy, John Deckes, Rosa DeLauro, Wayne Winsley, Steve Obsitnik and Elizabeth Esty.

Governmental Partners Working Together

Towns and cities provide services, solve day-to-day public problems, and respond directly to the needs of their citizens. A more cooperative intergovernmental system would offer significant opportunities for all levels of government to serve the nation's citizens better. The federal government should support local innovations and resist proposals that limit local authority or put local resources at risk.

The economic fortunes of Connecticut's towns and cities are closely linked to the health of the federal government's budget. Federal fiscal policies should not hamper the ability of municipal officials to respond to economic needs at the local level, especially during a deep and lengthy recession.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

What changes do you believe are necessary on a national level and on a local level to increase "livability" for our citizens?

First Congressional District

John Larson - I believe that as our nation continues to emerge from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the federal government cannot abdicate its responsibility to provide adequate funding to our local governments. This is especially true in the area of transportation funding where the lack of a comprehensive funding bill has left many local roads and bridges in disrepair. There is no question that the federal government needs to become leaner and more efficient, but it cannot be at the expense of services that all of our citizens use.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - Increasing livability in our towns and cities will require a streamlined partnership between federal, state, and local governments, businesses, and community organizations that work towards implementing plans that enhance transportation, improve housing, and grow local businesses. At the federal level, there is no shortage of proposals to do just that. I am a proud cosponsor of the American Jobs Act, which addresses a number of issues including components of livability in our nation's communities. Investment in a diversified transportation system along side mixed residential and commercial priorities is particularly critical in Connecticut where space is limited and the population is growing. I strongly support the American Jobs Act which provides \$50 billion in immediate investments for highways, transit, rail and aviation, helping to modernize an infrastructure that now receives a grade of "D" from the American Society of Civil Engineers. The bill also includes what the President has dubbed "Project Rebuild." The plan invests \$15 billion in a national effort to rehabilitate and refurbish vacant and foreclosed homes and businesses. Project Rebuild aims to stabilize neighborhoods with high concentrations of foreclosures and bring in expertise and capital from the private sector, focus on commercial and residential property improvements. The plan also invests in a core component of livable communities, education, through a \$30 billion investment in modernizing our schools and providing \$35 billion to rehire teachers and first responders.

A sustained push from Members of Congress will provide states, MPOs, and municipalities the means to continue planning and developing sustainable and livable communities. Progress on this front has been particularly encouraging. The House of Representatives has a number of bills pending that looks to encourage livable development, including the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act, the Livable Communities Act, the Commuter Relief Act, the Commuter Benefits Equity Act, and many related housing, transportation, and environmental bills that should be considered for the improvement of our communities.

Paul Formica – Parties must work together for common good to develop an environment conducive to promoting growth – cut spending – create efficient agencies – put forth reasonable and balanced budgets and repeal affordable Care.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – It is extremely important for our federal, state, and local officials to work together to improve the quality of services they offer to citizens. We must increase our collective dialogue, work to increase efficiency in government services, and ensure that together we are working to improve the public sector for those that we represent. I believe the most important step we must take on the national level is to tackle our challenging economic and fiscal situation to ensure that we can respond to our employment, infrastructure, and health care problems. That is why I have been proud to support efforts to stabilize our federal budget, while investing in areas that will promote economic competitiveness including transportation infrastructure, education, and health care.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - For the past 18 years I have represented the northwest corner in the Connecticut General Assembly. I have worked first hand with the 15 towns in my district addressing quality of living issues including open space preservation and transportation issues. These priorities greatly increase the livability of all communities in Connecticut. A large part of livability is the transportation decisions that are made at the local and national level. I believe that local governments should be given a larger say in how transportation dollars are spent, as our local leaders know firsthand what would be most successful in making commutes easier, downtowns more walk able and communities safer. At the federal level. I will help local towns through federal legislation to simplify the tax code to eliminate excessive regulations, and to pass a comprehensive energy policy to reduce the cost of living for all Americans.

Do you have any recommendations to improve the federal-local partnership?

First Congressional District

John Larson - As a former member of the East Hartford Board of Education and Town Council, I understand the challenges that face local governments. When I am in the district visiting local businesses, schools, community centers or other points of interest, I always welcome local government officials regardless of party affiliation because I believe the best ideas come from local input and not within the beltway. Additionally, I am always honored to welcome local elected officials to our nation's capital and invite them to make their case in front of other members of Congress for assistance to our community. Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra, for example, has been a frequent guest of mine, testifying in front of the Natural Services Committee on behalf of our bid to make Coltsville a National Historic Park.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - Continued communication remains the most effective element of the federal-local partnership. There are so many challenges that congress is and will be facing that directly impact our local communities. Whether its changes to local aid, resources to help revitalize our communities or invest in new infrastructure, municipalities need to have a clear voice to their elected leaders on the impact of these choices. As someone who has met with CCM on many occasions in Washington, and who routinely engages with municipal leaders in my district, I understand how important it is for a clear line of dialogue between my office and the towns we represent – and is an approach that I look forward to continuing.

Paul Formica – Infrastructure investments encouraged with block grants/revolving loans/public private partnerships more state/local control with federal support not hindrance, remove excessive regulations – modify NCLB.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – During my time in Congress, I have found that the federal-local partnership is one of the most important relationships that elected officials can develop. Hearing from local community leaders helps me to better understand the needs of Connecticut's cities and towns and fully understand the needs of my constituents. I think the most important improvement must be dialogue and I have constantly worked to improve my office's relationship with the cities and towns I represent. Creating this dialogue and developing relationships with local government allows me to

in turn advocate their concerns on the federal level.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - To improve this partnership, it is important to send someone who has been part of the local community for decades. In my 18 years in public service, I have been accountable to the people who make up the local municipalities. Through the years, I have forged a relationship that makes me uniquely qualified to move from a state-local partnership to a federal-local partnership. I would be uniquely situated to advocate for increased local say in federal spending, something sorely lacking in Washington today.

Federalism is still an important issue for local leaders. Could you tell us about one area in which the federal government should be working more effectively with local governments and one area in which the federal government should take a lesser role?

First Congressional District

John Larson - One of the best ways the federal government can work more effectively with local governments would be to pass legislation sponsored by Rosa DeLauro that would create a “National Infrastructure Bank”. The crux of this legislation is simple: create a bank that streamlines the needs of our communities infrastructure improvements by incentivizing local public-private partnerships. This would help put Americans back to work, while also making the repairs needed to increase ‘livability’ for our citizens.

I believe that one way the local governments can take a larger role in their interactions with the federal government is in terms of applying for federal funds. Presently much of the federal funding that goes to local governments is allocated to state governments first. There should be a way for the municipal governments to apply and receive more funding directly from the federal government.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - One area in which the federal government should be working more effectively with local governments is in the area of foreclosure mitigation. The continued foreclosure challenge has left many communities with foreclosed homes that both reduce municipal revenues and lower property values. The federal government has made several attempts to address this issue, but I do not believe that enough has been done to date. The federal government could better engage local leaders and organizations on ways to more effectively prevent foreclosures and, when they occur, work to get new families into these homes for the betterment of our communities.

One area in which I believe that the federal government should take a lesser role for our local governments is in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. While well intentioned, the law remains flawed in many respects – but particularly in the lack of flexibility in addressing unique needs of our communities. Congress has stalled on reform on this law, but I am hopeful for a debate in which these requirements can be relaxed to allow for greater flexibility and room for innovation on the state and local levels that achieves the goal of comprehensive education standards for our children.

Paul Formica – More effective use of resources supporting infrastructure upgrades -- not only transportation but water/wastewater. Lesser role in education and healthcare. Federal Government needs to solve nuclear waste dilemma instead of forcing local municipalities to find storage on sites.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – Federalism is the cornerstone of our constitutional system and its continuing success is a testament to our forefathers and the commitment of our current federal and community officials. But federalism should not take the form of well-intentioned but poorly executed unfunded mandates like No Child Left Behind. Instead, the federal government should focus on providing states with a guideline of best practices and expanding the “what works” clearinghouse. The government should then support those best practices and provide funding for research to further identify best practices in order to have more information to provide to states.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - The federal government has a responsibility to protect and to defend its citizens. To this end, homeland security/disaster preparedness needs to be adequately funded through federal funds to ensure that local governments have the personnel and equipment needed in case of a man made or natural disaster.

Education is an area where local government should be given more latitude to teach our children in a manner that best reflects the district. Teachers and parents need to have a more prominent role. We can improve our education by allowing local leaders to have a more direct impact. It's just not about good and bad schools, but about schools meeting the needs of our kids. A federal "one-size fits" all approach doesn't work.

Infrastructure Support

Connecticut towns and cities are facing a crisis in funding for their current and future infrastructure needs.

Connecticut's municipal governments own over 17,000 miles of local roads (more than four times as many as the State's 4,079) and are responsible for the construction and maintenance of over 1,200 local bridges greater than 20 feet in length, and another 2,100 between 6 feet and 20 feet. Those roads and bridges – an important part of the state transportation network – need help.

The condition of municipal roads and bridges has deteriorated over the last decade. Traffic congestion on state highways, and increased use of the local road and bridge network, has accelerated their decline. The local transportation network has had to bear an increasing traffic load maintenance costs have assumed a larger share of repair costs. That has meant increased pressure on local budgets and deferred maintenance. Deferring work on roads only increases the eventual cost of repair.

A strong federal role in infrastructure financing and planning, as well as an effective intergovernmental partnership with towns and cities, is necessary if we are to meet Connecticut's and our nation's infrastructure needs and provide for quality and sustainable economic growth.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

Do you think the federal government should play a larger role in financing infrastructure? How would you propose to fund infrastructure in the future?

First Congressional District

John Larson - For decades transportation funding has been a non-partisan issue - everyone has potholes that need to be filled. Unfortunately, with the arrival of the Tea Party in Washington, the House of Representatives has been unable to pass a comprehensive transportation bill and our states and municipalities are paying the price. In addition to passing Congresswoman DeLauro's, "Infrastructure Bank," I believe Congress should be mandated to maintain a minimum funding level for our nation's infrastructure on an annual basis. This action will allow municipalities and states an opportunity to better prepare their own local budgets for infrastructure improvement.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - While the federal government already plays a significant role in financing infrastructure improvements, I believe what is needed most is providing our states and our communities long term certainty they need to plan for their infrastructure needs. That is why I crossed party lines to pass MAP-21, a bipartisan transportation two-year authorization bill that had stalled amidst partisan debate. While I would have preferred a longer-term measure, it was important to put this measure in place to provide certainty to states and local communities as Congress debates a wider bill in the future. I believe that MAP-21 accomplishes two important

goals. First, it provides for predictable levels of federal investment that our state can expect to receive over the next two years while also enacting policies aimed at accelerating approvals of new transportation projects and eliminating unnecessary red tape that slows the process down. Second, MAP-21 included a dramatic increase of funding for the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), which provides federal credit assistance in the form of secured loans, loan guarantees, and lines of credit that are leveraged with non-federal funding such as private sector investment. Federal credit assistance provides funds at a relatively low rate and lowers project risk, helping to secure other financing at rates lower than would otherwise be possible.

Beyond MAP-21, I strongly support other measures aimed at providing alternate and predictable sources of infrastructure investment. For example, I have supported a National Infrastructure Bank. An Infrastructure Bank would provide funding for large scale-projects that are not easily supported through the existing federal transportation programs. It would enhance a long-term stable funding source, by providing new funding for projects, which would leave more funding for states to use formula funding for core programs. I am also the cosponsor of several measures that would increase support for communities seeking to improve their water supply and wastewater infrastructure, which is rapidly becoming a growing challenge in many eastern Connecticut towns.

Paul Formica – Yes. A combination of block grants/revolving loans and energy performance contracts thru private sector. Towns and state vehicles often travel the same roads during storms etc. – partner services when available.

Utilize Regional Council of Governments to award and distribute grant dollars and common solutions – connect water/wastewater systems.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – The time has passed to address our nation’s crumbling infrastructure. Congress has continuously kicked the can down the road when it comes to our nation’s roads and bridges. But now it is clearer than ever that our infrastructure challenges are blocking competitiveness, posing a safety hazard, and preventing thousands of Americans from getting back to work. While I was pleased that Congress recently agreed to a transportation reauthorization bill, and I supported this measure, this is only the first step in addressing our infrastructure and employment needs. I believe that it is more important than ever to fund transportation projects nationwide and I am proud to support the creation of a National Infrastructure Bank that will provide critical funding for infrastructure on an objective basis.

Locally, it is absolutely essential for the economic health of the Fourth District to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. Infrastructure deficiencies act as impediments to economic growth. I am proud to have brought two TIGER grants to the district through the Department of Transportation. The first brings over \$11 million in federal funding to develop and revitalize the Steel Point peninsula in Bridgeport, creating pedestrian and bike-friendly streets that connect neighborhoods to public transit, helping open the currently unused Steel Point waterfront to the public, and supporting commercial and residential development in the area. The second TIGER grant will bring \$10.5 million to make much needed improvements to the Stamford

Transportation Center, including upgrades to transit accessibility for commuters, capacity expansions, and passenger and pedestrian safety improvements. Further, I have been proud to partner with local officials to bring nearly \$720 million for road repair and highway construction projects in every town in the district.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - From our crumbling transportation infrastructure to our aging waste water treatment plants, there is no question our federal government needs to invest in our infrastructure. As a member of Congress, improving Connecticut infrastructure in the 5th district will be a priority for me. We need to look at all options for meeting the great needs of our state, including changing the funding formula to ensure that federal transportation funds are distributed more fairly. We also need to continue to invest in non-transportation infrastructure projects, and I will work tirelessly to ensure that Connecticut's levees, dams, and water and sewer lines see their fair share in funding.

Public Safety

Towns and cities are the first level of government to respond to most disasters and emergencies and must be regarded as the focal point of all disaster mitigation and recovery activities. The federal government should provide funding directly to local governments for homeland security, emergency preparedness, and response.

According to a Connecticut Legislative Program Review and Investigations study, "... Connecticut has consistently ranked below the national per capita average for federal homeland security funding. The percentage difference between Connecticut and the national average has increased each year and grew even larger with the introduction of a more risked-based formula in 2006. In 2005, the difference between Connecticut's per capita amount and the national average was 22 percent; by 2007, it was 47 percent. " The study examined Homeland security grant funding for the five major sub-grants on a per capita basis for three years among the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

In the face of a catastrophic event, no level of government can go it alone for any extended period. An effective intergovernmental system must be developed to ensure that federal and state emergency management officials conduct substantive consultations with local officials to ensure the best outcomes for managing for key decision-making affecting homeland security, disaster preparedness and response at the local level.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

Municipal law enforcement supports our state and nation's homeland security and confronts an increasing crime rate. How would you work with Connecticut's towns and cities to assist these essential public servants?

First Congressional District

John Larson - Our local law enforcement agencies need to be given all the resources needed to keep our citizenry safe. Over the years I have worked very hard with local governments to help secure millions of dollars in Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants and other programs that look to put more police officers on the street. I believe that these grants have significant value to local governments and will continue to fight for them moving forward.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - One of the greatest challenges facing towns and municipalities is maintaining essential functions in the face of the economic downturn and decline in local budgets. All levels of local municipal employment have been impacted, but cuts to local public safety capabilities—both in personnel and equipment – are most concerning. To this end, as a member of the Congressional Law Enforcement caucus I have been a strong supporter of competitive grant programs like Community Oriented Policing (COPs) program that help provide essential support to local law enforcement agencies. In June, I announced a \$500,000 grant through the COPS Hiring Program to the City of Norwich, which will be used by the Norwich Police Department to

hire four new police officers. Other funding secured for municipalities across the second district of Connecticut is helping local communities keep up essential law enforcement functions even in the midst of an economic and budgetary recovery at the local level. And, as a member of the Congressional Fire Caucus, I have backed both the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and SAFER grants that help bolster staffing and equipment in our region's fire departments. In Republican budget proposals. Over the last several years, I have also held multiple grant training sessions – including those focused on firefighter resources – to help our local governments and organizations take advantage of these critical programs, and I will continue to help secure these important resources for our region.

Paul Formica – Partner with State Police and emergency services to create and foster more efficiencies where available. Stricter parole oversight. Develop training programs in local community colleges to certify and develop new hires.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – Ensuring the safety and well-being of my constituents and local communities is one of my most important duties as a representative. I constantly work with local officials to ensure that we are using all the resources at our collective disposal to combat crime and ensure security. I am happy to act as a liaison on the federal level for my local law enforcement officials and have been successful in these efforts. I have worked to bring more police officers to Bridgeport, a 33-foot search and rescue boat to Fairfield, and an emergency generator to Westport that will supply emergency standby power to Westport's Emergency Operations Center, the Fairfield County Hazardous Materials Response Team and the Regional Communications and Command Response Unit.

I work diligently to ensure that federal resources to fight violence and promote security are directed into our community. I am proud of my record of securing our communities and I will continue to work to improve our crime rate and protect our citizens.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - As a state senator, I work closely with my towns' public safety departments to ensure that they receive adequate support from the state. As a member of Congress, I will support federal funding of homeland security programs to ensure that local governments have the personnel and equipment needed to confront crime and emergency situations. As with transportation and other forms of federal assistance, homeland security funding should be based on the threat posed and not random, political calculations.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

It often seems that federal, state and local governments are not on the same page when it comes to keeping us safe. How would you ensure a meaningful dialogue on both homeland security and hometown security between federal, state, and local governments?

First Congressional District

John Larson - Just as I have often encouraged municipal government leaders to come to Washington and testify firsthand on projects that directly effect their communities, I believe that Congress needs to hear directly from local government on how to best keep them safe. Hometown security is homeland security - the two are not mutually exclusive. If we are to keep our country safe, we're going to need to engage all levels of law enforcement.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - During last year's hurricane and snowstorms, I heard first hand from many of the local leaders in my district that they faced challenges not just with communicating with their state and federal partners, but in having those partners fully understand the needs of their areas and the limitations of their resources. Often times, I was helping to relay messages directly to the emergency operations centers on behalf of these leaders because the lines of communications simply were not well established or effective. While it is critical that state and federal emergency responders and planners look to these storms for lessons learned, it is as important that our local leaders be looked to for improvements that should be made to more effectively handle communication, resource allocation and emergency response during major incidents. Cooperation at all levels of government across all stages of planning and review, increased opportunity for joint training and simulation, and a greater focus on joint-ness in emergency planning would all go a long way towards making sure responders at all levels are on the same approach to homeland security and emergency management.

Paul Formica - State and local agencies need to be more like partners in the process -- better sharing of assets. Federal role should be one of oversight/big picture states and local cities and towns work in concert.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes - It is important that officials at all levels of government share in the burden of protecting our local communities. To accomplish this goal, we must maintain an effective dialogue, ensure information sharing, and provide each other with the resources necessary to succeed. I think it is important to develop personal relationships with the stakeholders in each area of government and I constantly work to communicate with local officials to ensure that they know my office is always available to help them should they encounter any problems or need help navigating the federal government.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - Everyone must be brought to the table. I think that at the end of the day it's really about resources. Who gets them, how quickly, and how well do they use them. There needs to be a partnership to ensure that the resources are being allocated in a timely and efficient manner and everyone needs a defined role in place before disaster strikes. I would also like to establish routine briefings by federal homeland security officials for our local governments, something that has been lacking since the establishment of DHS. I have found that the simple act of getting to know one another can have a significant impact on working relationships.

Poverty Reduction & Economic Opportunity

Towns and cities are directly and immediately affected by the poverty of their citizens as they must continue to fund public safety, education, and other social services with a tax base that is under attack due the crisis in the housing market, a sluggish economy, and new or proposed limits on taxing authority.

While some communities have considerable resources, several Connecticut towns and cities are in crisis:

- *Connecticut as a whole has the third lowest poverty rate in the nation for families (7.2%). However, the poverty rates for families in its largest cities are at least three times higher than the state average.*
- *While 28.7% of Connecticut's K-12 students are eligible for free/reduced-price meals, about 95% are eligible in both Bridgeport and Hartford. In New Haven, 70.5% of students are eligible.*
- *Connecticut ranks second in the nation in per capita income, at \$64,032, yet residents of its largest cities consistently report sharply lower incomes than the average. In Bridgeport, median household income is \$38,919, while it is \$35,122 and \$26,499 in New Haven and Hartford, respectively.*
- *Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven also face health demographics that differ markedly from the state average. The number of births to mothers on the HUSKY or Medicaid programs in these cities is about twice as high as the state average.*

Support for programs at the federal level that support and build financially stable families must be a priority.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

How would you work with Connecticut state and municipal officials and the private sector to design and implement comprehensive investment strategies to increase educational, employment, childcare, and health care opportunities, and enhance transportation systems?

First Congressional District

John Larson - I believe that the job creation is the key to increasing the quality of life for individuals throughout Connecticut. This is why I created the Connecticut Veterans and Manufacturing Job Matches - which look to place unemployed veterans and manufacturing professionals with local businesses are hiring. Until we can return to full employment, a sluggish economy will still cause our municipalities to struggle to engage the private sector in the areas of education, employment, childcare and healthcare opportunities as well as increased transportation systems. I was proud to sponsor, and introduce, President Barack Obama's 'American Jobs Act,'

which aims to invest heavily in local governments by funding school infrastructure, teachers, firefighters, police officers and other critical services. By working at the federal level to create jobs and improve our economy we can inspire the confidence needed in the private sector to comfortably invest locally in our communities.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - As discussed elsewhere in this survey, I believe that ongoing and open communication about the challenges that communities face is needed to ensure that federal action matches local needs. I do not believe that the federal government has all the answers, so robust engagement on all levels – state, municipal and private sector – is new to come up with innovative solutions. First and foremost, however, I believe that congress must fulfill its commitment to our communities with respect to resources in the areas of education, childcare and infrastructure enhancements.

Paul Formica – Reduce Government spending/relieve excess regulations creating environment to produce jobs/reduce federal education requirements on states/repeal Affordable Care Act as it has excessive taxes attached/public/private investment on infrastructure improvement projects/modify NCLB.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – To address our economic, health care, and transportation problems we need a complete and total effort across all levels of government, and when appropriate, partnership with the private sector. I have worked on the local level to increase job training programs, provide critical infrastructure funding, and support expanded health reforms during my time in Congress. I helped to bring funding to Bridgeport to provide for the hiring of 20 new police officers in 2009 and an additional 20 in 2011, creating jobs and enhancing public safety throughout our neighborhoods. At the request of City officials, I partnered with the City of Stamford to construct the Stamford Urban Transitway, a one-mile connector facilitating efficient travel between the Stamford Transportation Center and East Main Street, reducing congestion along the City’s busiest streets. I am proud of my vote for the Affordable Care Act and believe that although the legislation is not perfect it will help us address the health care crisis gripping our nation.

Although we face an extremely challenging budgetary situation, we cannot take an axe to the federal budget; instead we must make targeted investments in education, infrastructure, and employment. These targeted investments will help us improve our economic competitiveness in the long run and we cannot and should not eliminate vital funding for these programs.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - As a member of Congress, the way I can improve educational, employment, Childcare, and healthcare opportunities for my constituents is through economic growth policies

that simplify the tax code, eliminate excessive and burdensome regulation, and invest directly in local infrastructure. With these economic policies, Connecticut residents will have more jobs, more money in their pockets, less regulation and fees, and lower energy prices.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

Throughout your career, what action, policy, or effort are you most proud of that in some way addressed the issue of poverty and opportunity? How would this experience inform or reflect your approach to poverty and opportunity?

First Congressional District

John Larson - The Affordable Care Act will ultimately go down in history, along with Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, as one of the most important programs Congress has ever passed in terms of helping lift more Americans out of poverty and provide hope and opportunity for the future. Medical expenses are among the top expenses that drive Americans into poverty and by helping ease this burden we are providing new opportunities for all Americans to succeed. The Affordable Care Act not only increased the life of Medicare, but also provided millions of Americans with access to affordable healthcare by creating community health centers in low-income neighborhoods. I am very proud to have had role in crafting and supporting this legislation and consider it one of my proudest moments.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - I firmly believe that education opens the doors to opportunity for individuals throughout America. The future of American individuals, our nation as a whole, and our economy depends on investing in the education and skills of our children. I have fought hard to ensure adequate funding for our public school students in Connecticut, opposing budget cuts that would have increased class size and eliminated subjects. I helped to pass the post 9/11 GI bill of rights which opened the doors of education and training for our veterans who have given us so much, and I fought to rein in college costs to retain college access and affordability for our middle and low income students. I am particularly proud to helped pass the largest investment in higher education since the 1944 GI Bill, the Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA). During consideration of the bill, I offered an amendment that was accepted, to add an additional \$900 million to the Pell Grant program. The CCRAA cut interest rates on certain federal student loans in half, increased the maximum Pell Grant scholarship, rewarded public service with loan forgiveness after 10 years and made sure that borrowers did not have to pay more than 15 percent of their income on loan repayment. I will continue to work to ensure that all individuals, regardless of income, have access to the highest levels of education, so that all individuals might have the same opportunities to succeed as their peers.

Paul Formica – Established culture of opportunity and training in our family business. Training single moms/others in management and service skills. Empowering people in local government to create efficiencies and opportunity in all departments.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – America is a land of opportunity and we must work to ensure that all individuals are able to work hard and succeed. While we must eliminate barriers to opportunity, we must also be sure that government creates an environment that allows individuals to succeed. While at time government must get out the way, I also believe it is important that we work to provide a strong safety net that will fund programs for our most vulnerable citizens and allow them to focus on working hard and bettering themselves. No one in America should go to sleep at night worrying about where their next meal is coming from. I am proud of my work as an affordable housing advocate prior to my term in Congress and am proud that we have started to address the health care crisis in America by passing the Affordable Care Act. Although the bill is not perfect, it will help millions access health care and help them focus on achieving the American dream.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - I believe my support of early childhood education initiatives will both help reduce poverty and create greater opportunity.

Community Revitalization & Affordable Housing

Successful housing and community development strategies must be comprehensive and linked to sound economic policies. Successful community development expands economic opportunities; creates vibrant places where people want to live, work and visit; preserves the unique character of communities; and safeguards environmental resources.

Unfortunately, federal resources for housing programs continue to decline as home foreclosures continue to climb. More and more low-income and middle-income families are being squeezed out of the housing market in many Connecticut communities.

To assist Connecticut towns and cities in meeting their housing and community development goals, the federal government must support increased investment in federal housing and community development programs, as well as effective incentives for private-sector participation.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

Trends toward suburban growth and sprawl have left many older neighborhoods blighted and in need of environmental remediation. Describe how you would help Connecticut towns and cities clean up and redevelop brownfield sites, minimize local liability, and attract private sector investments.

First Congressional District

John Larson - Over the years I have worked very hard with our local governments to secure millions of dollars in federal funds to redevelop brownfield sites and encourage private sector investments in our communities. Green tax credits, similar to those that were included in the Recovery Act, work to decrease the financial burden many businesses may feel are standing in the way of investing in local projects that are in need of environmental remediation. The federal government can help local governments by continuing to invest in 'Green Jobs' and by creating additional tax credits that reward businesses who are responsibly investing blighted neighborhoods and communities.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - Since coming to Congress, I have continually weighed in to support Connecticut applications for federal grants and loans. Advocating on behalf of entities looking to secure brownfield funding is no exception. Most recently, I advocated in support of Preston's bid to secure cleanup money for the Norwich Hospital property and helped the town win an \$800,000 competitive grant in May. The funding gives the Town a tremendous opportunity to start over, and begin work on a site that would otherwise lay dormant and pose a threat to the surrounding

area. At the national level, I support continued funding for brownfields through extended tax incentives to encourage the cleanup of brownfields properties. These efforts have provided federal financial assistance for the cleanup of abandoned, idled, or underutilized properties and provided an incentive, rather than a deterrent, to redevelopment by prospective purchasers. Mills have been transformed into housing, factories into mixed purpose venues, and open spaces have enhanced our communities. Altogether federal, state and local efforts to repurpose these sites have improved livability and attracted private investment where it did not exist before.

Paul Formica – Promote transit oriented development -- will improve economics in downtowns bringing private sector dollars – PPP and favorable business climate will stimulate business growth which in turn creates jobs.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – It is extremely important that we make Connecticut's cities and towns attractive to private investment and a hub for business. We need to make a strong commitment to transportation-oriented development. It is important to focus on the density of urban cores and the need for open space. We should support use the Metro Green program as a model and go after other affordable, LEED certified development programs to make Connecticut a model for the rest of the country for economic competitiveness.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - Connecticut has a long history as a manufacturing hub, but when many factories moved they left behind not just a skilled workforce and manufacturing legacy but also pollution and blight. With the amount of money we send to Washington, we should be increasing brownfields investment at both EPA and HUD, and work to ensure that the programs are carried out effectively and distributed based on need. A modest federal grant to cleanup brownfields can leverage significant private investment. To maximize federal funds, we should look to consolidate programs, increase oversight, and require greater flexibility on the Part of the federal government.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson said, "Our society will never be great until our cities are great." While many towns and cities are experiencing a renaissance, others are lagging behind. What will you do to spur investment in Connecticut's towns and cities, especially our distressed municipalities?

First Congressional District

John Larson – When it comes to investing in Connecticut’s towns and cities, we must use our greatest asset to succeed: our ingenuity. The greatest example of this currently is what is going on in the city of Hartford. Two projects in particular: Coltsville and the iQuilt are poised to do great things for our state’s capital.

I am optimistic that by the end of this year we will finally succeed in our decade-long quest to turn the Colt factory into a National Historic Park. A recent study has shown that for every one federal dollar invested in our national parks, there is a four dollar return to the local economy. With Coltsville as a National Historic Park local businesses will flourish and Hartford could see a boost to its economy that it has been lacking for some time now.

A few years ago local artists came to my office with a plan to create a more livable, sustainable downtown Hartford. The idea to create a more sustainable downtown by harnessing the allure of Connecticut’s historical and cultural attractions became known as the “iQuilt.” Today the iQuilt has a comprehensive plan that looks to redevelop the city’s downtown area to make it walkable and attractive to local businesses. Thanks to a \$10 million federal grant earlier this year, this dream is becoming closer and closer to a reality every day.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - As many communities face difficult budgeting decisions, I understand how important federal resources are to help spur economic investment and complete worthy projects in our distressed municipalities. I have strongly supported robust funding for programs like the Community Development Block Grant Program, which allows local governments to address a wide range of unique development needs from housing to community centers. Every year about 15 towns in eastern Connecticut benefit from these funds, and I have worked with local leaders, state officials, and my colleagues in Congress to ensure the funds continue to assist small towns in my district.

Paul Formica – Increased investment in rail spurs transit oriented development -- a proven economic stimulus that raises property values and creates jobs. We have a rail line that should be upgraded linking port New London to Massachusetts and beyond.

Encourage private investors with partnerships/housing and enterprise zones to spur investments.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – To make our cities great, we need to reinvest in both our infrastructure and our education systems. Investment in transportation directly affects our economic growth and our

quality of life. We should be building better roads, expanding rail capacity and making sure that air travel in the United States is second to none.

That reinvestment in infrastructure needs to be paired with a focus on education. Public education should be the great equalizer and provide opportunity to those who are born without it. As a nation, our future prosperity depends on the quality of the education we provide our children. As a community, our towns and cities are dependent on the next generation of Connecticut citizens. We must work to close the achievement gap and invest in early childhood education so that our children can help rebuild our cities.

Rebuilding our roads and schools will lead to significant economic development and help reinvigorate Connecticut's towns and cities. In these difficult economic times, I am proud to have been able to bring significant federal investments into critical infrastructure across the district – most notably in Bridgeport and Stamford.

I was pleased to bring over \$11 million in federal funding to develop and revitalize the Steel Point peninsula in Bridgeport, creating pedestrian and bike-friendly streets that connect neighborhoods to public transit, helping open the currently unused Steel Point waterfront to the public, and supporting commercial and residential development in the area. This area is a mostly vacant brownfield site, and is one of the few existing large-scale waterfront areas open to redevelopment in the coastal region between New York City and Providence, Rhode Island.

I am also proud to have facilitated the investment of \$10.5 million to make much needed improvements to the Stamford Transportation Center, including upgrades to transit accessibility for commuters, capacity expansions, and passenger and pedestrian safety improvements. This funding will ensure that the Stamford Transportation Center will continue to be a linchpin of the Amtrak Metro North Corridor and the \$5 billion transit-oriented development taking place now around the station.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - One of our most successful federal programs has been the Community Development Block Grant, and it has had a significant impact on many distressed communities in Connecticut. We need to not only ensure the program continues to receive adequate funding, but we should look at ways of altering the program to allow smaller cities in Connecticut access to CDBG funds. In addition, transportation investments must be aggressively pursued at the federal level. Investing in safer, more efficient infrastructure can make our towns and cities more appealing to recent college graduates, families, and senior citizens, which would in turn spur economic development in our historic community centers.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

Describe your strategy for utilizing direct federal housing assistance and tax policies to increase the supply of affordable housing and stimulate the revitalization of Connecticut's neighborhoods.

First Congressional District

John Larson – My office has worked very closely over the years to bring local community organizations and municipalities together to work directly with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development so that we can ensure that we are making the most out of direct federal housing assistance. To this end we have had significant successes recently, such as the recent groundbreaking at Capewell in Hartford. We should be creating smart tax policies that reward businesses and developers that want to invest in affordable housing throughout our community instead of creating more obstacles to entry into the marketplace.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - I voted against the so-called Wall Street Bailout in 2008 because it did not do enough to address the housing and mortgage crisis. Federal housing programs are vitally important in the wake of our housing crisis, as these resources have proven effective in enabling millions of households to keep and even obtain stable, decent housing. I have and will continue to support a diverse range of programs to help increase the supply of affordable housing and help to revive Connecticut's communities. Having supported programs like the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, Community Development Block grants, and the Housing Choice Voucher Program, I understand that funding for these programs and other such federal housing assistance has recently failed to receive the increases they not only deserve, but also need. I will continue to support robust support for these programs.

Paul Formica – Incentive housing zones provide municipalities the opportunity to choose and direct where to locate all housing development -- locating these zones in downtowns with requirements for commercial space on street level. This housing will place people in the thick of downtowns and villages within walking distance to stores/services and public transportation. Private developers are able to build these units for profit to either sell or rent. Inspections will be required in rental assistance for homeowners provided by government. These opportunities bring people to downtowns. Have access to job centers through public transportation and provide an economic boost to villages where they live.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – We need to facilitate communication between local housing providers and federal agencies in Washington. By leveraging tax policies and federal grant programs, I will work to

secure housing vouchers for veterans and will encourage mixed use housing developments to revitalize Connecticut neighborhoods. Before coming to Congress I worked with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit through my work at Enterprise Community Partners. We need to use the LIHTC to leverage federal funding to build mixed use, sustainable developments in the Fourth District.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - We must all work together to leverage local, state and federal resources to increase the availability of housing opportunities for low and middle income residents from across the state.

Education Reform

The cost of K-12 education has a direct connection to local property taxes. Over the years, both the state and federal governments have established extensive requirements on local school systems, with commitments to share the costs of these mandates. Unfortunately, the state and federal funding levels fall short of the commitments, while the program mandates remain in place.

Underfunding the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) has an impact on the State since it -- along with towns and cities -- must make up for federally mandated education costs.

Public education is the largest and most expensive government service provided in Connecticut. This year, over \$10 billion will be spent on public education across the state. Indeed, up to 70% of local budgets go toward K-12 public education. Government makes these investments because public education is vital to Connecticut's prosperity and quality of life, now and in the future.

Special education costs are among the fastest growing public expenditures, and are often the cause of significant hardship at the local level. In FY 11, an estimated \$1.7 billion was spent on special education in Connecticut. More medically fragile students and expensive court-mandated services are pushing special education costs to rise as much as 5% to 6% per year, even though the percentage of students identified as needing special education continues to decrease. In addition, unforeseen demands for the most expensive special education services too often result in local mid-year budget shuffling, supplementary appropriations, and other extraordinary measures to ensure that funds are available to provide mandated services.

The victims of this fiscal stress are not only the recipients of special education services, but (1) students in regular education programs from whom resources are diverted, and (2) property taxpayers in general, who see tax increases, municipal service cuts, or both, in order to pay the ever rising special education bill.

Because the costs of special education programs are so high and growing, the federal government cannot expect individual communities to fund them without sufficient assistance. When the federal government underfunds mandated programs, regular education programs and other local services suffer.

Connecticut's towns and cities pay more than half of all K-12 public education costs; the State, less than 35 percent; and the federal government, the balance.

Federal and state underfunding of local public education over time has shifted an unfair tax burden onto the backs of residential and business property taxpayers.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

Describe approaches you would take to ensure that the federal government reaches its obligation to reimburse state government for 40% of IDEA costs.

First Congressional District

John Larson – As a former East Hartford High School History teacher I know how important it is for the federal government to provide public schools with a resources needed to reach every student. As a member of Congress I have consistently pushed the federal government to provide adequate funding for not only IDEA, but for many other programs that benefit students across the country. Moving forward I believe that a minimum funding threshold should be maintained for IDEA costs so in the event that Congress cannot come to a consensus on what the annual funding should be, action is still triggered to meet that minimum need level.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - I share the concern of local leaders and educators that adequate funding has not been provided to reimburse costs for IDEA, and states, local governments, and teachers have often and unfairly borne the costs. In order to ensure that all students have access to a quality education, I have not only pushed for robust funding for IDEA under annual appropriations bills, but I have also co-sponsored the Keep Our PACT Act (H. R. 1102). This legislation would require full funding of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. I will continue to support increased funding for Title 1 that meets the federal obligation to fund the Individuals with Disabilities Act.

Paul Formica – Encourage local/regional school partnerships on special education programs keeping those in need in district as much as practical – this will cut transportation costs when is a larger driver of education costs – cutting spending on federal level/reducing regulations and creating new environment to stimulate business all helps.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – The IDEA is an essential piece of legislation that works towards improving academic results and functional outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. The fact that so many people with disabilities are unemployed further demonstrates why IDEA funding is imperative.

We need to focus on shifting funding away from redundant programs and prioritize IDEA funding in future budgets. We need to transform and modernize our school systems and a large part of that involves fully funding the IDEA.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - As a state senator, I know full well the impact on the local budgets when the federal government doesn't fully fund its mandated reimbursement. For years. I have heard from my local elected officials about the budgetary impact when the federal government does not pay its obligation. As a member of Congress. I will work to bring this issue to the forefront and secure greater federal participation in funding spending education.

Connecticut's Towns and Cities Want to Know...

What approaches would you take to help ensure quality education for all Connecticut students and reward states for improvements? Further, do you think No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is in need of reform? If so, what sort of changes would you propose?

First Congressional District

John Larson – No Child Left Behind is a program that for too long now has proven to do the exact opposite of its title. I believe that the program should be reformed on a bipartisan basis so that we are encouraging education that doesn't just look at test results, but whether or not our children are really succeeding in the classroom.

Second Congressional District

Joe Courtney - I support greater cooperation between federal, state and local leaders to improve education for Connecticut's students. I have serious reservations, however, with regards to proposals to tie state education reforms to competitive federal funding opportunities. We cannot permanently and structurally establish a system of competitive funding that will burden local school systems with new requirements and increased standards if we do not provide them the resources they need to achieve such changes. In addition, an over-reliance on competitive funding pits small school districts against larger ones resulting in an improved academic climate for only a handful of students. If our goal is to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to succeed, we cannot rely on competitive grants to achieve those reforms.

Instead, at a time when local communities are already facing significant challenges in existing education funding resources, I strongly believe that that the federal government should first fully fulfill its commitment under the Title I, IDEA and other resources on which states and local communities base their education programs.

In regards to NCLB, in May I joined Governor Malloy and Federal Education Secretary Arne Duncan in announcing the approval of Connecticut's waiver from NCLB requirements. While a welcome vindication of the concerns of many in our state – including myself – about the inflexibility of the law and a reflection of state's actions in the area of education reform, this waiver is simply a stop-gap measure until Congress finally take up long delayed reform of this well intentioned, but deeply flawed, law. I believe that reform of the law must include greater flexibility for local and state education agencies to ensure that our teachers are not simply teaching to a single test, but are provided with the resources to give our state and our nation's children a truly comprehensive education. Inaction on this issue is one of my greatest frustrations in Congress, but I remain hopeful that it will be addressed in the next session given its importance to our communities. Until then, I will continue to engage all stakeholders – parents, teachers, administrators and local leaders – to ensure that the reauthorization will be based on proven reform methods.

Paul Formica – Need is apparent for more state and local control of education – efficiencies generated at the state/federal budget level will free up dollars so that funding for education becomes easier – measurables are necessary to monitor programs. Have NCLB and teaching to tests, needs modification – we also need to provide more access to trade training for those who skip college.

Fourth Congressional District

Jim Himes – For too long, we have tolerated failing schools that put our future, our economic stability and our global competitiveness at risk. That's beginning to change. At its core, NCLB was a call to action on this front. Passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, it sought to improve student achievement and the quality of teaching across the country. Unfortunately, NCLB programs were vastly underfunded and many schools were unable to meet many of the law's objectives. It's time to reauthorize NCLB, making sure its goals are both rigorous and attainable, while properly funding its implementation by the states. We must be willing to do what it takes to truly educate every child.

Until we close the “achievement gap,” the disparity between educational outcomes for children of different backgrounds and family incomes, we will not be preparing every child for the 21st century. We must commit resources to turn around low-performing schools and embrace the reform that will return us to being the highest quality educator in the world.

To help improve schools and transform young lives I voted for the Recovery Act, which included funding for education initiatives. It helped the state of Connecticut – and each of the seventeen cities and towns in the Fourth District – keep teachers in our classrooms. And it kept funding intact for special education, making sure that students got the services they need, despite the dire economic circumstances facing every school system.

Fifth Congressional District

Andrew Roraback - Education policy is best decided by parents, teachers, and principals. The federal government needs to return more decisions back to localities. NCLB created too much of a federal approach to education.