

## WLAD FIRST QUARTER 2016

### ISSUES AND PROGRAM LIST

Each program has a duration of 30 minutes

Each program has aired on the date indicated from 0730-0800

Connecticut Radio Network Dialogue 2016 Guests and Subject Matters  
(January, February, March)

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 - Peter Gioia - Connecticut Business and Industry Association Economist.

Subject Matter: On this start to the New Year 2016 show, Connecticut Business and Industry Association Economist Peter Gioia discussed how Connecticut's economy looks for 2016. He says the state ended the previous year by adding some 51-hundred jobs which sets the state up well for the new year. Gioia says Connecticut was getting back on good economic footing after the special session corrected some business taxes that had been onerous. However, he told that while there are things that Connecticut has under its control, there are a lot of things that happen around the world that we really have no control over. Gioia says probably the biggest thing is China with their economy slowing considerably. He gave listeners the heads-up that China would be a big story affecting the economy. And how right Gioia was as the problems in China, plus falling oil prices caused the stock market to get off to its worst start to a New Year with daily triple digit losses.

Peter Gioia told though that the falling oil prices are benefiting Connecticut. He says that has led to below 2-dollar gasoline prices at the pumps. Gioia says with Connecticut being a cold weather state heating oil prices are also very low now. He says it's a nice pleasant surprise when people fill their oil tank and the cost to fill it is so much cheaper than years past. CBIA Economist Gioia says these lower prices add a lot of dollars to consumer's wallets and contributes to consumer confidence as we haven't seen these prices in decades.

The Connecticut Department of Labor put out the report that the state has recovered nearly 90% of the jobs it lost during the recession. Connecticut has lagged behind the rest of the country in the turnaround. CBIA Economist Peter Gioia told that Connecticut lagging behind the rest of the country was partly self-inflicted in the fiscal and housing areas. He says with the fiscal end Connecticut has had tax increases, whereas other states have cut taxes, or at the very least haven't increased them. Gioia told there was a massive tax increase that walloped small businesses which he feels is the principal reason why Connecticut is behind the U.S. job recovery. He also told that the Connecticut legislature needs to take like a 3-year timeout on imposing any more regulations on companies in the state

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 - (Gioia continued) - because it hamstrings them. On the housing front Gioia explained that Connecticut has a very strict and long judicial process for foreclosure. He says some people feel that's another reason why it took so long for housing to pull out of the recession. Gioia says we are seeing housing sales improve now and he feels we'll have a really good year in 2016 with housing sales. But he did point out that the actual price of houses being sold in Connecticut continues to fall and that is a concern.

One thing CBIA Economist Peter Gioia says Connecticut needs is sustainable long-term structural changes in the state budget. He says the legislature has made some progress in corrections spending and in long-term care, and they are looking at municipal spending. But Gioia says they need to make these structural changes comprehensively because as we go forward there are more and more challenges with pension obligations and employee retiree healthcare obligations, and debt services. In addition, Gioia says the social service and other obligations of the state are not going away as you still have to pay for them. So Gioia says the State of Connecticut has to find ways to deliver the services that people need, but deliver them at a lower cost point. He says first the state has to get spending under control and then get some tax changes ... like giving businesses tax credits for producing products. Gioia says there really needs to be an emphasis on research and development, and on the type of companies the state wants like pharmaceutical companies and skilled manufacturing companies. He says these are the kinds of companies that have the types of jobs that provide full benefits, that pay their people really well, and are good corporate citizens in the community who make good charitable donations. Gioia says even though Connecticut has recovered 90% of the private sector jobs, a lot of the jobs recovered have not been the same quality as the jobs the state has lost. He says Connecticut needs more skilled science, technology, engineering, math, and financial services jobs, rather than more leisure, hospitality, retail, and restaurant jobs which the state has its full of.



January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Donald Williams - Director of Policy, Research, and Reform at the Connecticut Education Association.

Subject Matter: This week on Dialogue, Donald Williams with the Connecticut Education Association told why the state's largest teachers union wants to do away with the controversial SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) test. Williams told that the SBAC test, which is given to students in grades 3 through 8 is not fair, not reliable, and is inaccurate. He says the test is unfair to special needs students, students from low income homes that don't have access to home computers, and to foreign students. Williams says the SBAC test also takes too long to administer ... as much as 8 to 12 hours, taking away too much time from classroom study. He says the CEA doesn't feel the SBAC test provides any useful feedback to teachers about how their students are doing.

Donald Williams of the CEA told that there's too much emphasis on standardized testing these days. He says testing preparation and the SBAC testing takes away from classroom learning which is harmful to children's education. Williams told on the show that the federal government recently acknowledged that we've been on the wrong path for the last 15 years ... ever since the so-called "No Child Left Behind" legislation got passed. He says it imposed federal mandates on schools across the U.S. forcing them to give standardized tests like SBAC, taking away from valuable classroom learning. Williams told that finally Congress has decided to roll back those mandates and let the states take the lead on education for students. And that's why he says the CEA is calling on the State of Connecticut to scrap the SBAC test for grades 3 through 8. Williams says teachers are committed to classroom learning for students because they want to see students succeed and thrive ... which the SBAC does not allow them to do. He says under the new "Every Students Succeeds Act" states have more flexibility for what they use as a mastery examination ... so Connecticut is not forced to use the SBAC test. Williams feels that Connecticut should be a leader for the rest of the country and develop new better assessments that do not rely on standardized tests. He noted that the SBAC test has already been done away with at the high school level in Connecticut, with it being replaced by SAT tests. He told that a Gallup Poll last year asked parents to rate 6 different categories of learning potential and 78% said the most important indicator of future success is the performance by students on their classwork in the classroom, while coming in dead last at just 14% was test scores on standardized tests. So Williams says teachers understand it, students understand it, and parents understand it as well that they have to move away from



January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Williams continued) - their huge emphasis on standardized testing. He says they'd like to do away with the SBAC test by the spring of 2017.

January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Tony Hwang - State Senator – Republican from Fairfield.

Subject Matter: On this show State Senator Tony Hwang from Fairfield discussed the rough news that General Electric has decided to move from its world headquarters in Fairfield to Boston. He told that his heart goes out to the employees in Fairfield at GE and to small businesses and non-profits in the community as well that will be greatly impacted by GE leaving. Senator Hwang says what gives him a sickness in his stomach is whether this could have been avoided. He told that he's not looking to lay blame for GE's decision ... but says they have to understand what truly caused this and to make sure they can use this as a teachable lesson and not have this happen again. Senator Hwang says the state can ill afford economically to lose another company the caliber of GE.

Many feel that GE decided to leave because of the economic climate in Connecticut. GE publicly threatened to leave when the legislature raised business taxes. After the threat by GE other businesses also made their feelings known as well, and in a special session the legislature did roll back some of the taxes. But many feel GE had had enough and that allowed them to look elsewhere with many other states courting them. After choosing Boston, GE said they wanted to change their culture and image, wanting to be perceived as a high tech company. They stated they wanted to be located in Boston with many universities churning out high tech minds and it being a major Northeast hub with a big airport. But Senator Tony Hwang told that Connecticut has great universities and college where brilliant minds come out of including one of the best in Yale University. He feels GE may have been looking for that but got fed up in Connecticut with the state's financial eco-system of a tax and spend policy, its pension liabilities, labor costs, and the unpredictable way the state has governed for the last 5 years. Senator Hwang says absolutely the blame for GE leaving has to be Connecticut's unpredictable lack of vision as to how the state functions. He says Connecticut has to wake up and change the attitude, the climate, and the tone in which it treats corporations in the state. Senator Hwang says it's been a divisive and combative nature of us versus them attitude. He says as a legislative community they need to do a better job in partnering with businesses in Connecticut and empower them to succeed and thrive in the state ... instead of holding them back to the extent where

January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Hwang continued) - they then look to move elsewhere. Hwang added that when GE put out the warning that they might look to leave the state after the business taxes were raised ... some lawmakers publicly stated they thought GE was bluffing. Now Senator Hwang says he hopes lawmakers use this as a teachable moment and do not go into denial when it comes to the state's fiscal structure, because it has to be addressed.

Senator Tony Hwang says he still is in shock that GE is leaving Fairfield because it means a loss of jobs, property taxes, lost business to local services, and a big loss to local non-profits and charities. He told that GE donated millions and millions of dollars over the years to the local non-profits and charities. Senator Hwang says it's a significant loss that will have a long-term impact on Fairfield. He told that it's also a real kick in the stomach losing a world class, prestigious, iconic company. Senator Hwang says the state hopefully has learned a painful lesson with GE leaving and he is optimistic the state will change its ways, because he says right now Connecticut's slogan that it is open for business has an asterisk next to it.

January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Jillian Gilchrest - Senior Policy Analyst with the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

Subject Matter: On this show Jillian Gilchrest with the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women discussed their legislative agenda for the 2016 general assembly session. She told that topping their agenda is the push for passage of paid family and medical leave legislation. Gilchrest explained that they have been working on this issue for about 4 years and hopes this is the year that it passes and becomes law. She says women are still overwhelmingly the caregivers in their families ... for new babies, adopted children, and also for aging parents and loved ones. Gilchrest says this issue is very important to the women of Connecticut and families in the state. She told that a study was being currently done on how it would be implemented. Gilchrest explained that last year's program said there would be up to 12 weeks of paid leave which would be an entirely employee funded program. So this would mean that every employee in the state would put in a percentage of their paycheck, say a quarter of a percent. Those people who would need it would get 12 weeks of paid time off to care for themselves if they had an illness, care for a loved one if they fell ill like an aging parent, and for the birth of a new child. Gilchrest says many millennials are moving to other states



January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Gilchrest continued) - and to other countries for policies like paid family and medical leave. So she says this is something that would help Connecticut attract an innovative workforce and to keep forward thinking businesses. Gilchrest says if it is approved Connecticut would be the 4<sup>th</sup> state in the country to have paid family and medical leave that would be for both women and men. She also informed listeners that last year there was some pushback that if family and medical leave was paid for, who wouldn't take the full 12 weeks ... but Gilchrest says you still need medical certification, so there are insurances that people can't take advantage of the program. She says she's really confident that it can get passed this session, saying the timing is right and the atmosphere is right for this policy this year.

Another issue Jillian Gilchrest discussed is a bill for affirmative sexual consent standards on college campuses. She told that it came up last year and will again this year. Gilchrest says the affirmation consent bill would ensure that Connecticut has uniform campus policies at every institution of higher education in the state. Gilchrest explained that in 2014 in reaction to what occurred at the University of Connecticut's campus with a sexual assault lawsuit, lawmakers passed a comprehensive sexual assault campus bill, which this bill builds off of. She told when a student makes a complaint that a sexual assault took place, the university right now is already required to investigate the complaint based on Title IX. Gilchrest says what the affirmative consent legislation does is change the way the university conducts the investigation. She told that right now what often happens is the university will question the individual who makes the accusation and ask what the person did to resist, and how did that person say no. Gilchrest says this legislation would turn it around and say to the person being accused, how did the accused know they obtained consent. She says this is not about the hug police being on campus, it only comes into play when a student makes an accusation that a sexual assault has taken place. Gilchrest told that the other part of this legislation would have education and training for both staff and students on what affirmative consent means.

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women will also be pushing for legislation this session concerning labor and sex trafficking. Senior Policy Analyst Jillian Gilchrest of the PCSW says they want to see action taken on nail salons in the state. She told that the Connecticut Department of Labor did a small investigation of 20 nail salons and found that 98 employees were not being paid the minimum wage. Gilchrest says they found other trafficking issues as well. She



January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (more Gilchrest continued) - told that shockingly Connecticut is the only state in the country that does not require nail technicians to be licensed, and PCSW would like to see that changed. With regards to sex trafficking and prostitution she says the Department of Children and Families' Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team in the last 4 years has found 300 victims of domestic minor sex trafficking here in Connecticut. Gilchrest says they'd like to bring greater attention to the demand side of sex trafficking and prostitution. She says the focus too often is arresting the prostitutes while those buying the sex are not targeted and often are not arrested. Gilchrest says when these individuals have sex with a minor they use the mistake of age defense and it could be dropped to a misdemeanor. She says they want that language removed because it should be a felony.

January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 - Denise Merrill - Connecticut Secretary of the State.

Subject Matter: On this week's show Connecticut Secretary of the State Denise Merrill discussed a report on Connecticut's Civic Health Index. She told that this is a report that measures how well people are working together to improve our state. Merrill says civic health is important because if people are civically engaged, they tend to be in communities that are more resilient to change when things go badly. She says they are better at relating to each other and coming together to solve problems. Secretary of the State Merrill says Connecticut's Civic Health Index shows Connecticut does pretty well in areas of volunteering and charitable giving. Merrill says even in very poor communities people are associating like eating dinner with their family and knowing their neighbors. She added that even in these modern times where people are online all the time they are forming new associations online.

One of the measures to determine if people are civically engaged is whether they vote. Secretary of the State Denise Merrill says this is important because society works best if everybody is at the table. She says unfortunately there are big gaps. Merrill told that the lowest rate of participation is the Hispanic ethnic group. She says this has been consistent as they did a very similar report about 5 years ago and while the gap has lessened a little bit, in general Hispanics vote at about half the rate of white people. Merrill says they once did a focus group on this and Hispanics say that for instance in Puerto Rico Election Day is a holiday and about 0% of the people vote with it being a celebration. So she says maybe it's a

January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 - (Merrill continued) - cultural thing. Merrill also told that 18 to 25 year olds also vote in much smaller numbers than older folks.

Secretary of the State Denise Merrill says they'd like to see people involved in their communities, whether it be just a neighborhood situation or on boards and commissions. She says that's how you learn to be a citizen and participate in solving community problems. Merrill told they have found that communities where more people know their neighbors, work to solve problems together, and run for offices at local levels, have much stronger communities in general. She says that's what they want to look at ... ways to encourage that interaction and activism, and many times even asking local people to get involved. Merrill did admit that unfortunately one of the problems in this day and age is social media, where when someone does become community involved, people can harass them online if they don't like something that's proposed or passed. She says it's an enormous problem with the lack of civility for our public offices now. Merrill says it's really a crisis because unfortunately it does discourage some people from getting involved, especially women. She told that by writing this type of report and getting some activism going where people can participate in a way that is civil and a real discourse will help, because that is what's got to happen. But Merrill says she sometimes feels we have lost our manners publicly and it is in most part due to the advent of all the anonymous sorts of social media people can do.

Secretary of the State Denise Merrill says they are trying to get the idea out there in a public way, that people need to be involved civically in their communities. She also says they are working with the State Department of Education to do something in the classroom in this Presidential Election Year and recognize schools that are doing a good job with community service. Merrill says recognizing those who do a good job civically will help get more people involved, but she also admits that these are cynical times.



February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Themis Klarides - State House Republican Leader from Derby.

Subject Matter: On this Dialogue edition, State House Republican Leader Representative Themis Klarides gave her views on Democratic Governor Dannel Malloy's budget address. Many thought that what the governor had to say sounded more Republican than Democrat. Klarides says people thought that because he sounded responsible for the first time in 5 years. She says she wishes this was the Dan Malloy that ran 5 years ago because then the State of Connecticut might not be in the mess it is now facing huge budget deficits. But in his budget address Klarides says Malloy made sense as far as being fiscally responsible. She says he sounded like somebody who finally realizes what a dire financial situation the state is in and sounds like he ready to make the tough decisions to get us out of it.

State House Republican Leader Themis Klarides says for some time the governor and Democrats were saying that Republicans were being fear mongers, naysayers, and just trying to scare the public by telling what kind of fiscal shape the state was in. She says when in reality Democrats knew in their gut that Republicans were saying what was real ... but the Democrats were afraid to acknowledge it and accept it because then they would have to make difficult decisions. So she says she applauds the governor for laying it on the line in his budget address that there needs to be spending cuts and employee layoffs ... and hopes that he sticks with it.

GOP House Leader Klarides says now the legislature also has to take this very seriously and make structural changes. She says part of that is going to be cuts because that's how bad it is. Klarides says the State of Connecticut is facing a close to \$4-billion-dollar deficit in the next 2 years and right now is sitting on a 72-million-dollar deficit. So she says there may be state workforce reductions and painful cuts that have to be made. But Klarides says they have to make them ... that's their job.

Aside from the cuts that have to be made right now Themis Klarides says they still have to make structural long-term changes. She says if they don't, nothing is going to change and the state will continue to have the same problems year after year. Klarides says it's like a hamster on a wheel in a cage going around in circles and you're going to get the same result if you keep doing the same things. So while Klarides likes what she hears from Governor Malloy, she's very leery of the Democratic leadership in the legislature going along with the tough



February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Klarides continued) - decisions the governor has outlined, because they've been very reticent to do it in the past ... and also because this is an election year. She fears the Democratic leadership in the legislature might want to do the minimum hurt possible so they're not portrayed as the bad guys come Election Day. But really Klarides says the state does need to make the tough decisions the governor has come around to, to make the state more predictable, more affordable, and sustainable.

As for state employee layoffs, House GOP Leader Themis Klarides told what she would do if she were a state employee union leader is come to the table and give enough things so there wouldn't have to be layoffs, other than attrition. She explained that state employees get the highest pensions and retiree benefits in the country, but Connecticut employees only pay 0 to 2% into their benefits package. Klarides says the average for the rest of New England is 7% so there is a lot of wiggle room there. She says everyone has to be realistic about the situation as nobody wants to hurt people or take people's jobs away ... so they have to give a little to save the state a lot of money.

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Martin Looney - State Senate President Pro Tempore, Democrat from New Haven.

Subject Matter: This week State Senate President Martin Looney, (D) from New Haven gave his thoughts on Governor Dannel Malloy's budget proposal. He told he feels it was a realistic warning about the challenge the State of Connecticut is facing with a deficit. Senator Looney says it's a reflection in his view that Connecticut still has not recovered from the economic crash in 2007 and 2008. He says the primary problem has been that the state's revenues have not recovered despite moderate spending levels the last 5 years. Looney says the revenues have not kept pace partly because the number of jobs lost in the higher paying categories haven't been recovered to the extent of the lower paying jobs. Senator Looney says Connecticut has actually seen a significant decrease in the unemployment rate, but yet it's not being reflected in the state's income tax revenues because of this lag. He also told that capital gains have been very volatile because of losses in the stock market. All of that Looney says is creating this chronic shortfall.

Governor Malloy in his budget told there would have to be some state employee job cuts and spending cuts. Senate President Martin Looney told that some job cuts could be accomplished through attrition, while others would have to

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Looney continued) - be negotiated with the state employee unions ... but that concessions would have to be forthcoming. On spending cuts, the governor also indicated there needs to be substantial cuts because of the state's budget deficit. Last year Governor Malloy did propose spending cuts, but after various interest groups pleaded for their funding to be restored, the legislature in many cases did just that. Senator Looney told on the show that the legislature could indeed say no again this year to some of the governor's proposed cuts. He says he expects an extended and lively debate over how they define core mission ... and have to come to a meeting of the minds on what they believe those core services to be. But Senator Looney says some things are going to have to be cut, so they'll have to look at programs, evaluate them, and look at whether the program or service really is delivering what was expected from it. He says they have to critically examine the success of various commitments to make sure they are delivering a vital service that continues to be both necessary and cost effective. Senator Looney also told they need greater efficiencies from cities and towns and for there not to be a duplicating of services. He says there ought to be a lot more regional districts to provide services in a more productive way.

On this show Senate President Martin Looney was also asked about the business climate in Connecticut. This after the legislature put through some business taxes last year and some high profile companies were very upset with those taxes and the business climate here and threatened to leave the state. While the legislature after hearing those cries from the business sector did pull back some of the taxes, General Electric followed through on their threat to leave Connecticut, deciding to move their headquarters out of Fairfield to Boston, Massachusetts. Aetna was another company that made some rumblings and now has been silent lately ... but there are some fears that they are merging with Humana now. Senate President Martin Looney says they will be vigorous in making the case that Connecticut really is a good place to do business. He told that on a per capita basis Connecticut has more top 400 corporate headquarters in the state than anywhere else. Looney says it is important for the state to continue to invest in the workforce and invest in an educated population. He told they brought Jackson Labs here and the state has invested in biotech companies like Alexion Pharmaceuticals in New Haven.



February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 - Joe DeLong - Executive Director of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities.

Subject Matter: On this show Joe DeLong, Executive Director of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, discussed how cities and towns will do in this session of the legislature after Governor Malloy unveiled his budget plan. As far as cities and towns getting state aid, DeLong says CCM is hopeful that they will be held harmless, in other words not cutback in aid from what they've received the previous year. He explained that the big problem local cities and towns have is that they have no revenue diversification which is a huge issue. DeLong says communities have the ability to generate funds one way and one way only – through the property tax. He told that all of the rest of the taxes that are collected go to the state and then a portion of that money is returned. DeLong says it's called "state aid" but it's actually money that came out of the community to begin with. He says what they try to educate people on when there's talk about spending reductions in the state budget and shared pain, is that reductions in municipal aid aren't exactly spending cuts. The CCM executive director says they are just shifting a greater burden into the property tax. DeLong says to some degree they look at it as a tax increase because the difference is made up by a hike in property taxes. DeLong told that Governor Malloy is a former mayor, so they know he gets it, and they are hopeful even in these very difficult budget times that local cities and towns will not be hurt by cuts to state aid. They hope the state legislature is sensitive to this as well.

One thing Joe DeLong told on the show that local communities are trying to do more of these days to save them and the state money is trying to find more regional efficiencies and share services. He says neighboring communities are looking to find commonalities in areas of education, public works, transportation, and health to share resources and save dollars.

On another topic CCM Executive Director Joe DeLong was asked about a new proposal by Governor Malloy to shorten lines at Department of Motor Vehicles branches in the state. The state had just undergone a computer upgrade changeover at the DMV that did not go well, ending up with very long lines and long wait times. Governor Malloy, in trying to respond to public consternation, has proposed having the DMV stop refusing to give motor vehicle registrations to people who haven't paid their property taxes or local parking tickets. The governor says the DMV should not have to be the collection agency for cities and



February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 - (DeLong continued) - towns. He feels this would eliminate people waiting in line for long periods only to get to the counter and find out they can't get their registration renewed because they owe back property taxes or have not paid a parking ticket. However, Joe DeLong of CCM says doing that could mean lost revenues of some 40 million dollars to cities and towns if people are not forced to pay up in order to register their vehicle. He says the governor's proposal could be called the tax evasion protection act because it would reward cheaters and allow people to not have to play by the rules ... because if you allow people to register their vehicle without having paid their car taxes and tickets, then what incentive do they have to pay them. DeLong says that would leave a gaping 40-million-dollar loss in revenues collected and give towns and cities no way to make up that lost revenue. He says fortunately they feel people in the legislature don't agree with the governor either and also feel it's a terrible approach to reduce DMV lines.

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Jeff Walter – Interim CEO of the Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance.

Subject Matter: On this week's show Jeff Walter, the Interim CEO of the Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance was the guest. He explained that this alliance is a major merger of two groups: The Connecticut Association of Nonprofits and the Connecticut Community Providers Association. He told they merged for the enhanced advocacy at the state level and to have a more unified voice for non-profits in Connecticut and to find a more efficient way for both organizations to operate. Mr. Walter says they represent over 550 organizations across the state that provide services in areas of health and welfare, human services, housing, employment, and arts and culture.

Jeff Walter told though that they are a sector that is under siege because of the budget deficit and the call by Governor Malloy for significant spending cuts. Malloy's stance is state government has to be rightsized and can no longer afford to do all of the things it has done in past years. Walter on the show told that in the 40 years that he's been working in the non-profit arena this is the worst budget for human services programs that he has ever seen. He says that is no exaggeration as the depth of the cuts that are proposed are unprecedented. Walter told the governor's proposed budget reductions represent about 400 million dollars to areas heir members are involved with. That represents 72% of all the proposed budget

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Walter continued) - reductions in the whole state budget ... so Walter says they are being unfairly targeted. He says they do agree that longer-term structural changes need to happen in state government ... but he says it can't be done in one budget cycle. Walter says it also cannot be done on the backs of people who receive the services by their members that can be the difference between life and death. He says at the very least their services mean the ability of these people to be independent and not forced into settings that no one wants.

Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance Interim CEO Jeff Walter says they have a disagreement with Governor Malloy on whether his proposed cuts would shred the safety net ... something the governor has said in the past he would never want to happen. Walter says they feel it does, the governor disagrees. But Walter says in looking at the hard facts if these budget cuts were enacted as proposed, then they are looking at about a 15% reduction in most of their member organization's budgets that are funded primarily through state funds. Walter says that is a big cut and cannot be absorbed without significant reductions in services and up to 75-hundred jobs ... which is a lot of people he says. Walter says that would have both an economic and human impact.

Jeff Walter of the Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance told that the state provides funding for their members to do their work, that if they were not doing would have to be done by the government ... which would make matters even worse economically for the state. He gave as an example the governor's Second Chance Society Initiative, which helps people who have been in prisons and jails transition out into the community to be productive citizens. Walter says that effort is totally dependent on the nonprofit sector to carry that load and provide the services such as helping with housing, employment, mental health and addition services and others. He says if these services are reduced, that initiative fails. Walter says they have no fat to cut and hopes the legislature will reinstate the cuts proposed by Governor Malloy.



March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Antonio Guerrero - State Representative, Democrat from Rocky Hill and Co-Chair of the Legislature's Transportation Committee.

Subject Matter: Transportation issues were discussed this week on Dialogue with the co-chair of the legislature's transportation committee Representative Antonio Guerrero. One of the bills before the transportation committee deals with allowing electric car maker Tesla Motors to sell their vehicles directly to consumers. State car dealers are opposed to this not wanting to be bypassed. Representative Guerrero told that they had a public hearing on the matter in which they heard from both sides. He told that he asked the question in other states where Tesla has opened shops, have they hurt any of the dealers out there. Guerrero says the response he got was no. Now he explained that we don't need 10 to 15 Tesla dealers popping up throughout the State of Connecticut. But he feels there's ways of crafting legislation that will allow maybe one or two of these dealerships in the state, so as to not hurt the auto dealers across the state. So Representative Guerrero feels there's going to have to be some compromise here, so everyone can win, and so Connecticut consumers don't have to go out of state to purchase Tesla vehicles.

Also discussed on the show with Representative Antonio Guerrero was something Governor Malloy is pushing for: a so-called transportation lockbox. This would secure funds for improving the state's transportation infrastructure so that those funds can't be raided for other things. If passed by enough votes in the legislature it would be put on the ballot for voters to decide whether it would become a constitutional amendment. Representative Guerrero feels though they need to carefully craft the legislation in a way so that it secures the money in this lockbox ... but he also thinks it shouldn't just sit there and balloon to the point where they have so much money they don't know what to do with it, but can't touch it. He does feel they need a lockbox however to make sure the funds raised are used to fix roads, bridges, and other transportation modes.

Another proposal by Governor Malloy is not going over too well with lawmakers and local municipalities. The governor proposed allowing people to still be able to register their vehicles at DMV branches even if they get to the counter and learn that they owe car taxes or haven't paid a ticket. Right now this prevents people from being able to register their vehicle until they pay the past due car tax or ticket. Governor Malloy proposed this after the DMV upgraded its computer system ... which did not go well with DMV customers having to wait in extremely long lines. But Transportation Committee Chair Representative Antonio



March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Guerrera continued) - Guerrera told that municipalities are totally against the governor's proposal fearing that with no incentive to pay their car taxes or parking tickets without the repercussion of not being able to register their vehicle, that people would never be forced to pay them. He says most legislators agree. Guerrera feels a better way would be to outsource more DMV functions to AAA offices in the state. AAA already renews driver's licenses and he says they could also add renewing vehicle registrations to that to cut down DMV lines.

With Connecticut constantly in recent times running budget deficits, Representative Antonio Guerrera ... a longtime proponent of electronic tolling ... feels the state needs to go in this direction in the not too distant future. He says Connecticut is getting less and less revenue from the gasoline tax with the combination of lower gas prices and more and more hybrids and electric cars on the road. Representative Guerrera also feels that it's not fair that out of state drivers use Connecticut roads for free and only Connecticut residents are paying for their upkeep.

March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Eric Hammerling - Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association.

Subject Matter: On this week's show Eric Hammerling, Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, discussed what they do and how they want to protect parks from unwise land deals and state budget cuts. He told that they are not a state agency but the oldest conservation organization in Connecticut established in 1895. Hammerling says they are dedicated to protecting forests, parks, walking and hiking trails for future generations.

Eric Hammerling told on the show that they have concerns about the selloff, swapping, or giveaways of park lands in the state for various reasons. Every year the legislature has so-called conveyance bills where a parcel of land might be given to a town or sold to a town or a business. Hammerling says their group feels these conveyance acts are far too reaching in having the authority to give these lands away. They would like a constitutional amendment passed to make sure when situations like this occur that it's done in a much more transparent fashion. He says they are most concerned about lands that have been set aside for conservation, agriculture, recreation, and open space purposes. Hammerling says the integrity of these lands should be respected before, for example, turning them into a soccer

March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Hammerling continued) - field. Hammerling says they are not saying that a constitutional amendment would say that a transfer of land could never happen, it's more if it's going to happen you have to raise the bar and ensure that it's done publicly, with public hearings and a two-thirds majority okaying it in both the State House and Senate. He says he's very hopeful they can get this constitutional amendment on the ballot for this fall.

With the State of Connecticut running a budget deficit and the prospects of big spending cuts needed to close that gap, Connecticut Forest and Park Association Executive Director Eric Hammerling says the State DEEP could face cuts that affect how our state parks and campgrounds are run this summer with less staff and lifeguards. He says seasonal workers would especially be cutback. Hammerling says it's a shame and that right now the State DEEP has fewer than 70 field employees responsible year-round for 109 state parks. He says if the 500 seasonal workers in the May to October period are cutback dramatically it could mean park closures and some campgrounds not opened. Hammerling says this would be a real shame because the value of the state parks to the state is extraordinary. He says this would be especially distressing because for every dollar that's spent on state parks, about 38 dollars is returned to the state coffers. Hammerling told that over a billion dollars in annual revenue come from state parks with 8 million visitors every year and 9 thousand jobs are sustained by state parks. He feels there should be a dedicated fund for state parks so they don't suffer in tough budget times.

March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Mae Flexer - State Democratic Senator from Killingly.

Subject Matter: On this week's show Killingly State Senator Mae Flexer discussed legislation that she'd like to see passed this legislative session. One measure would prohibit anyone subject to a restraining order from possessing firearms. She explained that this is a really important measure to provide safety for victims of domestic violence. Senator Flexer says when a victim comes forward and applies for a temporary restraining order it's often the most dangerous moment of their lives deciding to leave their abuser. She says because it is such a dangerous time they want to see where it is required that the abuser has to turn over their firearms, because it is such a volatile time. Senator Flexer told that a woman is five times more likely to be killed if her abuser has access to a firearm. She says unfortunately Connecticut averages about 14 domestic violence fatalities a year



March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Flexer continued) - and in those it's a firearm 40% of the time that's used to commit the homicide. Flexer says they need to close this loophole in victim's safety.

Senator Mae Flexer also told that as part of this bill that has to do with violence against women, it also looks to improve state law regarding human trafficking and sex trafficking. She says it would hold those who solicit prostitutes to the same penalties as those who sell it. Senator Flexer says most of the time now only the prostitute faces criminal action.

Senator Flexer is also leading efforts to pass the affirmative consent bill, that would make affirmative consent, yes means yes, the standard on college campuses when it comes to students engaging in sexual activity. She says this would be the standard when investigations of sexual assault on college campuses are done. Senator Flexer tells it would also require that all colleges and universities teach students about affirmative consent and what getting to yes means in a practical way. She says this can change the culture on a college campus, like it has at Uconn and Yale which already have this policy. Senator Flexer says it should also lead to a decrease in the number of sexual assaults on Connecticut college campuses.

Senator Mae Flexer told on the show that they'd also like to fix a loophole in current state law that allows a rapist to sue for custody of the child that's been produced from the rape. She says the only way the rapist can be omitted from the custody proceeding is if they were convicted of sexual assault in the first degree. She told that in many criminal cases people often plead down to a lesser charge ... and if they do then they could sue for custody of the child that resulted from that rape. Senator Flexer says they are trying to eliminate that possibility and make sure that a woman who has been raped won't have to go through the nightmare of fighting their rapist for custody of their child.

Another bill Senator Flexer has introduced this legislative session would raise the age to purchase tobacco products from age 18 to 21. She explained on the show that they know the way teenagers get cigarettes is from other teenagers. Senator Flexer says most people start smoking before they leave their teenage years as 80% of smokers start before they are 20 years old. So she says it's important to raise the age to get them out of the hands of teens and try to ensure people don't start smoking in the first place. Senator Flexer told that we spend millions of dollars in Connecticut to combat the effects of tobacco usage.



March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - Rob Kane - Deputy Senate Republican Leader of Watertown.

Subject Matter: On this show Deputy Senate Republican Leader Rob Kane discussed the daunting deficit problems facing the State of Connecticut. Senator Kane told that while Governor Dannel Malloy has recently come to the conclusion that the economy has not turned around here in Connecticut, Republicans have been saying that for the past few years. He says during that time the governor tried to say that things were good and Republicans were just being pessimists. Senator Kane stated that the state has been spending more than it brings in in revenue and the economy has been stagnant. So he says Republicans have been very prophetic in warning that the economic climate in the state is not good and now finally Democratic Governor Malloy and the Democratic-controlled legislature are waking up to this fact ... albeit very late to the table.

Senator Rob Kane says now the finger pointing has to stop and they have to get down to the business of fixing the state's economic woes. He says the big key that Republicans have been clamoring for is that the state needs long-term structural changes so that they don't keep revisiting budget deficit after budget deficit. Senator Kane says one thing they need to do is open up the labor deal with state employees and renegotiate some of the benefits employees get, which are way too rich for this day and age and economic climate in his opinion. Governor Malloy has stated that state employee concessions are needed to cut down on the number of employee layoffs that will occur, with numbers floated as high as 1,000. Senator Kane told that Republicans would rather go with some layoffs, but get savings in other ways to limit the number of layoffs, by offering employees the alternative of taking furlough days without pay to save money. He also added that state government will also shrink through attrition with state workers retiring and those jobs not being filled. Senator Kane says that number could be between a thousand and two thousand jobs. He says if the Democrats in this election year put forth a budget encompassing some of the ideas that Republicans have put forward, then there could be bipartisan support ... but only if it provides real savings and is a responsible budget that put the state on the right fiscal path. Senator Kane noted they can't just keep kicking the can down the road ... they need to fix it.

One thing Senator Kane told on the show that Republicans will not go for is any new taxes after a couple of the biggest tax budgets that state has ever seen. He also told that Republicans are not happy about talk of cutting municipal aid to cities and towns. Senator Kane also discussed a proposed lockbox for

March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016 - (Kane continued) - transportation funding to make sure that those funds are not raided for other purposes in the future.