

WAXB SECOND QUARTER 2014

ISSUES AND PROGRAM LIST

Each program has a duration of 30 minutes

Each program aired on the date indicated from

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Connecticut Radio Network Dialogue 2014 Guests and Subject Matters

(April, May, June)

April 6th, 2014 - Beth Bye - West Hartford State Senator (D) and Co-Chair of the Legislature's Budget-Writing Appropriations Committee.

Subject Matter: On this Dialogue edition the new chair of the legislature's Appropriations Committee Senator Beth Bye talked about the budget that her committee produced. She says they heard about the many needs that people have. Bye says the state is coming out of really hard economic times when it had flat funded a lot of things. The Appropriations Committee chair says these people saw that the state had a budget surplus for the first time in a while and were saying they've been waiting a long time for help. Senator Bye says organizations that are dealing with the most needy such as people with mental health challenges, have really been struggling to meet their budgetary needs. So she says they heard the loudest from them and they added 4.5 million for them ... and Bye says they would have added more if they could have.

Appropriations Committee Chair Senator Beth Bye says the budget that her committee voted out was a little more than 19 billion dollars. She says it wasn't much different than Governor Dannel Malloy's proposed budget ... but she told that they did add 12 million dollars to it. Senator Bye says they have heard from cities and towns who have also been struggling through these hard times. So she says you get to that 12 million just with the money that they sent to cities and towns to try to mitigate some of the property tax challenges for people. Senator Bye told that it's a real regressive tax and towns don't have a lot of ways to get money. She says they increased PILOT, which is payment in lieu of taxes, for state property and for colleges and hospitals. She says they also added about 7 million dollars to the governor's bottom line for education cost sharing for schools.

Senator Beth Bye told that one area they were trying to get a handle on was funding for the state's magnet schools. She told they were having a conversation with the State Department of Education on the magnet school data to find out how much they need to fund the magnet schools. Senator Bye also commented that

April 6th, 2014 - (Bye continued) - they need to find ways whereby they can contain that funding. She says in looking at the situation there doesn't seem to be any containment to adding magnet schools. She feels we need to have a plan as a state and do what we can afford. Senator Bye says the budget calls for \$35 million for magnet schools which are 8% of the state's public schools ... and \$41 million for the other 92% of schools in the state. So she says they have to look at this situation equitably and make sure that the state is funding its cities and towns' typical public schools, as well as the magnet initiatives.

On the show Appropriations Committee Chair Beth Bye was asked if the legislature, whether it's good times or bad, can ever get a handle on what's going on in the budget because there are so many things - especially in the healthcare area - that are out of their control and seem to increase every year. Senator Bye says that healthcare had been growing and growing and hard to contain ... but she did say that the Affordable Care Act has helped Connecticut offset some of those. She also told that the State Office of Healthcare Advocate is working on innovation models to improve the quality and contain costs of healthcare. Bye says it is hard though as 18% of our economy is dependent on healthcare, so there are a lot of people who make a profit on healthcare and who want to keep making a profit on healthcare. Meantime right now the State of Connecticut is running a modest budget surplus ... but there are dire reports by some analysts that there could be a billion dollar deficit facing the state next year. Senator Bye says her best guesstimate is an 800-million deficit and they'll have to find ways to deal with it.

April 13th, 2014 - Sarah Eagan - State Child Advocate.

Subject Matter: On the show this week State Child Advocate Sarah Eagan discussed a public health alert they've issued on infant sleep risks. Ms. Eagan explained that this alert was issued jointly by the Office of the State Child Advocate and the State Child Fatality Review Panel of which she is a member. She told that the 17-member panel looks at unexpected or unexplained child deaths. Ms. Eagan says they look at the causes of these deaths and how to prevent them in the future. She told that many, many of the deaths that they see of children

April 13th, 2014 - (Eagan continued) - of all ages are preventable. Connecticut's Child Advocate says not a single month goes by where they do not see and review the death of an infant that died in a way that was sudden or unexplained. Ms. Eagan says many of these infants died where there was the presence of unsafe sleep conditions. So the members of the review panel felt that this is a tragedy that they have to talk to people about.

State Child Advocate Sarah Eagan said what people don't know is how often infants still die from conditions associated with unsafe sleep. She emphasized on the show that this really happens all the time. Ms. Eagan told that first of all infants should sleep on their back, as it is the best position for them to avoid accidental suffocation. She says the ideal sleep environment for infants is a crib with a fitted sheet ... and nothing else in the crib. The child advocate says infants should not be co-sleeping in an adult bed with other adults or other children in the bed. Eagan says there should also not be bedding filled with pillows, blankets, comforters, bumpers, or any other toys and things in the bed. She says unfortunately society is selling and marketing products to parents that are not safe for infants. Eagan says it is not safe to have zoo animals, or fluffy bumpers or comforters in an infant's crib because they can suffocate with those things in the crib.

Another area State Child Advocate Sarah Eagan told that they are concerned about is the frequent use of restraints and seclusion used to deal with children with behavior problems. She says each school year there are between 30-and-40-thousand incidents of restraints and seclusion of children with disabilities in our schools, with the majority of these incidents in elementary schools. State Child Advocate Eagan says part of what is concerning to them is that these are non-evidence based practices, meaning there's no evidence to support the use of restraints and seclusion as a therapeutic behavioral intervention for children with disabilities. So Eagan asked why are we using it so systematically for children. She says this is potentially a harmful tool as the research is increasingly telling them that restraints and seclusion techniques can be traumatizing to children. Ms. Eagan told of a better way to go using what's called "Positive Behavioral Intervention Support" for reducing problem behaviors in schools. She says this is in use in about 17-hundred schools nationwide and is evidence based as an intervention. Eagan says it involves training and has been shown to be effective.

April 20th, 2014 - John Larson - Connecticut's First District Congressman, Democrat.

Subject Matter: On this edition of Dialogue, first district Congressman John Larson discussed the dysfunctional nature of Congress these days. He says it's hard to find a time in America's history where Congress has been so divided and so partisan on everything that comes before them. Congressman Larson says it is very bad in the U.S. House of Representatives whereas the U.S. Senate has been able to pass some bills. But in the U.S. House Larson told that there are Tea Party representatives, as well as Libertarians and Populist representatives that oppose big government. He explained the only way things can finally have a chance of something getting done is if House Speaker John Boehner finally lets a bill come to the floor and lets the House work its will. Larson told that it even got so bad that Hurricane Sandy relief was being delayed due to politics, with Boehner only relenting to have the House take it up after New Jersey Republican Governor Chris Christie took his own party to task on purposely delaying a vote.

As far as the elections coming up in November and whether Democrats can win back control of the House, Congressman John Larson says that will be tough. He says Democrats would need to win 17 seats to take back control, and while he feels they will win some seats it's not likely they'll win 17. Larson says it's a mid-term election where Republicans have been unrelenting trying to demonize Obamacare which is actually the Affordable Care Act.

On another matter Congressman John Larson explained on the show something that he is proposing in Congress which is to increase the term of a United States Representative from 2 years to 4 years. He says the problem with such a short term is almost the minute after a congressman gets elected they have to almost immediately start trying to raise money for the next election to get reelected. Larson says if they were elected to a 4 year term then they would have time to get out to their districts, meet their constituents, and do their job and not immediately have to begin chasing after money again ... or as he put it "dialing for dollars." He says it would just be a lot more practical to have a 4 year term as a U.S. Senator's term is 6 years. Larson's proposal would stagger it so that half of the U.S. House of Representatives would be up for reelection every 2 years. But alas for Larson's proposal to happen Congress would have to pass a constitutional

April 20th, 2014 - (Larson continued) - amendment to change the term of a U.S. Representative from 2 to 4 years and in this gridlocked Congress the chances of that happening are not likely at all.

April 27th, 2014 - James Fleming - President of the Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association.

Subject Matter: On this week's show James Fleming, President of the Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association, discussed the health of auto retailing and the push to sell electric cars. As far as the health of the auto retailing industry these days Fleming told that they have recovered from the recession when they lost nearly 30% of their dealerships here in Connecticut. He says they have not gotten back all of the dealerships that they lost ... but they are adding dealerships now. Fleming also says a good sign of how the industry has recovered is when a dealer wants to sell now there is another dealer who will buy that franchise. He says during the recession that was not the case.

James Fleming disclosed on the show that they are now back at the same sales levels this year that they were at in 2007 and 2008. He says there certainly has been some pent up demand. But Fleming says more importantly people now have better confidence that they are going to have a job and keep their job. He explained that when people buy a car or buy a house those are two of the biggest financial obligations any family is going to have. Fleming told that when times are tough and people are not sure they are going to have a job they are going to be less likely to enter into a 3-to-5 year commitment to pay off a vehicle. But he says people are feeling that confidence again to go out and buy a car. Fleming stated that they are back to selling nearly 9 billion dollars worth of cars just here in the State of Connecticut and nationwide 17 million cars are being sold.

James Fleming told that the other big issue for consumers is credit. He says that during the recession credit really took a hit. But credit is good now and readily available again to people to get a loan to buy a car.

The President of the Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association James Fleming also discussed a big public recall by General Motors. This had to deal

April 27th, 2014 - (Fleming continued) - with faulty ignition switches that might turn off the car if there were a lot of keys on a key chain hanging off the ignition switch. Fleming told that GM wanted to get this situation fixed right ... but compounding this problem has been their slowness in getting parts to the dealers to fix the problem. He told though that consumers could get a loaner car while waiting for the parts to be sent to the dealership to fix the faulty ignition switches.

On the issue of electric cars Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association President James Fleming discussed the topic of a news conference that Governor Dannel Malloy had during the week concerning "range anxiety." He explained this means that people would be nervous if they purchased an electric car and there were not a convenient charging station to go to for recharging it. So Fleming told on the show that the car dealers were approached by Governor Malloy and the commissioner of environmental protection and were asked if they would be willing to make their charging stations at their dealerships available. He said the 250 car dealers in Connecticut said "sure"! Fleming pointed out that it's good for business as electric car owners will come in, plug their cars in to recharge, and walk around and look at vehicles. So he says the State of Connecticut is trying to work with the private sector to make it easy for consumers to get electric vehicles, because the issue here is to have cleaner air in Connecticut.

May 4th, 2014 - Jacqueline Ford - Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment Specialist with the Department of Children and Families.

Subject Matter: This week's guest on Dialogue 2014 was Jacqueline Ford, who is a foster care and adoption specialist with the State Department of Children and Families. She told that May is national foster care awareness month. Ms. Ford explained that it is a great opportunity for them to thank their foster families. She also wanted to acknowledge the improvements that the agency has made and one of those is placing children with relatives or in kin care with people that they have connections with. Ms. Ford says that national experts have assisted them with their recruitment efforts and looking through kid's history and their cases to see where those connections are so they can identify people who would be able to care for these kids. She says they have interstate compact agreements so it is a possibility

May 4th, 2014 - (Ford continued) - that they could connect these kids with relatives in other states, although Ford added that most of the time they are placed with relatives right here in Connecticut. Ms. Ford says it could also be with a coach, a family friend, or someone that the child already has a bond and connection with. She says this is really beneficial to the child with much lower disruption rates when they are able to place him or her with a family member or someone they are familiar with. Ford says this is something that DCF has been working on to make it a priority with now 30% of the children in care placed with relatives or kin care. She also noted that they have a care giver support team that will go right into the home to help make that placement work.

DCF foster care and adoption recruitment specialist Jacqueline Ford told that DCF provides a lot of support to their licensed families. She says they provide medical insurance for the kids and the families are reimbursed for the care that they provide. Ms. Ford says the families in addition have support social workers and training available to them as well. So she says there are a lot of benefits that foster families will receive.

One segment of foster children that are tougher to place told Jacqueline Ford is teenagers. She says there is just a natural stigma around the teen years and even the children who are living in the best family circumstances have some challenges that they are going through. Ford says adolescent teens can definitely have some struggles. She told that they are harder to place with the issues that they are going through in the teen years with changes to their bodies and sexual issues.

On the show Jacqueline Ford with the State Department of Children and Families told how those interested in becoming a foster parent could do so. She explained that the first step is to contact their general inquiry number at 1-888-kid-hero. Ms. Ford told that they'll talk to someone who will provide them with the dates and times of various open houses in Connecticut. She says an open house is an informational session that provides the interested family information about their program, regulations, what can qualify them, as well as talking about the kids – who they are and what their needs are. Ford also said that people can visit their website to find out more information at www.ctfosteradopt.com. She says when you speak with their foster families they will say how rewarding this is and what a benefit it is to them and their families to be able to help these foster kids.

May 4th, 2014 - (more Ford continued) - Jacqueline Ford says that background checks are done on the potential foster family and if the assessment checks out they go through a 10-week training and then if approved they'll be licensed for a 2-year period.

DCF foster care and adoption recruitment specialist Jacqueline Ford says the rewards for the foster family are being able to provide a safe home environment for the children and to see them flourish in their care and provide them with the stability that they were lacking. Ford also pointed out that when one becomes a foster parent you are assigned to a support social worker that is there through the journey. She says they provide a monthly stipend to care for the child as well as a medical stipend - so medical and dental are taken care of for the foster child. Ford also noted that they will also reimburse for college expenses for the child when they reach the age to attend. She told that some families that come forth say they'd love to send the child to college but they just can't afford it. But Ford says that is one of the myths and misconceptions about the foster care program as that cost is handled by the state.

May 11th, 2014 - Merrill Gay - Executive Director of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance.

Subject Matter: On this week's show Merrill Gay, the Executive Director of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance discussed gains in early childhood education made during the just completed general assembly session. One of the main things the legislature did was pass legislation establishing the Office of Early Childhood in statute. It had been approved by the governor's executive order last year when the legislature ran out of time to do so in the previous session. Mr. Gay told that there needed to be a centralized body to coordinate state early childhood services. He says there was a real tangled web of funding streams and regulatory bodies. Gay explained that childcare providers might have been dealing with four different state agencies with conflicting eligibility requirements, different reporting requirements, and different rules they had to deal with. So he says five years ago they started the effort to try and make state government work for families and children. Now it has come to fruition with the Office of Early Childhood passed

May 11th, 2014 - (Gay continued) - and Gay added that it was wonderful to see it passed unanimously in both the Senate and House of Representatives.

Merrill Gay says that the State of Connecticut's commitment to early childhood education is vitally important. He says they know that early childhood education is probably the best bang the state can get for its dollar. Gay explained that when you start that education process earlier children are more likely to start school with the vocabulary they need and with the interpersonal skills that they need to be in a classroom. He told that kids who have been to preschool are more comfortable with other children. Gay says nobody has ever talked about doing mandatory preschool as we still don't even have mandatory kindergarten in Connecticut. So he says nobody is ever forcing anyone to send their child to pre-K. Gay says what they are trying to do here is overcome the barriers that keep children out of pre-K if their parents want them to attend. He says what they find are children who are behind in kindergarten tend to never catch-up. Gay says by the time they get to third grade a child who is not reading at grade level has very little chance of catching up and are much more likely to drop out of high school. So he says that early intervention is really important.

Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance Executive Director Merrill Gay said on the show that the legislature and Governor Malloy really did hold true to their commitment that we need to invest more money at the early ages to get the maximum payback and close the achievement gap. Gay told that research across the country shows that poor children are the ones who get the biggest advantage from an early education. He says that helps to make up for lower language skills at home with perhaps a parent who didn't finish high school and doesn't read well. Gay says the earlier exposure to learning, the more likely they are going to be able to catch up with their peers who have a more enriching environment at home. Mr. Gay says that in Connecticut we have 80% of our children going to preschool, so we are doing really well compared to other states. But for those 20% who aren't going to preschool says Gay, they are starting that much further behind their peers. So he was very pleased by the legislation passed by the general assembly calling it the year of early childhood at the State Capitol. He says our elected officials have caught up with the understanding that early childhood is really a key time in a child's life and the key time for intervention is when people's brains are developing.