

WAXB FIRST QUARTER 2016

ISSUES AND PROGRAM LIST

Each program has a duration of 30 minutes

Each program has aired on the date indicated from 0600-0630

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 hamstring 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 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 - (more Gilchrest continued) - told that shockingly  
the state in the country that does not require nail technicians to  
have a license = (more Gilchrest continued) = told that shockingly

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 80% 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.