



Jamie Eldridge

★ State Senator Middlesex & Worcester District ★

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Dear Constituent,

It's my pleasure to present you with my Fall 2009 District Newsletter, a quarterly publication designed to keep the residents of the Middlesex & Worcester District informed about what's happening at the State House.

Fall is here, and the Legislature is back in full swing, with a busy few months ahead of us. I kicked off the beginning of the fall session by marching in the Marlborough Labor Day Parade (right).



Topics that may come before the Senate over the next few months include health care cost control, education reform, expanded gambling, and criminal justice reform, among others. I'll be continuing to work to make sure the interests of the Middlesex & Worcester District are well-represented in these debates, and that we uphold progressive values like fairness, equal opportunity, and economic justice for all.

These are just a few of the values championed for so long by our Senator, Edward Kennedy -- whose recent passing is sad news for all of us who admired his unparalleled leadership, his tenacious advocacy for those in need, and his dedication to fairness and equality for all. Kennedy dedicated nearly all of his life to public service, and he played an instrumental role in crafting and passing major pieces of legislation throughout his career that had a real impact on families across the nation, including those in the Middlesex and Worcester district. This is a loss that will be felt deeply across the Commonwealth for years to come.

I hope that you find this newsletter useful and informative, and I encourage you to continue to contact me about how you feel about local and state issues, as well as anything that I may do to help you personally.

As your State Senator, I'm here to make sure that our state government is working for you. If there's anything we can help you with, I invite you to please contact my office. We'll work to make sure your needs are responded to in a timely fashion.

Very Truly Yours,

FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER

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Legislative Update

Here are updates on some of the issues I've been working on this past summer and into this fall:

Expanded Gambling

It seems likely that the question of expanded gambling in Massachusetts will come before the Legislature this fall. I am strongly opposed to bringing casinos, slot machines, or "racinos" to the Commonwealth, and I will be working hard to try and defeat these proposals this session.

I've spent a lot of time looking at the studies, and the reasons to oppose expanded gambling in Massachusetts are overwhelming:

- Casinos will hurt local businesses. Money that would otherwise be spent at locally-owned small businesses -- including hotels and restaurants -- will instead be spent at large casinos owned by out-of-state corporations.
- Casinos will hurt our local communities. The introduction of casinos to a community has been demonstrated to increase crime, leading to greater police costs for local governments.
- Casinos create more problem gamblers. Casinos make 90% of their profits from 10% of players. The simple truth is that if people were not addicted to their product, casinos would not be profitable. The increase in problem gambling at casinos and slots will result in more foreclosures, more bankruptcies, distressed families, child neglect, increased domestic violence and even increased suicide. This isn't the sort of thing we want to bring into our communities.

We're facing a fiscal crisis in Massachusetts, but casinos aren't the answer. There are better ways, less destructive ways, to solve our fiscal problems and make the Commonwealth a better place to live.

Half Hour on the Hill

Please check out my new bi-monthly television program, "Half Hour on the Hill," which will run on local cable access channels throughout the district.

The first program, which is running now, focuses on ethics reform, a hot topic on Beacon Hill this year. I had a great conversation about the subject with Pam Wilmot, a long-time leader on the issue of ethics and campaign finance reform, and the head of Common Cause, a nonpartisan organization that works to ensure open, honest and accountable government.

Check with your local cable access channel for details.

Water Infrastructure

I am pleased to announce that over the summer, I passed my first piece of legislation as a Senator, working with State Representative Carolyn Dykema on a bill to create a Water Infrastructure Finance Commission.

Given my work on the bill, I am honored that I've been appointed to serve on the Commission, which will devise a plan to help cities and towns finance their water infrastructure capital needs.

The need for clean water, delivered by a reliable water Infrastructure system, impacts every part of our lives, and yet it's often taken for granted. Even in a state with plentiful rainfall, we can't afford to waste fresh clean water in leaking pipes, and we must help our cities and towns afford capital upgrades to their water and wastewater treatment plants.

Help for Low-Income Families

This fall the Committee on Children & Families heard one of my top-priority bills this session, *An Act Removing Barriers to Financial Stability and Asset Development for Low-to-Moderate Income Families*.

Low-to-moderate income families often face substantial barriers to gaining and keeping employment and to building the assets necessary to achieve financial stability. Having a car to drive to work, the education and vocational training necessary to gain sustainable employment, and the ability to build modest savings are key to breaking the cycle of poverty.

However, many transitional assistance and education programs are restricted to those with few or no financial assets. These restrictions can have the unintended effect of restricting employment options due to a lack of reliable transportation, education, and training, and can create disincentives for saving.

This bill would remove state-imposed barriers to asset development for low-to-moderate income residents of the Commonwealth, and promote gainful employment and financial stability.

I'll be working hard to pass this bill this session, because we need to make sure we are helping *all* families, including low and moderate income families, gain financial stability and move up the economic ladder.