



**Naugatuck Chamber**  
*driving business to business*



**Waterbury Regional Chamber**  
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**Watertown Oakville Chamber**  
*driving business to business*

## ***2022 Legislative Session Report***

Prepared by Joe Violette  
Director of Public Policy & Economic Development  
on behalf of the Public Policy Committee  
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The 2022 Legislative Session began with members of the legislature meeting mostly online during the committee and public hearing process. At that time, only the first floor of the Legislative Office Building and State Capitol were open to the public. As session progressed and proposals moved on to the House or Senate Chamber for a vote, the State Capitol Complex once again became a flurry of in-person activity not seen in nearly two years. Lobbyists, advocates and members of the public were welcomed back to the first and second floor of the State Capitol. The third floor, where the Senate Chamber is located, remained closed to the public.

Chamber lobbyist Armando Paolino III was essential in identifying and tracking bills important to Chamber members. Under his direction, and in conjunction with the Public Policy Committee led by Chairman Jack Traver, the Chamber developed a robust advocacy campaign on legislation relevant to businesses, including labor and workforce, economic development, manufacturing, regulatory matters and the state budget. The Committee regularly hosted local elected officials and industry experts at their monthly meetings to discuss public policy and the political discourse in Hartford. The Chamber hosted a legislative summit and legislative breakfast, participated in many public hearings, advocacy meetings and coalition calls where its voice was heard by legislators, state commissioners and Governor Ned Lamont.

This report includes legislation that the Chamber advocated for, or against, and additional bills that will impact our region's business community. To read the text of any bill, its fiscal note and other pertinent information, follow the links provided. If you have any questions or comments on policies included (or not) in this report, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

Joe Violette

Director of Public Policy and Economic Development

[jviolette@waterburychamber.com](mailto:jviolette@waterburychamber.com)

203-757-0701 x319

### **Senate Bill 6: An Act Concerning Personal Data and Privacy and Online Monitoring.**

This proposal is intended to improve the privacy of personal information and protect consumers' data. The data privacy requirements apply to individuals doing business in Connecticut and producing products or services that target Connecticut residents. The new law would affect Connecticut businesses that controlled and processed personal data of at least 100,000 consumers in the state, and excludes personal data controlled and processed solely for the purpose of completing payment transactions.

Additionally, the bill would apply to businesses that derive 25% of their gross revenue from 25,000 Connecticut residents. The data privacy requirements apply to individuals doing business in Connecticut, producing products or services that target Connecticut residents. Small businesses in the state benefited from thresholds set within the language of the bill.

The Chamber was monitoring this bill due to the potential high costs on small businesses. They were eventually lowered. It passed in concurrence and has been signed by the Governor.

### **Senate Bill 98: An Act Concerning the Manufacturing Apprenticeship Tax Credit to Pass-Through Entities.**

The bill extends the manufacturing apprenticeship tax credit to the affected business entity tax, allowing members of pass-through entities (LLCs and S corporations) to claim the credit against this tax and reduce their PE tax liability.

The Chamber supported this bill to develop a stronger workforce pipeline in manufacturing. It failed in the House but provision was included in the budget.

### **Senate Bill 115: An Act Concerning Extended Producer Responsibility for Consumer Packaging.**

The proposal would require packaging producers to create an entity to recover packaging and paper product materials. The entity would be funded by an additional fee assessed on everyday items purchased by consumers.

The Chamber opposed because it would raise costs for businesses. It failed in Environment Committee.

**[Senate Bill 118: An Act Concerning Use of Certain Polystyrene Products.](#)**

This bill creates a ban on single use polystyrene products for restaurants, catering and retail food service areas by July 1, 2024.

The Chamber was monitoring this bill because of its potential impact on the restaurant industry. It failed in the House.

**[Senate Bill 163: An Act Concerning Protecting Employee Freedom of Speech and Conscience.](#)**

This proposal allows employees to bring civil actions against an employer if they are required to attend a meeting where they believe political matters, such as legislation or regulations that impact business operations or employer involvement in civic or community events, are being discussed.

The Chamber opposed this bill because it restricts employer to employee communication. It passed in concurrence and awaits the Governor's signature.

**[Senate Bill 214: An Act Concerning the Sale of Electric Vehicles in the State.](#)**

The bill would expand the ability of certain licensed motor vehicle manufacturers to sell their vehicles directly to consumers in Connecticut, bypassing current consumer protection regulations that car dealerships must follow.

The Chamber opposed this legislation because it ignores consumer protection standards and jeopardizes local jobs. It failed in the Senate.

**[Senate Bill 218: An Act Concerning Brownfield Remediation.](#)**

This bill makes changes to the Abandoned Brownfield Cleanup program and the Brownfield Remediation and Revitalization Program. Among many things, the bill allows short term lessees to be considered for participation in the program, requires full compliance for liability protection purposes and requires applicants to acquire title to a property within two years of it being designated for inclusion in the program.

The Chamber supported this bill to continue to help our region's municipalities address brownfields and return them to use. It passed in concurrence and awaits the Governor's signature.

### **Senate Bill 317: An Act Concerning Unemployment for Striking Employees.**

This bill would allow striking workers to be eligible for unemployment benefits after they have been on strike for two consecutive weeks.

The Chamber opposed this bill because it would raise costs for business. It failed in the House.

### **House Bill 5127: An Act Establishing the JobsCT Tax Rebate Program.**

This bill would establish a tax rebate program under which companies may earn rebates for reaching certain job creation targets. The rebate is based on the number of new full-time employees the business creates and maintains, the average wage, and the state income tax that would be paid on this average wage for a single filer.

The Chamber supported this bill to help increase the number of jobs created. This bill failed in the House but provision was included in the budget.

### **House Bill 5249: An Act Concerning Non-Compete Agreements.**

This bill would invalidate all no compete agreements if the employee is a non-exempt (hourly) employee, the employee is an exempt employee earning not less than three times the minimum wage, is an independent contractor earning less than five times the minimum wage, or if the employee subjectively believes the employment relationship ended for good cause attributable to the employer.

The Chamber opposed this bill because non-compete agreements protect trade secrets, emerging technology and other confidential information, all of which are essential to the success of a business. It failed in the House.

### **House Bill 5353: An Act Concerning Fair Work Week Schedule.**

This bill requires employers in the retail, restaurant or hospitality industries that have 500 or more employees, or where all franchisees collectively have 500 or more employees, to provide 14 days' notice to employees of their work schedules. Any deviation from that schedule results in financial penalties to the employer.

The Chamber opposed this bill because it would raise costs and burden businesses. It failed in the Judiciary Committee.

**House Bill 5506: An Act Adjusting the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 30, 2023, Concerning Provisions Related to Revenue, School Construction and Other Items to Implement the State Budget and Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of The State.**

Also known as the state budget, the plan was largely focused on human services and less on small business or small business relief. The package includes tax cuts of \$600 million and dedicates money to initiatives including mental health care, property tax relief and an extended consumer gas tax holiday through November 30th. The manufacturing tax credit for small manufacturers finally passed this year as part of the budget. To reduce the burden on businesses \$40 million in federal pandemic funds were allocated to reduce the nearly half billion dollars in debt the state's unemployment trust fund is in because of pandemic shutdowns. Also, the JobsCT tax rebate program was included in the budget for new full time equivalent positions created in CT.

Other budget notes:

- \$67 million for private providers
- \$80 million for childcare through the Office of Early Childhood
- \$4.3 million for rail operations
- \$1 million for CDL Training at Community Colleges
- \$111.5 for the Office of Early Childhood
- \$100,000 for Education Technology Training at Gateway
- \$35 million for Healthcare Workforce Needs at both public and private schools
- \$155 million for childcare and early development programs
- \$15 million for CT Summer at the Museum Program
- \$11 million for Magnet schools to cover 1 years' worth of tuition
- \$23 million for outfitting 5G on Rail Cars
- \$250 per child tax credit, capped at maximum three children per household

The Chamber was monitoring this bill and supports many of the above provisions included in the final package. It passed in concurrence and has been signed by the Governor.