



# Dining

## Catering, Takeout & Dine-In For Every Occasion

**Angel's Deli**  
Fast and friendly service, wide selection of breakfast and lunch deli items at reasonable prices. 470 Federal Rd B, Brookfield (203) 546-7232 [www.angelsdeli.com](http://www.angelsdeli.com)

**Backdoor Chicken and Burgers**  
A wonderful new restaurant in Brookfield featuring delicious sandwiches, breakfast, entrees and some of the best coffee anywhere. They have the most friendly and helpful staff and reasonable prices. And if you like BBQ, try the pulled pork, but only if your plan on coming back again and again because it is truly wonderful! 537 Federal Rd, Brookfield (203) 546-7403 [www.backdoor-chicken.com](http://www.backdoor-chicken.com)

**Bagel Crossing**  
Fast and friendly service with a great selection of bagels, toppings and breakfast sandwiches with lunch salads and sandwiches, too. But be warned, the cinnamon rolls are beyond addictive. 6 Library Place, Bethel (203) 790-6656 [www.bagel-crossing.com](http://www.bagel-crossing.com)

**Bagel Delight**  
This is truly a delight as they have one of the absolute best selections of NY style, delicious bagels anywhere outside of "the city", with one of the most kind and friendly owners anywhere. Breakfast and lunch selections are all delicious and the prices are reasonable. Dine-in or take out. 30 Church Hill Rd #1, Newtown (203) 426-6838

**Bethel Pizza House**  
Delicious and reasonably priced, still using George's original recipes, with some of the most friendly, helpful service anywhere, and shhh, the best kept secret in town is that they also offer delivery. 206 Greenwood Ave, Bethel (203) 748-1427 [www.bethelpizzahouse.com](http://www.bethelpizzahouse.com)

**Blue Colony Diner**  
Fast and friendly service in a comfortable diner with a great selection of delicious, reasonably priced food. They offer dine-in, take-out and catering. 66 Church Hill Rd, Newtown (203) 426-0745 [www.bluecolonydiner.com](http://www.bluecolonydiner.com)

**Capri**  
Possibly the best calzone pizza we have every tasted. Pizza, entrees, generous and delicious salads. Take out, dine-in or delivery. 182 Old Hawleyville Rd, Bethel (203) 743-6800 [www.capripizzaofbethel.com](http://www.capripizzaofbethel.com)

**Caraluzzi's**  
Local grocery stores that offer excellent take out and catering. - Bethel: 98 Greenwood Ave, Bethel (203) 748-3547 [www.caraluzzis.com/](http://www.caraluzzis.com/) - Danbury: 102 Mill Plain Rd, Danbury (203) 743-8003 [www.caraluzzis.com/caraluzzis-danbury-market-2](http://www.caraluzzis.com/caraluzzis-danbury-market-2) - Newtown: 5 Queen St, Newtown (203) 270-7500 [www.caraluzzis.com/caraluzzis-newtown-ct](http://www.caraluzzis.com/caraluzzis-newtown-ct) - Wilton/Georgetown:

22 Padanaram Rd, Danbury (203) 731-2559 [www.elfersdiner.com](http://www.elfersdiner.com)

**Famous Pizza**  
Famous pizza is truly and deservedly famous for their pizza, but also for their salads (try the house dressing!) and delicious entrees. They offer dine in, take out and delivery. Try the thin crust, it is amazing! 7 P T Barnum Square, Bethel (203) 797-1550 [www.famouspizzabethel.com](http://www.famouspizzabethel.com)

**Farmboys Smokin' BBQ**  
If you love BBQ, try Farmboys. The BBQ is delicious and smoked on the premises, but the secret to taking this to the next level is their amazing homemade BBQ sauces. You can thank me

later. 30 South St, Danbury (203) 616-5942 [www.farmboyssmokinbbq.com](http://www.farmboyssmokinbbq.com)

**Food Emporium**  
Brookfield's newest market brings SOHO style, fresh produce, and one of the best prepared foods and deli selections anywhere. They offer take out and catering. Did we mention the mouth watering desserts in the bakery department? 731 Federal Rd, Brookfield (203) 746-9487 [foodemporium.keyfood.com/store/203/792-2444](http://foodemporium.keyfood.com/store/203/792-2444)

**For Pete's Sake**  
Fast, friendly service, dine-in or take out and they offer catering, too, and a wide selection of delicious sandwiches and entrees. 73 Stony Hill Rd, Bethel (203) 792-2444 [www.forpetessakedeli.com](http://www.forpetessakedeli.com)

**Gino's Pizza Parlor**  
Fast and friendly service, some of the most generous salads anywhere and delicious italian cuisine at affordable prices. And they have some of the most diverse and delicious choices of pizza toppings. 102 Church Hill Rd, Sandy Hook (203) 304-1304 [www.ginosparlor.com](http://www.ginosparlor.com)

**Hunan Noodle Bar**  
Delicious food, wonderful selection, fast and friendly service. 461 Main St., Ridgefield (203) 431-4238 [www.ridgefieldhunan.com](http://www.ridgefieldhunan.com)

**Jacqueline's**  
This is my go to place for breakfast and lunch or just

excellent coffee. They offer dine-in, take-out and catering and some of the best wait staff anywhere. I have a friend who sneaks out and drives 40 minutes round trip every so often just to get their bacon, egg and cheese on an english muffin. Thankfully I live much closer! 138 Greenwood Ave, Bethel (203) 792-5541 [www.catatjacquelines.com](http://www.catatjacquelines.com)

**Kowloons Chinese Restaurant**  
Fast, friendly service, reasonably priced and a wide selection of delicious choices. The BBQ spare ribs are the closest to New York ribs we have found, and the shrimp with lobster sauce is another personal favorite. 110 Greenwood Ave, Bethel (203) 205-2325 [www.kowloonchinesect.com](http://www.kowloonchinesect.com)

**Newtown General Store**  
A dizzying array of delicious choices for breakfast and lunch. They feature dine-in, take out and catering. 43 Main St., Newtown (203) 426-9901 [www.newtowngeneralstore.com](http://www.newtowngeneralstore.com)

**Pop's Diner**  
Enjoy a classic diner experience with a wide selection of fast and friendly service. 199 Ethan Allen Hwy, Ridgefield (203) 445-4272 [www.popsclassicediner.com](http://www.popsclassicediner.com)

**Portofino's Wine Bar and Restaurant**  
A cozy pub like atmosphere on one side, an elegant dining room on the other, with food by one of the absolute best chefs in Connecticut. They offer dine-in, take out and catering. And the bar

is tended by one of the best anywhere. A truly perfect choice for an evening out or take out. 213 Greenwood Ave., Bethel (203) 797-8131 [portofinorestaurantandwinebar.com](http://portofinorestaurantandwinebar.com)

**Prime Burgers**  
Some of the best burgers anywhere. Lots of other delicious choices, but seriously, my mouth waters just thinking about their burgers. 449 Main St, Ridgefield (203) 431-3000 [www.primchurgerct.com](http://www.primchurgerct.com)

**Queen B's**  
Delicious baked goods, sandwiches, entrees and an awesome coffee bar. Fast and friendly service and did we mention how delicious the baked goods and coffee is? Dine-in, take-out or delivery. 417 Main St, Ridgefield (203) 894-5994 [www.queenbcoffeecompany.com](http://www.queenbcoffeecompany.com)

**Red Colony Diner**  
Fast and friendly service in a comfortable diner with a great selection of delicious, reasonably priced food. They offer dine-in, take-out and catering. 121 Federal Rd, Brookfield (203) 546-8280 [www.redcolonydiner.com](http://www.redcolonydiner.com)

**Rocco's Cafe & Delicatessen**  
Same great food, new owners and an updated, more welcoming dine-in experience. So here is a true story: After surgery at Danbury hospital, I decided to say thank you to the amazing nursing staff for the wonderful care I received by catering lunch

and dinner for the 2 primary shifts on the 5th floor. Rocco's provided a delicious array of sandwiches and fixin's at a reasonable price, but best of all, when I went in for a follow-up, a year later, the nursing staff were still talking about the great lunch. 208 Greenwood Ave, Bethel (203) 297-6262 [www.roccodeli.com](http://www.roccodeli.com)

**Shoptree Brookfield**  
They offer some of the best prepared food, wide selection at affordable prices. The bakery selection is amazing, and they offer catering, too. 143 Federal Rd, Brookfield (203) 775-7078 [www.shoptree.com](http://www.shoptree.com)

**Spice Indian Cuisine & Bar**  
Looking for a delicious and authentic Indian dining experience in a comfortable atmosphere with reasonable prices? Then this is your place! 25 Grassy Plain St., Bethel (203) 300-5784 [www.spiceindiancuisinect.com](http://www.spiceindiancuisinect.com)

**Stony Hill Diner**  
Fast and friendly service offering dine-in, take-out, delivery and catering. I love good prime rib (who doesn't?) and I recently had a top notch prime rib meal at a shockingly reasonable price. 14 Stony Hill Rd, Bethel (203) 791-2280 [www.stonyhilldiner.com](http://www.stonyhilldiner.com)

**Sycamore Drive-In**  
Offers dine in, take out and drive-in service (and the black and white shake is legendary!) 282 Greenwood Ave, Bethel (203) 748-2716 [www.sycamoredrivein.com](http://www.sycamoredrivein.com)

**Three Brothers Diner**  
Fast, friendly service, delicious food and an amazing dessert selection. 242 White St, Danbury (203) 748-6008 [www.3brothersdiner.com](http://www.3brothersdiner.com)

**Uncle Leo's and Rosny's Gourmet**  
Three great locations with excellent food, quick and friendly service and reasonable prices. They offer dine in, take out and catering. 114 Greenwood Ave, Bethel (203) 885-2362

19 Main St, Georgetown/Redding (203) 587-1050

17 Danbury Rd, Wilton (203) 644-8085 [www.facebook.com/uncleleos](http://www.facebook.com/uncleleos)

**Varano Bakery**  
Their baked goods, especially the desserts, should only be reserved for those truly on your nice (ok, or maybe naughty) list. We suspect Santa stops there several times his Christmas cookies because they are truly that good. 198 Greenwood Ave, Bethel (203) 744-6640 [www.varanobakery.com](http://www.varanobakery.com)

**Whitlock's**  
Enter and find a welcoming pub and a friendly dining room with delicious food, friendly service and reasonable prices. They feature dine-in, takeout and catering. 273 Greenwood Ave., Bethel (203) 791-2707 [www.whitlocks-bethel.com](http://www.whitlocks-bethel.com)

Did we miss your favorite? If we have, then please email Brad@CommunityGazette.com

**Bethel** 114 Greenwood Ave 203-885-2362  
**Redding** 19 Main St 203-587-1050  
**Wilton** 17 Danbury Rd 475-277-4313

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[www.spiceindiancuisinect.com](http://www.spiceindiancuisinect.com)

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537 Federal Road, Brookfield (203) 546-7403

[www.backdoor-chicken.com](http://www.backdoor-chicken.com)

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Our live music events are designed to bring the community together, providing a space where you can unwind and enjoy quality entertainment. In Brookfield, we're known for our welcoming atmosphere and delicious food,

Our mini golf course is designed to complement your dining experience, offering a unique way to unwind after a delicious meal. It's a great spot for family gatherings or a casual day out. At Backdoor Chicken & Burgers, we

What Our Customers Say

★★★★★ Quick food service, Sandwiches are great. Very friendly and accommodating staff. - Ray V

★★★★★ Super friendly, and amazing food. Will be back a bunch. - Chris T

★★★★★ Some the best fried chicken I ever had, the strawberry sauce is phenomenal. - Damon C

★★★★★ This is our second time eating at Backdoor Chicken &

### Municipal Calendar

Inland Wetlands Commission Monday, March 23, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Planning & Zoning Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Budget Public Hearing Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Public Site & Building Commission Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Parks and Recreation Commission Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Bethel Film Committee Thursday, March 26, 2026 at 9:00 AM
Board of Education Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Bethel Volunteer Fire Department Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Stony Hill Fire Department Monday, April 6, 2026 at 7:30 PM
Board of Selectman Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 7:00 PM
America 250 Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 5:30 PM
Public Site & Building Commission Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Housatonic Resources Recover Authority Thursday, April 9, 2026 at 10:00 AM
Aging Commission Monday, April 13, 2026 at 2:30 PM
Planning & Zoning Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 7:00 PM

# First Selectman's Update



March 20, 2026

Dear Bethel, Budget Hearing  
The Board of Finance (BOF) will hold a public hearing on the 2026-2027 budget next Tuesday, March 24th at 7pm in the Bethel High School auditorium. After the hearing, the BOF will consider any final changes and the budget will go before the residents at the Town Meeting on Tuesday, April 7th and a referendum tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, April 21st. See the budget details at <https://bethel-ct.gov/>. (Select the FY 27 Budget tile in the middle of the page.)

Protect Your Internet  
The Connecticut Intelligence Center keeps us informed of some of the threats that could affect our community. They provided an interesting Public Safety from the FBI this week. Imagine someone using your home internet to commit crimes. Use the link to learn more about residential proxies, the risks they pose, and steps you can take to safeguard your devices: <https://www.ic3.gov/PSA/2026/PSA260312>

Affordable Housing Bill  
House Bill 5502 is moving forward in Hartford. The bill will move the town's deadline from July 2026 to January 2027 to create a process to allow transit-oriented middle housing or mixed-use development on commercially zoned lots through a summary review process that would not allow public hearings, which will limiting local zoning discretion. It will also expand the

requirement to industrial lots within 1,000 feet of our train station and industrial properties previously zoned for residential use. Learn more and check out the public hearing testimony HERE.

P&Z Hearing  
On Tuesday, March 24th at 7:00 pm at Town Hall in Conference Room D, the Planning & Zoning

Commission will continue a public hearing for a text amendment change to add pet daycare and boarding to the RT6 zone in Stony Hill and begin a hearing that was tabled for 23 PT Barnum Sq. (Special permit and site plan).

Chris Herren Returns to Bethel  
BHS and the Town of Bethel is hosting a community night with Chris Herren on Thursday, April 23rd, from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm in the Bethel High School Auditorium. In this very personal presentation, Chris will share his recovery journey in a brutally honest format with just a microphone. The event will start with a 5-minute film introducing Herren and showing highlights of his basketball career and his dream to play in the NBA which began to unravel by making a few bad decisions. From growing up in Fall River, MA to playing Division 1 basketball and in the NBA, he will take the audience on his journey from addiction to sobriety. Additionally, he will relate his story to the audience addressing themes of gateway drugs, prescription drug use, vaping and the responsibility of prevention starting with us all. To conclude the event Chris will field questions from the audience. If you would like to attend this free presentation, please preregister with the Google link below. This is an incredible opportunity. Don't miss it!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdUavb411uZEKaaH1YWx3CdeJxop15w7b7vWSvjK9lelMs9Fg/viewform?usp=header>

Our First Spring Weekend  
Don't miss the Bethel High School presentation of Chicago: Teen Edition on tonight, March 20th, tomorrow, March 21st at 7 pm and Sunday, March 22nd at 2 pm. Expect a fantastic show with a few special guests! Visit <https://www.bhstheaterboosters.com/> for tickets and information!  
In celebration of the Spring Equinox, check out the Drum Circle tomorrow from 3 pm to 4:30 pm at the Bethel Municipal Center. They have percussion instruments available to borrow, and feel free to bring your own. Be creative! If you haven't experienced a drum circle, this is a great opportunity.

United Methodist Church at 141 Greenwood Ave. is hosting a 50's Sock Hop tomorrow from 7pm to 9 pm. Expect a fun-filled evening of dance, games, treats and prize opportunities in a lively sock hop vibe. DJ, milkshakes, snacks. \$15 at the door; additional \$5 for a dance lesson at 6:30 pm!

St. Thomas' Chicken/Egplant Parm dinner tomorrow, March 21st from 5 pm to 7 pm. Dinner includes chicken and eggplant parm, pasta, salad, bread and dessert and will be eat-in as well as continuing with a take-out option. Reservations close today, so please visit <https://www.stthomasbethel.org/Dinner>.

Bethel Chamber Axe Throwing  
Join the Bethel Chamber of Commerce for a "Network, Play, and Connect" event on Wednesday, March 25th from 4 pm to 7 pm at The Cave in Stony Hill. Enjoy Mini golf, laser tag, ax throwing, and Bowling! Tickets are \$12.00 and Chamber members are free. For tickets visit: <https://bethelchamberofcommerce.com/event/the-cave-networking-event>

Companion Planting Program  
Join the Bethel Library and Bethel Garden Club on Thursday, March 26th at 6:30 p.m. for the Companion Planting Program

with Master Gardener Karen Brown. To register and for more information go to <https://bethellibrary.assabetinteractive.com/calendar/companion-planting/>

Sell Your Gold  
Bethel United Methodist Church is hosting a "Sell Your Old Gold Fundraiser." Look through your jewelry boxes for broken gold chains, bracelets, single earrings, old school rings, non-working watches, platinum, sterling silver jewelry, flatware and hollowware. Bob, the "Gold Man," will buy your old gold and hand you a check. Call 203-743-6835 to schedule a private and secure appointment at the Bethel United Methodist Church on March 27th, 28th, or 29th from 10 am to 4 pm.

Library Mini Golf  
Don't forget the Bethel Public Library will close at 2 pm next Friday, March 27th to set up for their "Beer, Wine and Mini Golf 'fore the Library" fundraiser. The event takes place from 6 pm to 9 pm. Adults ages 21 and over will enjoy beer, wine, and food from local restaurants and businesses while playing a round of mini golf. On Saturday, March 28th all ages are invited to play 18 holes from 10 am to 4 pm. Tickets are now on sale. Check out [www.bethellibrary.org/minigolf/](http://www.bethellibrary.org/minigolf/) for all the details, sponsors, and tickets!

No Kings Event  
There will be a "No Kings" event on the Town Hall lawn next Saturday, March 28th from 11 am to 12:45 pm. We ask that event attendees please use the Bethel Train Station at 13 Durant to the max extent possible and use lot behind Town Hall for attendees that may have a harder time walking. Note that the Library Board coordinated with the event organizers to reserve the parking at the Bethel Public Library will for families attending the Mini Golf fundraiser for the library. Scotty Dueling Piano Night

Join the SCOTTY Fund to kick-off 30 years of hope and giving at The SCOTTY Fund Dueling Piano Night on Saturday, March 28 from 7 pm to 11 pm at the Summit in Danbury. A casual, super fun evening featuring great music and great friends to benefit a great cause! Tickets are \$50.00 per person. Desserts will be served. Cash bar. <https://cbo.io/sfpiano26/tix>

Shoutouts  
Congrats Sam Salvestrini from Scout Troop 54! Sam earned his Eagle Scout rank this week! Sam's leadership and community service has earned him a recognition that only 4% of all Scouts have earned since 1911. Great job Sam, and all the Bethel Eagle Scouts!

Each year the Bethel Public Schools honor individuals who have significantly impacted our schools and programs. A huge shoutout to the 2026 CHAMP award recipient, Lt. Matt Zavatsky from the Bethel PD! This is well deserved!

A shoutout to Ayla Kamen, a 5th grader at RMT Johnson, Bethel's winner of the annual Fire Prevention Poster contest! Thanks for helping Bethel families to be more aware of the dangers from fire and the steps we can take to protect our community!

Congrats to Kevin Ly for placing 28th Nike Indoor Nationals with a long jump of 21' and for an amazing showing by Adrian Vasquez in the New Balance Indoor Track Nationals in Boston!

A huge shoutout to the Bethel Winter Guard for their amazing Friends and Family Night! The hard work and dedication really made you shine!

To the award-winning BHS NJROTC, your Military Ball was one of the best EVER! Congrats on artfully navigating the last-minute changes!

Have a great weekend!  
Dan

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# Gardening

## Get Ready for Spring: UConn Extension's Online Home Gardening Course Is Available



UConn Extension is now accepting registrations for its Fundamentals of Home Gardening online course, designed for beginner and intermediate gardeners who want to build strong foundational skills for successful home and community gardening.

The self-paced, multi-module program covers essential topics including vegetable gardening, soil health, composting, pest management, pollinator support, and sustainable gardening practices. Participants gain practical knowledge that can be applied immediately in gardens of all sizes, from backyard plots to containers and raised

beds. "Our goal is to help Connecticut residents grow with confidence," said Jean Madden-Hennessey, a program coordinator with UConn Extension's Master Gardener program. "This course gives people the tools they need to make informed decisions, nurture healthy plants, and support thriving local ecosystems."

### Course Features

- User-friendly online format accessible at any time
- Step-by-step guidance from UConn horticulture experts

Videos, readings, quizzes, and hands-on learning suggestions Science-based, practical information suited for all learning styles

### Who Should Enroll

The Fundamentals of Home Gardening course is ideal for new gardeners, homeowners, community gardeners, educators, and anyone looking to strengthen their horticultural knowledge.

Registration is open now, and the course is available through October. Visit: <https://s.uconn.edu/fundamental> for more information and to enroll.

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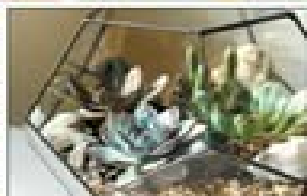
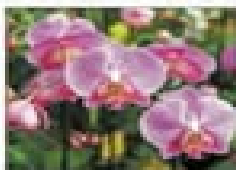
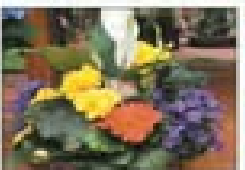


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### WINTER HOURS

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We will close during inclement weather season. Please call 203-792-0267 to confirm we are open.

# Things To Do

## Read To Sydney!



Children 5+ are invited to take turns to read to Sydney, a trained therapy dog. Reading to Sydney provides a judgment free space for many children to increase their reading skills, self confidence, and encourages a love for reading! Sydney's handler, Hayley, also happens to be a pediatric occupational therapist and loves to volunteer her time with Sydney at the library. So bring a favorite book, take a peek at Sydney's book, or pick one out at the library before the event.

April 1st and 15th at 4 p.m. at the Danbury Library.

Mon, 03-23-26, Spanish Conversation Group, 2:00 PM, Danbury Library	PowerPoint, 1:00pm-3:00pm, Brookfield Library	Matter, 10:00am-12:00pm, Ridgefield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Mother Goose II In-Person, 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM, CH Booth Library, Newtown
Mon, 03-23-26, Club de lectura en español, 4:00 PM, Danbury Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Weekly Drop-In Knitting Circle (In-Person), 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm, The Mark Twain Library, Redding	Wed, 03-25-26, AARP Foundation Tax Aide, 10:15 AM - 2:45 PM, Bethel Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Free Income Tax Help In-Person, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM, CH Booth Library, Newtown
Mon, 03-23-26, Code Like Ada Lovelace: First Steps in Programming, 5:00 PM, Danbury Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Mother Goose on the Loose In-Person, 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Wed, 03-25-26, 30 Minute Flex & Balance with Sean via Zoom Online, 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Thu, 03-26-26, Storytime, 10:30 - 11:00 AM, Bethel Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Baby & Me, 1:00 - 1:30 PM, Bethel Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Career Coach Workshop: Microsoft PowerPoint, 10:00am-12:00pm, Brookfield Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Preschool Storytime, 10:30am-11:15am, Ridgefield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Free Income Tax Help In-Person, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown
Mon, 03-23-26, Historically Speaking Book Club - Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker by Jennifer Chiaverini, 1:00pm-2:00pm, Brookfield Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Storytime, 10:30-11:00 AM, Bethel Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Creating a Presentation with Canva, 11:00am-12:00pm, Ridgefield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Terrific Twos, 10:30am-11:15am, Ridgefield Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Storytime Adventures (Ages 3-4), 10:00am-10:45am, Brookfield Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Knitting and Crocheting, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM, Bethel Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Mah Jongg, 12:00pm-2:00pm, Brookfield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Baby & Me Playtime, 11:30am-12:00pm, Ridgefield Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Storytime, 10:30 - 11:00 AM, Bethel Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Mother Goose for ages 12-24 months, 10:30am-11:00am, Ridgefield Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Memory Cafe, 2:00pm-3:00pm, Ridgefield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Free Income Tax Help In-Person, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown
Mon, 03-23-26, All-Age Family Storytime, 10:30am-11:00am, Ridgefield Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Unscripted: An Improv Group, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm, The Mark Twain Library, Redding	Wed, 03-25-26, Mindfulness Meditation for Adults, 3:30 - 4:30 PM, Bethel Library	Thu, 03-26-26, The Art of Calm: Meditation with Ancient Wisdom for Modern Lifestyles (Virtual), 12:30 pm - 1:15 pm, The Mark Twain Library, Redding
Mon, 03-23-26, Music Monday with Principal at the Newtown Community Center In-Person, 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Tue, 03-24-26, With Special Guest Barbara Kingsolver: America's Failed Response to the Opioid Crisis (Virtual), 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm, The Mark Twain Library, Redding	Wed, 03-25-26, Open Hours in the Makerspace In-Person, 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Thu, 03-26-26, Intro to Excel Series, 3:00pm-4:00pm, Brookfield Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Time for Twos, 11:00am-11:45am, Brookfield Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Virtual Author Talk: America's Failed Response to the Opioid Crisis with Author Shoshana Walter In-Person Online, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Wed, 03-25-26, Mystery Book Group, 4:00pm-5:00pm, Brookfield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Read with Thor In-Person, 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown
Mon, 03-23-26, Pirate Party! with Bus from RES to MTL (Grades K-4), 3:15 pm - 4:00 pm, The Mark Twain Library, Redding	Tue, 03-24-26, Little Crafts, 4:30 - 5:00 PM, Bethel Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Slime Science, 4:30pm-5:30pm, Ridgefield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Fact Not Fiction Book Club: Everything is Tuberculosis, 4:30pm-5:50pm, Brookfield Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Teen Volunteering, 4:00 - 6:00 PM, Bethel Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Pokémon Players Club, 4:30pm-5:30pm, Ridgefield Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Lo-fi Lounge, 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Bethel Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Walking Rainbows, 4:30pm-5:30pm, Ridgefield Library
Mon, 03-23-26, LEGO League, 4:30 - 5:15 PM, Bethel Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Read to Mia, 5:00pm-5:15pm, Brookfield Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Movies at the Library!, 6:00 - 8:00 PM, Bethel Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Chess Club - All Ages, 5:00pm-6:00pm, Brookfield Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Kids Coding Club, 4:30pm-5:30pm, Ridgefield Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Read to Mia, 5:15pm-5:30pm, Brookfield Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Mystery Book Group, 6:00pm-7:00pm, Brookfield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Kids Video Games, 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Bethel Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Library Board of Directors Meeting, 6:00 - 8:00 PM, Bethel Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Language Exchange at the Library In-Person, 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Wed, 03-25-26, Library Board of Trustees, 7:00pm-8:00pm, Brookfield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Adulting 101: The Art of Container Gardening: Design, Plant, and Maintain Your Own Urban Oasis, 6:00pm-7:30pm, Brookfield Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Scrabble Club, 6:00pm-7:00pm, Ridgefield Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Read to Mia, 5:30pm-5:45pm, Brookfield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Outreach: Tabling, 2:00 PM, Danbury Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Companion Planting, 6:30 - 7:30 PM, Bethel Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Adult Chess Club (In-Person), 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm, The Mark Twain Library, Redding	Tue, 03-24-26, Taco Tuesday- No Bake Tacos, 5:30pm-6:30pm, Brookfield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Spanish Junior Book Club, 4:30 PM, Danbury Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Lit Fic Book Club In-Person, 6:30 PM - 7:45 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown
Mon, 03-23-26, Evening Historically Speaking Book Club - Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker by Jennifer Chiaverini, 6:30pm-7:30pm, Brookfield Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Read to Mia, 5:45pm-6:00pm, Brookfield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Lawyers in Libraries: Free Legal Help, 5:30 PM, Danbury Library	Thu, 03-26-26, A250 Community Conversations: The Declaration of Independence, 7:00pm-8:00pm, Ridgefield Library
Mon, 03-23-26, Online: Next Chapter Book Club, 6:30pm-7:30pm, Ridgefield Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Community Knitting, 6:00 - 7:00 PM, Bethel Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Lawyers in Libraries: Free Legal Help, 6:00 PM, Danbury Library	Fri, 03-27-26, Shake, Rattle & Read Storytime (ages 6-24 mos) - Session One, 10:00am-10:45am, Brookfield Library
Tue, 03-24-26, Multicultural Bilingual Storytime, 11:00 AM, Danbury Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Grateful Gathering In-Person, 6:00 PM - 7:15 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Thu, 03-26-26, Lawyers in Libraries: Free Legal Help, 6:30 PM, Danbury Library	Fri, 03-27-26, Shake, Rattle & Read Storytime (ages 6-24 mos) - Session Two, 11:00am-11:45am, Brookfield Library
Tue, 03-24-26, America's Failed Response to the Opioid Crisis with Author Shoshana Walter, 2:00 PM, Danbury Library	Tue, 03-24-26, Kid Craft, 6:30 - 7:30 PM, Bethel Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Lawyers in Libraries: Free Legal Help, 7:00 PM, Danbury Library	Fri, 03-27-26, Music Dynamics with Brad Peterson In-Person, 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM, CH Booth Library, Newtown
Tue, 03-24-26, Homework Help/Skill Builders, 3:30 PM, Danbury Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Python Programming For Middle Schoolers, 4:00 PM, Danbury Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Lawyers in Libraries: Free Legal Help, 7:00 PM, Danbury Library	Fri, 03-27-26, Classics Book Club: "The Rebel Angels" (In-Person), 11:00 am - 12:30 pm, The Mark Twain Library, Redding
Tue, 03-24-26, Introduction to Tower Gardening, 4:00 PM, Danbury Library	Wed, 03-25-26, The New Romantics-Romance Book Club, 6:00 PM, Danbury Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Lawyers in Libraries: Free Legal Help, 7:00 PM, Danbury Library	Fri, 03-27-26, Shake, Rattle & Read Storytime (ages 6-24 mos) - Session Two, 11:00am-11:45am, Brookfield Library
Tue, 03-24-26, Printmaking Butterfly and Flowers Workshop, 5:00 PM, Danbury Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Drop-in Art with Miss Nora In-Person, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Thu, 03-26-26, Baby & Me, 1:00 - 1:30 PM, Bethel Library	Fri, 03-27-26, Big Picture, 11:30am-12:00pm, Ridgefield Library
Tue, 03-24-26, Suffragetto! A Board Game About Voting Rights, 5:00 PM, Danbury Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Mother Goose on the Loose In-Person, 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Thu, 03-26-26, Free Income Tax Help In-Person, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Fri, 03-27-26, Teen CreateSpace, 12:00pm-5:00pm, Ridgefield Library
Tue, 03-24-26, Speedcubing Club, 5:30 PM, Danbury Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Fun & Friends (ages 6 mos - 5 yrs), 10:00am-11:00am, Brookfield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Rosen Movement with Betty Ross, 1:00pm-2:00pm, Ridgefield Library	Fri, 03-27-26, Free Build with Miss Nora In-Person, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown
Tue, 03-24-26, Tai Chi for Beginners, 6:00 PM, Danbury Library	Wed, 03-25-26, Hybrid: A.M. Book Group, 10:00am-11:30am, Ridgefield Library	Thu, 03-26-26, Free Build with Miss Nora In-Person, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown	Fri, 03-27-26, Free Build with Miss Nora In-Person, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM, CH Booth Library, Newtown
Tue, 03-24-26, Career Coach Workshop: Microsoft	Wed, 03-25-26, Ridgefield Garden Club: Growing Gardens That		

## Pets

### Meet Marco



waiting for his forever home.

Marco thrives on connection with his people. He is a world-class cuddler who loves to snuggle up close, sleep in bed, and carefully paw at his blankets until they are just right. Playtime brings out his joyful spirit—he loves zoomies, fetch, and tug-of-war, and his happiness is contagious. Marco is also very intelligent and enjoys enrichment activities like snuffle mats, food puzzles, and lick mats. He walks well on leash and enjoys getting out for adventures.

Meet Marco, a truly special soul who has so much love to give and is simply waiting for the right person who understands him. Marco is a four-year-old, 60-pound sweetheart with a heart-melting smile and an incredibly soft coat. Found as a stray in rural North Carolina in November 2021, Marco spent 17 long months living in a shelter kennel.

Despite that difficult beginning, he has shown remarkable resilience. Since coming into foster care in Connecticut in March 2023, Marco has truly blossomed and is now our longest resident, patiently

Marco does well with other dogs and cats of all ages and sizes, making him a great fit for a multi-pet household.

That said, Marco can be anxious around new people and needs time, patience, and understanding to build trust. Once he feels safe, he forms deep bonds and is incredibly loyal and affectionate. Marco is looking for an adult-only home with a patient, experienced ad

to learn more or to adopt a rescue, contact Happily Forever After Rescue at info@happilyforeverafter.org or (631) 935-3578 or visit their website at www.happilyforeverafter.org

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## Doing Good

### Feed A Veteran

Patrons of For Pete's Sake Delicatessen, located at 73 Stony Hill Road in Bethel, can donate breakfast or lunch to local veterans all year long. As a result, veterans of American armed forces can enjoy breakfast or lunch at no charge as part of the program. Veterans should bring proof of service as they may ask for it. The program runs all year long.

## Bethel Community Food Pantry

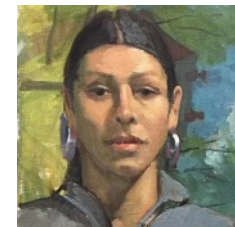
Their mission is to provide free food and hygiene items to Bethel residents in need, with compassion and respect for clients' dignity. They rely greatly on the generous donations from the local community to continue doing everything they can to help. Regular locations for drop off of food donations are: Bethel Community Food Pantry: Wednesday 10:30am-12pm (Small & Large Donations accepted) First and Third Monday of the Month: 9:30am-11am and 6pm-7pm (Small & Large Donations accepted) Rainy Day Paper Day Exchange: Tuesday-Saturday 10am-4pm (Small Donations) Bethel Mail Services - Best Practice is to Call (203) 947-1754 prior to drop off. To learn more, readers can visit their website at www.bethelcommunityfoodpantry.com

## Uncle Leo Needs Your Food and Clothing Donations and More Volunteers

Leo Spinelli, known as Uncle Leo to many, has been delivering to food pantries in Bridgeport and Danbury. He has also been delivering donated clothing. Leo is doing this in memory and honor of his wife Bobbie, who he tragically lost earlier this year. Leo has setup donation spots in the Uncle Leos And Rosny's Gourmet shops in Bethel, Georgetown and Wilton, and is seeking more businesses to join in as donation spots for food and clothing. He will also pick up donations and asks those interested in donating or to setup a donation station to text him at 203-770-0555. Volunteers are needed, too. Leo also welcomes volunteers to help collect donations and to bring them to area food pantries and shelters.

## Arts

### Painting Demonstration



On Wednesday March 25, 2026 at 1:30pm, Frank Bruckman will be demonstrating a portrait in oil. This event will be at The Newtown Senior Center, 8 Simpson Street in Newtown, CT. All are welcome and admission is free.

The Community Gazette

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America's 250th Celebration

Upcoming Local Events Celebrating The 250th Anniversary Of The Signing Of The Declaration Of Independence

AMERICAN MILITARY STRENGTH
Celebrating the Legacy of Our Armed Forces
Date: March 28, 2026
Time: 10:00am - 1:00pm
Location: The Green, Acres from 5 PT Barnum Square, Bethel CT 06801

SAVE THE DATE FOR The Remembrance Ball
Cannon Ridge DAR
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6PM SATURDAY APRIL 25TH, 2026
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IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. -- That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. -- That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has created a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States;

For entering our Trade with all parts of the world; For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent;

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury; For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences;

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies;

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments;

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury.

A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

No, we have We have petitioned for attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unallowable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to discontinue those usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of concinnity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connections between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

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# At Home



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Welcome to your dream home in the highly sought after Sleepy Hollow Estates in the Codfish Hill area of Bethel. This sprawling ranch that has been updated with over \$100K in recent enhancements some include a heated saltwater pool, expansive entertaining deck, and beautifully updated landscaping. From the moment you step inside, you'll experience an open, airy floor plan filled with natural light. Enjoy an eat-in custom kitchen with sliders that lead directly to your private resort-style backyard, with large decks and that amazing pool. This home features two elegant fireplaces, central AC, and a beautifully finished lower level offering a large rec room, cedar closet, and office or guest suite. Large rooms, most freshly painted with two full and two half baths. Perfectly positioned on a level .79-acre lot on a quiet street, this home also features a mudroom to the pool and an attached large two-car garage. Located in southern Bethel with easy access to I-84, Metro-North, charming downtown amenities, and Bethel School Park, this property delivers the ideal blend of luxury, location, and lifestyle.

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# Statehouse Update

## Education



State Senator Eric Berthel

State Sen. Eric Berthel (R-Watertown), ranking member of the Education Committee, has opposed the committee's approval of a controversial homeschool bill that drew

hundreds of families to the Capitol last week to testify against the measure during a nearly 20-hour emotional public hearing.

"I continue to echo the thousands of homeschool families that oppose this bill. Last week, we heard from nearly 300 people during a 19-hour public hearing who overwhelmingly opposed the bill, and we received more than 3,300 pieces of testimony with similar concerns. Committee chairs from the majority party capped public testimony to 24 hours, creating a

chilling effect that discouraged many from even coming to Hartford. That is fundamentally wrong.

"Families showed up, many with their children, and stayed into the early morning hours to make their voices heard. They demonstrated not only their commitment, but the success of their children's homeschool education. Their voices should matter, and they should guide our decisions.

"This bill unfairly targets homeschool families and is built

on flawed assumptions and questionable data. At the same time, we are being told the real failures lie elsewhere. Expanding government intrusion into families who are doing the right thing is not the answer.

Bipartisanship is possible, and we've proven that on other issues.

"Unfortunately, today the majority is ignoring the clear message from the public. For that reason, I did not support this misguided bill that will only punish homeschool families who are doing the right thing," said

Sen. Berthel.

The bill now awaits action by the full General Assembly before the 2026 legislative session ends May 6.

Background:

Days before the Education Committee's March 11 public hearing on H.B. 5468, Democrat-majority committee chairs limited public comment to 24 hours—an uncommon practice for public hearings.

The bill includes new intrusive government reporting requirements for homeschooling

families based on the Lamont administration's policy recommendations in 2025.

The state Department of Education and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) have raised significant concerns about the bill in written testimony.

Following widespread opposition from thousands of homeschool families, majority Democrats declined to advance similar legislation during the 2025 legislative session.



State Representative Raghib Allie-Brennan

State Representative Raghib Allie-Brennan recently said "Today I raised to strengthen safety review for certain housing developments was voted out of committee, moving it to the floor of the House for consideration.

The legislation grew directly out

of concerns raised about the Vessel Technologies proposal in Bethel, where residents and local officials asked an important question: when developers use new or unconventional construction systems, how do municipalities verify that those designs meet life-safety standards before they are approved?

To better understand how similar projects were being reviewed at the state level, my office filed a Freedom of Information request. The documents we received showed regulators and engineers repeatedly raising questions about fire-rated

assemblies, means of egress, and testing documentation for certain construction systems. In some cases, those questions were still being addressed while projects were moving forward in the development process.

You can review those FOIA documents yourself here: <https://www.housedems.ct.gov/.foia-documents-insurance...>

The bill I introduced addresses this gap in the process.

Under Connecticut law, developments filed under 8-30g, the state's Affordable Housing Appeals statute, receive significant legal protections during the zoning

process. Because these projects can move through approvals more quickly than traditional developments, it's especially important that life-safety documentation is available before approvals are granted.

This legislation requires that when a development relies on non-traditional, prefabricated, or proprietary construction systems, the applicant must submit a Preliminary Life Safety Report prepared by a licensed engineer or fire protection engineer demonstrating that the design can comply with the State Building Code and Fire Safety Code.

Importantly, the bill does not change building codes, fire codes, or the affordability requirements of 8-30g. It simply ensures that when new construction methods are proposed, safety compliance is verified earlier in the process.

Fire professionals also emphasized the importance of reviewing safety information early:

"As fire professionals, we support any measure that brings critical life-safety information to the table earlier in the development process," said Roger Nelson, President of the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association. "When a project uses new or

unconventional building systems, engineers should demonstrate how those systems meet fire-resistance and egress requirements before approvals are granted. This isn't about slowing down housing, it's about making sure every family moves into a home built to proven, life-saving standards."

Housing and safety should never be competing priorities. We can support housing development while ensuring the codes designed to protect residents and first responders are respected.

I'll continue to keep you updated as this legislation moves through the General Assembly."

## Housing

## Healthcare



State Senator Bob Duff

Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff, State Senator Matt Lesser, advocates, residents and faith leaders will hold a press conference ahead of the committee vote on Senate Bill 3, a Senate Democrats priority piece of legislation designed to make health care affordable.

When Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress allowed

federal premium tax credits to expire, Connecticut families insured through Access Health CT saw their premiums skyrocket overnight. Additionally, 100,000 residents are projected to lose their HUSKY Medicaid coverage this year due to passage of HR.1 the so-called "Big Beautiful Bill,"

which also threatens the financial underpinning of Connecticut hospitals. Senate Bill 3 takes a broad approach to ensure that Connecticut residents are not forced to choose between paying rent and staying insured.

Senate Bill 3 will be voted on in the Human Services Committee at 11 a.m. in Hearing Room 2A.

Creating the Connecticut

Affordable Health Insurance Trust Fund

The bill transfers \$200 million from Connecticut's Emergency Federal Response Fund to make health care and health insurance more affordable for Connecticut residents.

The Connecticut Option

Thousands of Connecticut residents saw their Access Health CT premiums spike due to the Republicans in Congress and the White House. Connecticut quickly acted to provide full tax credits for families earning 100–200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and partial tax credits for middle class families between 400% and 500% of poverty. This proposal funds

additional health care tax credits that will cover families earning up to 600% of the FPL, so middle class families aren't left behind.

The proposal also begins the planning process for the Governor's Proposed Connecticut Option, creating a state designed health plan that would provide affordable healthcare options for small business owners and their employees.

Basic Health Program

In addressing the benefits cliff experienced by many working families and individuals across the state, this legislation establishes a Basic Health Program (BHP) to cover low-income residents. For those who earn too much to qualify

for HUSKY, but cannot afford private healthcare on Access Health CT, this would create an affordable, reliable option that could replace the more limited Covered CT.

Addressing Medical Debt + Hospital Financial Assistance

This legislation prohibits hospitals from billing patients who earn under 200% of the FPL, or receive public benefits like SNAP or WIC, reducing the number of Connecticut residents who will be saddled with medical debt. It would also require hospitals to offer payment plans for patients who do not otherwise qualify for financial assistance.

The proposal creates a state funded program that would

provide payments to support hospital financial health. The bill contemplates tapping into Disproportionate Share Medicaid payments to compensate hospitals for the cost of providing health care to uninsured and under-insured residents.

Prior Authorization  
Senate Bill 3 makes improvements to prior authorization by shortening the timeframe for certain review determinations and decisions. Delays in prior authorization can restrict medically necessary care, increase emergency room wait times and crowding, increase the cost of care and negatively affect patient care and experience.

## Vaccinations



State Representative Vincent Candelora

House Republican Leader Vincent Candelora (R-North Branford) and State Rep. Nicole Klarides-Ditria (R-Seymour), House Ranking Member of the Public Health Committee, released the following statement Friday in response to committee Democrats' decision to limit to midnight the March 11 public hearing on H.B. 5044 and S.B. 450, bills that would

grant the governor's public health commissioner unchecked authority to mandate vaccines for schoolchildren without legislative approval and erode religious freedom:

"Residents should take note: this is the new way Democrats are doing business in the legislature. This decision comes on the heels of their recent omnibus bill, passed under

an emergency certification that conveniently bypassed public hearings altogether, and now they're capping testimony on bills that strip parents of their voice, their rights, and for many families, close the courthouse door on their ability to challenge the state's controversial elimination of the religious exemption for school vaccines.

Governor Lamont wants to give

his public health commissioner unilateral power to add vaccine mandates to school requirements, cutting out the legislature and setting a precedent that could ultimately extend to the workplace too. That's a dramatic departure from Connecticut law and the legislature should offer the public the maximum input possible—so it's

telling that Democrats have chosen to limit this hearing to midnight. They can't praise Connecticut's open public hearing process, including the ability to testify remotely, and then slam the door shut the moment residents line up to oppose their agenda. Every Connecticut citizen who wants to be heard deserves that right."