

THE ADVOCACY PULSE OF CONNECTICUT



August 2026 – James Williams, CT Government Relations Director

It's Summer- Time to Begin Getting Ready For the 2027 Session!



Though the 2026 legislative session ended back in May, we rely on a productive summer and fall to ensure success during subsequent sessions. This begins with identifying which issues we need to prioritize, ensuring that we have talking points, fact sheets, and an educated group of advocates ready to help ensure success.

Three priorities we are currently working on include:

- Universal School Meals - Ensuring that every kid in CT has a healthy breakfast and lunch while at school, regardless of family income.
- Sugary Drink Tax - Perhaps the most important issue related to universal school meals is how the state will fund them. A two-cent-per-ounce sugary drink tax will not only provide sustainable funding for those meals but also pay for other legislative priorities such as expanded after school care for kids.
- Local Tobacco Retail Licensure and Tobacco Flavors - We also prioritize being active in local communities and are currently working to ensure that local governments have the tools that they need to better enforce CT's tobacco laws via local licensing. This will hold retailers more accountable, achieve public health goals, better regulate emerging products, fund compliance activities, and help to control retail density.

Another tobacco prevention priority for us is prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products. This will curb youth initiation of tobacco and nicotine products by removing the lure for kids to start.

Legislative Key-Contacts Needed- In- District Meetings A Priority

Now is the time to refocus on improving our association's relationships with our state lawmakers by striving to match at least one constituent-advocate with each of our 187 state legislators (36 Senators & 151 Representatives). In advocacy, the main currency is

relationships, which equals access. Getting to know your legislator, especially this time of year, is very easy. If you are interested in becoming a Legislative Key-Contact, and would like some more information, please email me at James.Williams@heart.org

CT Advocacy Committee: Passionate Volunteers Always Needed!

The CT Advocacy Committee is an action-oriented group of individuals responsible for providing leadership in developing, supporting, promoting, and implementing state and local policy priorities, within the framework of the American Heart Association's State and Local Public Policy Priorities guidance. Volunteers who are passionate about improving the overall health of our communities are needed! To learn more about the Committee email Jim Williams at James.Williams@Heart.org.

Legislative Spotlight- Representative Moira Rader

Today's Legislative Spotlight is on Representative Moira Rader, who was first elected to represent Branford and Guilford in November 2022. Of importance to our priorities, she is Vice Chair of the Finance Committee and a member of the Education Committee. She has earned a BA from Villanova University and a Master of Science from the Columbia University School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. She lives in Guilford with her husband and four children and has been a staunch supporter of many of our issues.



Please reach out to Jim Williams, Director of Government Relations, with any questions at james.williams@heart.org