Public Policy in Connecticut has a breadth and comprehensiveness that makes it a satisfying reading experience. The book fills a need in the study of applied politics, practical governmental studies, and public policy. The writing here is engaging and informative, and while the focus is Connecticut, there is much to be learned here that is germane to other state politicians and policy makers.

Gregory G. Lebel, The George Washington University

Public Policy in Connecticut examines ten of the key policy challenges that currently confront Connecticut lawmakers. Following an overview essay by the volume editor, discussing the recent transfer of power to state governments and outlining the policy challenges faced by lawmakers, each of these challenges is taken up in a separate essay by the volume's contributors. The first challenges considered, associated with economic growth, transportation, environmental protection, ethnic diversity, and ethics in politics, affect the Connecticut public at large. The remaining issues considered, health care, services for the aged, prison overcrowding and recidivism, inner-city education, and higher education, affect more specific population groups, but still have consequences for all state residents. The book examines each issue in depth, and sets an agenda for legislative action and citizen concern.

Gary L. Rose is professor and chair of the Department of Government and Politics at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. His previous books include The American Presidency Under Siege, Connecticut Politics at the Crossroads, two editions of Controversial Issues in Presidential Selection, and Connecticut Government at the Millennium. In addition to his teaching and writing, Professor Rose provides regular political commentary for state and national media. He resides in the town of Cheshire, Connecticut, with his wife and two children.

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Connecticut Government at the Millennium by Gary L. Rose

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Preface

Connecticut government and politics have been lifelong interests of mine. Both of my parents were involved in various ways in local politics and it seemed as if political activity was integral to family life. Thus, it was inevitable that my personal interest in Connecticut politics would evolve into a more serious professional commitment. For more than twenty years now, I have devoted a significant portion of my professional writings to the fascinating topic of Connecticut politics.

With the devolution of power to state governments, which began in earnest during the historic “Reagan Revolution” of the early 1980s, my interest in Connecticut politics has become even more acute. In addition to studies presented at professional conferences, journal articles, and several op-eds in the Hartford Courant regarding political trends in Connecticut, I have authored two books on the subject of Connecticut politics. In 1992, I authored a volume entitled Connecticut Politics at the Crossroads. This was an examination of party organization decline in Connecticut and the political consequences of this trend. Several state lawmakers and party organization officials were interviewed for this work and provided insight into what was rapidly becoming a new style of politics in Connecticut. Recognizing that students were in need of a more comprehensive description of Connecticut government and politics, I then decided to write a textbook on the subject. The end result, published in 2001, was a volume entitled
Connecticut Government at the Millennium. In this work, I explored Connecticut’s rich constitutional tradition, the state’s political culture, trends involving the two-party system, the growing power of special interest groups at the Connecticut state Capitol, as well as the structure and policy-making capacity of Connecticut’s governing institutions. This seven-chapter textbook also included extensive interviews with leading political figures in Connecticut government and politics, including, among others, the Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives, the governor of Connecticut, and the chief justice of the state supreme court.

Although Connecticut Government at the Millennium explored the policy-making structures of state government, the work stopped short of examining the actual policy challenges that currently confront Connecticut lawmakers. It thus became clear shortly after the publication of that volume that a companion work focusing on the major public policy challenges within the state of Connecticut needed to be written. After considerable inquiry into an array of challenges facing Connecticut state lawmakers, I was able to discern ten complex and critical policy challenges that in my judgment require the most immediate attention on the floors of the Connecticut state legislature.

Once the ten issues were outlined, I recruited a team of contributors who, in my view, would address the policy challenges in an objective and rigorous fashion. Fortunately, I was able to find a highly qualified group of contributors within the ranks of the faculty at Sacred Heart University. Each individual recruited for the project had extensive expertise related to the assigned policy challenge. Indeed, several of the contributors were well-respected and nationally renowned scholars, lecturers, and public policy consultants. Needless to say, I am grateful to each and every one of them for their commitment to this project and confidence in me as the volume’s editor.

The introduction discusses the devolution of power to state governments during the past twenty-five years, and outlines ten policy challenges that await Connecticut lawmakers. These issues are then explored by the individual contributors in separate chapters. It is important to note at this point that the ten public
policy challenges, although addressed in separate chapters, do not by any means exist in a policy-making vacuum. Indeed, as I was compiling, editing, and reviewing the various essays for this text it became increasingly clear how closely interconnected seemingly disparate policy challenges are with one another. Every policy challenge and every policy recommendation has direct ramifications for the nine others.

I organize the chapters in this book in a manner that clusters the ten policy challenges into two broad groups: those public policies that affect the Connecticut population at large, and those that have bearing on subsets of the state's population, several of whom are clearly and unfortunately at risk. The policy challenges associated with economic growth, transportation, environmental protection, ethnic diversity, and ethics in politics are presented in chapters one through five. Such policies have exceptionally broad consequences for all residents of Connecticut, regardless of income, occupation, race, or place of residence. One might label such policy areas as the "macro" challenges that face state lawmakers. The focus then shifts to policy challenges that seem to affect more specific population groups in Connecticut, although it should be evident that such policy areas do have consequences for all residents of Connecticut. Thus, in chapters six through ten, the policy challenges associated with health care, services for the aged, prison overcrowding and recidivism, inner-city education, and higher education are examined. Such policy areas are where the reader will also discover a considerable degree of human suffering and stress. One could argue that it is within such policy areas where policy resolutions are perhaps the most desperately needed. The chapters unfold as follows.

In chapter one, Thomas D. Corrigan examines the condition of Connecticut's economy. He provides a penetrating overview of the various sectors of the state's economy, followed by a description of specific economic problem areas. Corrigan advocates creative economic planning on the part of state decision makers for the purpose of stimulating economic growth.

Connecticut's severely congested transportation system is explored by William B. Kennedy in chapter two. The gridlock one experiences on Connecticut's highways is not only described in
this chapter, but also explained. He explores alternative transportation strategies that would alleviate congestion, and examines the possible impact of an increase in telecommuting.

In chapter three, Jennifer H. Mattei examines the various environmental challenges that have emerged within the state of Connecticut. The degradation of Connecticut’s forested ecosystem and the multiple consequences that emanate from such a condition are thoroughly explored in this chapter, along with the complex challenge of managing the large number of pollutants that currently threaten the state’s air, soil, and water. Noting the ineffectiveness of existing environmental protection laws, Mattei proposes innovative solutions for improving the quality of Connecticut’s threatened environment.

In chapter four, I explore the political and policy challenges associated with the growing ethnic diversity of Connecticut’s population. In this chapter, special emphasis is placed on the political and policy attitudes of nonwhites in comparison to whites. The data suggest in no uncertain terms that state lawmakers in Connecticut must work especially hard to bridge a deep and wide racial divide. The data are supplemented with comments and observations from political practitioners in Connecticut, along with the perspective of an inner-city school principal in the beleaguered city of Hartford.

Chapter five, by Brian Stiltner, presents a penetrating discussion regarding the challenge of ethical political leadership. Stiltner reviews the ethical dilemma that has descended on the Connecticut polity in recent years and presents a clear analysis of the ethical standards one should expect from those elected to positions of political leadership. The chapter concludes with a set of policy prescriptions, which, if adopted, should elevate the ethical conduct of Connecticut’s public servants. Stiltner’s contribution is particularly relevant in light of the 2004 impeachment investigation against Governor John G. Rowland, which resulted in the Governor’s resignation from office and a plea bargain in federal court. Rowland was subsequently sentenced to federal prison for one year and one day.

The challenge of health care is explored by Jody Bortone, Michael J. Emery, and Patricia W. Walker in chapter six. They
focus particularly on the shortage of health care professionals in the Connecticut workforce, the increasing difficulty Connecticut residents face with respect to accessing and receiving appropriate health care services, and the rising costs associated with the many dimensions of health care. The authors conclude their essay with a very specific set of remedial measures designed to resolve the disturbing trends in the state's health care system.

In chapter seven, Nicole X. Cauvin and Elaine B. Davis discuss the policy challenges associated with an aging or “graying” state population. Demographic data clearly demonstrate that Connecticut’s population, similar to the population of other states, is becoming older. The authors propose innovative public policies designed to accommodate the long-term health care and social service needs of the state’s elderly.

Prison overcrowding and recidivism are investigated by Pearl Jacobs in chapter eight. The trends and studies examined in this chapter have direct bearing on prison conditions across the land. Jacobs believes that better job training and a more sincere attempt to reintegrate ex-offenders into society, rather than the construction of more cells and penal institutions, would more effectively address the problem of overcrowded prisons and recidivism.

The complex challenge of inner-city education is reviewed by Lois A. Libby in chapter nine. She presents a stark look at the two very different worlds of urban and suburban education in Connecticut, and discusses recent reforms and policy proposals to reduce educational disparity in the “two Connecticuts.”

The challenge of sustaining a quality system of higher education in Connecticut is examined in chapter ten by Steven Michels, where he discusses the fiscal difficulties that currently confront institutions of higher learning and the creative attempts on the part of colleges and universities to generate revenue. Michels parts company with educators who advocate more government spending for the purpose of resolving the “crisis” in higher education and instead recommends reforms less dependent on government aid.

The ten major policy challenges examined in this volume are the most important and pressing issues currently confronting the
state of Connecticut. Granted, there are policy challenges beyond the ten identified that could have been incorporated into this work. Protecting Connecticut residents from a terrorist attack, election reform, improving Connecticut’s capacity to withstand a power outage such as that experienced throughout the Northeast in 2003, and elevating the standard of public housing for Connecticut’s poor are among the policy challenges that could be added to the list. Nevertheless, the challenges addressed in this work are ones that require immediate attention on the part of the Connecticut General Assembly and should receive top priority on the state legislative agenda.

Notes

Acknowledgments

The publication of a book is always the result of a collective effort, and this book is certainly no exception. In addition to working with an outstanding and dedicated team of chapter contributors, I once again had the distinct pleasure of working with Sid Gottlieb, the director of editorial and production work for the Sacred Heart University Press. A very distinguished professor in the University’s Department of Media Studies and Digital Culture, Sid is without doubt the best text editor and coordinator of academic and research projects that I have ever worked with.

Anthony J. Cernera, the president of Sacred Heart University, must be recognized and thanked not only for his leadership in transforming Sacred Heart into an outstanding institution of higher learning, but also for his efforts in establishing the Sacred Heart University Press. It is through this particular press that my best work on Connecticut politics has been brought to light and made available to students in Connecticut and elsewhere.

My colleague and contributor, William B. Kennedy, read portions of the manuscript during its infant stage and as always provided me with sage advice regarding the intricacies of Connecticut’s policy process. I deeply appreciate Bill’s expertise and interest in the project. My political science colleague, Steven Michels, also read portions of the work and provided many helpful substantive and stylistic comments. I am grateful to Steve
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Last but not least, I thank my wife Laura, son Garrison, and daughter Meredith, for being the persons they are, and for supporting me in ways too numerous to describe. I once again dedicate my work to them.
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Preface

Connecticut government and politics have been lifelong interests of mine. Both of my parents were involved in various ways in local politics and it seemed as if political activity was integral to family life. Thus, it was inevitable that my personal interest in Connecticut politics would evolve into a more serious professional commitment. For more than twenty years now, I have devoted a significant portion of my professional writings to the fascinating topic of Connecticut politics.

With the devolution of power to state governments, which began in earnest during the historic "Reagan Revolution" of the early 1980s, my interest in Connecticut politics has become even more acute. In addition to studies presented at professional conferences, journal articles, and several op-eds in the Hartford Courant regarding political trends in Connecticut, I have authored two books on the subject of Connecticut politics. In 1992, I authored a volume entitled Connecticut Politics at the Crossroads. This was an examination of party organization decline in Connecticut and the political consequences of this trend. Several state lawmakers and party organization officials were interviewed for this work and provided insight into what was rapidly becoming a new style of politics in Connecticut. Recognizing that students were in need of a more comprehensive description of Connecticut government and politics, I then decided to write a textbook on the subject. The end result, published in 2001, was a volume entitled
Connecticut Government at the Millennium. In this work, I explored Connecticut’s rich constitutional tradition, the state’s political culture, trends involving the two-party system, the growing power of special interest groups at the Connecticut state Capitol, as well as the structure and policy-making capacity of Connecticut’s governing institutions. This seven-chapter textbook also included extensive interviews with leading political figures in Connecticut government and politics, including, among others, the Speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives, the governor of Connecticut, and the chief justice of the state supreme court.

Although Connecticut Government at the Millennium explored the policy-making structures of state government, the work stopped short of examining the actual policy challenges that currently confront Connecticut lawmakers. It thus became clear shortly after the publication of that volume that a companion work focusing on the major public policy challenges within the state of Connecticut needed to be written. After considerable inquiry into an array of challenges facing Connecticut state lawmakers, I was able to discern ten complex and critical policy challenges that in my judgment require the most immediate attention on the floors of the Connecticut state legislature.

Once the ten issues were outlined, I recruited a team of contributors who, in my view, would address the policy challenges in an objective and rigorous fashion. Fortunately, I was able to find a highly qualified group of contributors within the ranks of the faculty at Sacred Heart University. Each individual recruited for the project had extensive expertise related to the assigned policy challenge. Indeed, several of the contributors were well-respected and nationally renowned scholars, lecturers, and public policy consultants. Needless to say, I am grateful to each and every one of them for their commitment to this project and confidence in me as the volume’s editor.

The introduction discusses the devolution of power to state governments during the past twenty-five years, and outlines ten policy challenges that await Connecticut lawmakers. These issues are then explored by the individual contributors in separate chapters. It is important to note at this point that the ten public
policy challenges, although addressed in separate chapters, do not by any means exist in a policy-making vacuum. Indeed, as I was compiling, editing, and reviewing the various essays for this text it became increasingly clear how closely interconnected seemingly disparate policy challenges are with one another. Every policy challenge and every policy recommendation has direct ramifications for the nine others.

I organize the chapters in this book in a manner that clusters the ten policy challenges into two broad groups: those public policies that affect the Connecticut population at large, and those that have bearing on subsets of the state’s population, several of whom are clearly and unfortunately at risk. The policy challenges associated with economic growth, transportation, environmental protection, ethnic diversity, and ethics in politics are presented in chapters one through five. Such policies have exceptionally broad consequences for all residents of Connecticut, regardless of income, occupation, race, or place of residence. One might label such policy areas as the “macro” challenges that face state lawmakers. The focus then shifts to policy challenges that seem to affect more specific population groups in Connecticut, although it should be evident that such policy areas do have consequences for all residents of Connecticut. Thus, in chapters six through ten, the policy challenges associated with health care, services for the aged, prison overcrowding and recidivism, inner-city education, and higher education are examined. Such policy areas are where the reader will also discover a considerable degree of human suffering and stress. One could argue that it is within such policy areas where policy resolutions are perhaps the most desperately needed. The chapters unfold as follows.

In chapter one, Thomas D. Corrigan examines the condition of Connecticut’s economy. He provides a penetrating overview of the various sectors of the state’s economy, followed by a description of specific economic problem areas. Corrigan advocates creative economic planning on the part of state decision makers for the purpose of stimulating economic growth.

Connecticut’s severely congested transportation system is explored by William B. Kennedy in chapter two. The gridlock one experiences on Connecticut’s highways is not only described in
this chapter, but also explained. He explores alternative transportation strategies that would alleviate congestion, and examines the possible impact of an increase in telecommuting.

In chapter three, Jennifer H. Mattei examines the various environmental challenges that have emerged within the state of Connecticut. The degradation of Connecticut’s forested ecosystem and the multiple consequences that emanate from such a condition are thoroughly explored in this chapter, along with the complex challenge of managing the large number of pollutants that currently threaten the state’s air, soil, and water. Noting the ineffectiveness of existing environmental protection laws, Mattei proposes innovative solutions for improving the quality of Connecticut’s threatened environment.

In chapter four, I explore the political and policy challenges associated with the growing ethnic diversity of Connecticut’s population. In this chapter, special emphasis is placed on the political and policy attitudes of nonwhites in comparison to whites. The data suggest in no uncertain terms that state lawmakers in Connecticut must work especially hard to bridge a deep and wide racial divide. The data are supplemented with comments and observations from political practitioners in Connecticut, along with the perspective of an inner-city school principal in the beleaguered city of Hartford.

Chapter five, by Brian Stiltner, presents a penetrating discussion regarding the challenge of ethical political leadership. Stiltner reviews the ethical dilemma that has descended on the Connecticut polity in recent years and presents a clear analysis of the ethical standards one should expect from those elected to positions of political leadership. The chapter concludes with a set of policy prescriptions, which, if adopted, should elevate the ethical conduct of Connecticut’s public servants. Stiltner’s contribution is particularly relevant in light of the 2004 impeachment investigation against Governor John G. Rowland, which resulted in the Governor’s resignation from office and a plea bargain in federal court. Rowland was subsequently sentenced to federal prison for one year and one day.

The challenge of health care is explored by Jody Bortone, Michael J. Emery, and Patricia W. Walker in chapter six. They
focus particularly on the shortage of health care professionals in the Connecticut workforce, the increasing difficulty Connecticut residents face with respect to accessing and receiving appropriate health care services, and the rising costs associated with the many dimensions of health care. The authors conclude their essay with a very specific set of remedial measures designed to resolve the disturbing trends in the state’s health care system.

In chapter seven, Nicole X. Cauvin and Elaine B. Davis discuss the policy challenges associated with an aging or “graying” state population. Demographic data clearly demonstrate that Connecticut’s population, similar to the population of other states, is becoming older. The authors propose innovative public policies designed to accommodate the long-term health care and social service needs of the state’s elderly.

Prison overcrowding and recidivism are investigated by Pearl Jacobs in chapter eight. The trends and studies examined in this chapter have direct bearing on prison conditions across the land. Jacobs believes that better job training and a more sincere attempt to reintegrate ex-offenders into society, rather than the construction of more cells and penal institutions, would more effectively address the problem of overcrowded prisons and recidivism.

The complex challenge of inner-city education is reviewed by Lois A. Libby in chapter nine. She presents a stark look at the two very different worlds of urban and suburban education in Connecticut, and discusses recent reforms and policy proposals to reduce educational disparity in the “two Connecticuts.”

The challenge of sustaining a quality system of higher education in Connecticut is examined in chapter ten by Steven Michels, where he discusses the fiscal difficulties that currently confront institutions of higher learning and the creative attempts on the part of colleges and universities to generate revenue. Michels parts company with educators who advocate more government spending for the purpose of resolving the “crisis” in higher education and instead recommends reforms less dependent on government aid.

The ten major policy challenges examined in this volume are the most important and pressing issues currently confronting the
state of Connecticut. Granted, there are policy challenges beyond the ten identified that could have been incorporated into this work. Protecting Connecticut residents from a terrorist attack, election reform, improving Connecticut’s capacity to withstand a power outage such as that experienced throughout the Northeast in 2003, and elevating the standard of public housing for Connecticut’s poor are among the policy challenges that could be added to the list. Nevertheless, the challenges addressed in this work are ones that require immediate attention on the part of the Connecticut General Assembly and should receive top priority on the state legislative agenda.

Notes

Acknowledgments

The publication of a book is always the result of a collective effort, and this book is certainly no exception. In addition to working with an outstanding and dedicated team of chapter contributors, I once again had the distinct pleasure of working with Sid Gottlieb, the director of editorial and production work for the Sacred Heart University Press. A very distinguished professor in the University’s Department of Media Studies and Digital Culture, Sid is without doubt the best text editor and coordinator of academic and research projects that I have ever worked with.

Anthony J. Cernera, the president of Sacred Heart University, must be recognized and thanked not only for his leadership in transforming Sacred Heart into an outstanding institution of higher learning, but also for his efforts in establishing the Sacred Heart University Press. It is through this particular press that my best work on Connecticut politics has been brought to light and made available to students in Connecticut and elsewhere.

My colleague and contributor, William B. Kennedy, read portions of the manuscript during its infant stage and as always provided me with sage advice regarding the intricacies of Connecticut’s policy process. I deeply appreciate Bill’s expertise and interest in the project. My political science colleague, Steven Michels, also read portions of the work and provided many helpful substantive and stylistic comments. I am grateful to Steve
for his contribution to the project. My work-study student, Diane Raimann, must also be recognized for her tireless efforts in conjunction with the production of this volume. Her research, proof-reading, typing, and photocopying proved to be invaluable. My administrative assistant Loretta Winter tended to various details related to this project, for which I am grateful.

Last but not least, I thank my wife Laura, son Garrison, and daughter Meredith, for being the persons they are, and for supporting me in ways too numerous to describe. I once again dedicate my work to them.
One of the principal functions of a state government is to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of state residents. State governments are expected to design and enact a broad array of domestic public policies that contribute, to the extent that resources allow, to a respectable quality of life for those persons who reside within the state's geographic borders. Indeed, for the past twenty-five years, as a result of the “Reagan Revolution” that commenced in 1981 and the subsequent Republican congressional election victory in 1994, a substantial share of domestic public policy has been transferred from the federal government to the governments of the fifty states. The transfer of power, applauded by conservatives and criticized by liberals, is commonly referred to as “devolution.” As a result of devolution, state governments are now expected to assume a much more pronounced role in the delivery of public services to the American people.

Although debate continues among politicians and academics regarding which level of government is most capable of delivering services to the American people, the fact of the matter is that the fifty states, not the federal government, are currently the units of government that determine the substance of numerous domestic policies. Moreover, the American people apparently look to state governments, more than the federal government, for domestic leadership, policy innovation, and trustworthy decision making. In 1981, the Gallup Poll asked a sample of Americans this
question: "Which do you think is more likely to make decisions free of political corruption: the federal government in Washington or the government of this state?" Forty-two percent of respondents identified their state government as the level of government least affected by corruption, while only 26% identified the federal government.\(^1\) The American peoples' growing confidence in state authority can be observed across time as well. In 1936, the Gallup Poll asked a sample of Americans: "Which do you favor: concentration of power in the federal government or in the state government?" Fifty-six percent of respondents in 1936 favored concentrated power in the federal government, while 44% preferred power in state government. In 1995, the Hart and Teeter Research Companies for the Council for Excellence in Government asked the same question with vastly different results. Sixty-four percent of respondents in 1995 favored concentrated power in state governments, while only 26% favored concentrated federal power.\(^2\)

Precisely how well state governments have delivered services to the American people in the age of devolution is a debatable question, and one that is well beyond the scope of this particular work. Moreover, with fifty individual state governments in the United States, there is a substantial variation in public service performance; thus blanket generalizations are virtually impossible. Financial resources, political leadership, and the capacity of state governing institutions are directly related to the ability of a state to effectively deliver public services to state residents. In some states, public operating budgets are healthy and robust, the state revenue base is broad and deep, political leaders are creative, and governing institutions, such as state legislatures, are equipped with appropriate technologies and staff. In such states, the response to public needs is normally more efficient and effective compared to those states with modest operating budgets, unstable streams of public revenue, ineffective political leadership, and governing institutions unprepared and ill-equipped for the range of new public responsibilities associated with devolution. However, regardless of how well prepared a state is to exercise and manage public policy in the twenty-first century, the fact of the matter is that state governments, prepared or not, are fully expected to meet the public needs of the American people.
Devolution Comes To Connecticut

For more than two decades, state lawmakers, governors, and judges in the state of Connecticut have immersed themselves in a host of domestic policy issues that at one time seemed far beyond the scope of the Connecticut polity. Even the policy challenges that historically have been regarded as the province of Connecticut government now require approaches and solutions far more sophisticated and innovative than those employed by decision makers prior to the age of devolution. As House Speaker Moira Lyon noted in an interview with this author, lawmakers who served in the Connecticut General Assembly twenty or more years ago would be "blown away" if they knew what sort of policy issues currently face those who serve in the state legislature. Indeed, all branches of Connecticut government are feeling the effects of devolution: the legislative workload of the Connecticut General Assembly involves issues that require lawmakers with technical, financial, and scientific expertise; Connecticut's governors grapple with an array of new and highly complex issues that demand creative problem solving; and Connecticut's judges are forced to confront a growing docket of civil and criminal cases that require not only an excellent grasp of the law, but also an understanding of the social, economic, and political underpinnings of the law itself.

The devolution of power to state governments has also meant that states are in many ways more responsible for financing public policies that prior to devolution were regarded as federal responsibilities. Accordingly, state operating budgets have expanded and policy makers out of necessity have adopted new methods of raising public revenue. In Connecticut, for example, a 4.5% state income tax was adopted in 1991. Indeed, a review of Connecticut's operating budget should underscore the financial ramifications of policy devolution.

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2003, the state of Connecticut's operating budget was $13.2 billion. For Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005, the governor recommended budgets of $13.6 and $14.2 billion respectively. Connecticut is a relatively small state with slightly more than three million residents, yet in FY 2005 it will have an
annual operating budget of more than $14 billion. As indicated in table 1, over 90% of the state’s operating budget is directed towards programs associated with the General Fund. This includes areas such as human services, aid to towns and cities, hospitals, and corrections. Over 6% of the budget is allocated to the Special Transportation Fund, while close to 2% is designated for the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Funds. The additional monies are appropriated for a variety of established operating funds, including the Soldiers’, Sailors’, and Marines’ Fund, the Regional Market Operating Fund, the Banking Fund, the Insurance Fund, the Public Utility Control Fund, the Workers Compensation Fund, and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund.†

<table>
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<th>Appropriated Funds Of the State (in millions)</th>
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<td>Estimated FY 03</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Fund</td>
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<td>Regional Market Operating Fund</td>
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<td>Workers Compensation Fund</td>
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<td>Criminal Injuries Comp. Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
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Source: Governor Rowland’s Budget Proposal, FY 2003-2005 Biennium

With respect to sources of revenue, the state of Connecticut depends on a variety of taxes to support the operating budget. The state income tax generates roughly 35% of the budget, while the state sales and use tax yield more than 23%. Additional sources of
revenue are derived from federal grants, gaming, corporate taxes, public service taxes, the cigarette tax, the real estate conveyance tax, and the motor fuels tax.\textsuperscript{6}

Governing in an age of devolution is certainly a most challenging task for Connecticut's political leadership. Indeed, in addition to expertise in budgetary matters, an effective state lawmaker in Connecticut must understand the many demographic and economic trends currently underway within the state and how such trends will inevitably impact the budgetary and policy process. State lawmakers in Connecticut must have a good grasp of finance and economics, as well as sociology and politics, in order to respond to the many multifaceted policy challenges that are rapidly emerging in the first decade of the twenty-first century. As we embark upon the new century, there appear to be ten major and distinct policy challenges that await Connecticut's lawmakers.

The Challenge of Economic Growth

Public policies designed to promote economic growth are one of the major challenges that continuously face state lawmakers across the land. In Connecticut, economic growth and job creation will definitely be a high priority item for the state's policy makers in the years ahead. Although many aspects of economic growth and economic cycles are conditioned by national and even international forces well beyond the scope of state government influence, it is still reasonable to expect policy makers at the state level to adopt economic policies that contribute to employment and business productivity. Indeed, the success of public policies such as those related to urban development and health care for the aged depend directly on the vitality of the state's economy. Public revenue is needed for government to provide public services to state residents, and a healthy economy that generates streams of revenue is essential for this purpose.

Projecting trends in economic growth is a difficult task, even for the most skilled economist. Long range forecasts contain many elements of uncertainty due to the multitude of hidden variables that affect economic growth. Consider the analogy presented by W. Michael Regan, the deputy director of the Connecticut
An economy is fluid. It ebbs and flows in a constant struggle for equilibrium. Imagine a marble dropped in a bowl. It will continue to roll around the inside of the bowl until it comes to rest. At this point it has reached its “stationary state” (or “steady state” if all relevant variables grow at an identical rate). It will remain stable until it encounters another stimulus. The magnitude of the stimulus will determine the path the marble takes and the amount of time it will spend rolling around in search of its “stationary” or “steady” state.7

Although “ebbs and flows” as well as “stimuli” are difficult to predict, most observers of the Connecticut economic scene seem to agree that Connecticut’s economy in the foreseeable future will be marked by low growth and modest productivity. Indeed, several indicators reveal a less than robust economy now and in the immediate years ahead.

Economic projections from 2000 to 2010, suggest that economic growth in the state of Connecticut, like economic growth patterns in states throughout the Northeast, will lag behind the national average, a pattern that has persisted for more than thirty years.8 In Connecticut specifically, it is projected that approximately 150,000 new jobs will be created from 2000 to 2010, which is only 15,000 new jobs per year. In addition to creating new jobs with respectable salaries and wages, the challenge of economic growth and productivity will be further compounded by the declining number of young persons entering the work force. Demographic trends reveal that compared to 1990, 200,000 fewer persons between the ages of 18-34 will enter the Connecticut workforce during the first decade of the twenty-first century. This is a 22% decline in the number of available workers in this very critical age category. Among the fifty states, Connecticut ranks third with respect to the population decline of 18-34 year-olds.9

In addition to modest job growth and a declining pool of eligible workers, another problem inherent in Connecticut’s
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economy concerns the types of jobs that will be created in the years ahead. More specifically, the trend is quite clearly towards jobs that require very sophisticated technological skills and high levels of education. For example, jobs related to the fields of computer programming and information technology are expected to grow at a phenomenal rate. Indeed, the Connecticut Economic Resource Center projects that with the exception of computer programming, information technology occupations will grow at five times the rate of other jobs in the state. The important question, however, is whether or not the emerging workforce in Connecticut posses the necessary levels of education and technological skills required to assume such positions.  

Traditional manufacturing jobs in Connecticut, which served as the backbone of Connecticut’s economy for a good part of the twentieth century, are clearly on the wane. Moreover, it is unlikely that the state will ever experience a reversal of this trend. Manufacturing plant relocation to southern states, Latin America and Asia are among the several reasons manufacturing jobs are rapidly disappearing in Connecticut. From 2000 to 2005, employment in manufacturing jobs in Connecticut declined from 262,360 to 254,900. By 2010, the Connecticut Department of Labor projects 251,600 employees in the field of manufacturing. Thus, over the ten-year period, it is projected that 10,760 manufacturing jobs in Connecticut will be lost, a total decrease of 4.1%. Examples of manufacturing jobs projected by the Department of Labor to be very hard hit by 2010 include, but are not limited to, lathe and turning machine tool setters, machine feeders and offbearers, cutting, punching, and press machine setters, prepress technicians, along with drilling and boring machine tool setters. On average, such occupations will experience somewhere between a 17-18% loss in jobs.

Although Connecticut’s economy is not by any means in a state of crisis, the economic forecast and projections clearly suggest that strategic and creative economic planning on the part of Connecticut’s political leaders, working in conjunction with economists and executives from private industry, will definitely be needed in years to come. Those involved in economic planning must develop long-term strategies and policies designed to
stimulate economic growth, accommodate the growing labor shortage among persons 18-34 years of age and prepare young adults entering the workforce with the necessary skills required for technological occupations. At the same time, economic planners must find ways to retrain individuals who appear destined to lose their jobs, most notably those involved in manufacturing occupations. Economic policy making is a very complex, multidimensional and far reaching policy area. It is currently one of the most serious policy challenges facing the state of Connecticut.

The Challenge of Transportation

Anyone who drives on Connecticut's major highways, such as I-95, I-91, Route 84, or Route 15 (also known as the Wilbur Cross Parkway in the north and the Merritt Parkway in the south) will most likely be frustrated by the sheer volume of traffic and the inevitable traffic jams that occur on a daily basis. The vast majority of the Connecticut work force travels to and from work in cars. Buses and railroads are used by only a tiny percentage of individuals. The people in Connecticut, like Americans across the land, love their automobiles.

Table 2
Land Area and Persons Per Square Mile:
U.S. and Six New England States

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<th>Land Area</th>
<th>Persons Per Square Mile</th>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>3,537,438</td>
<td>79.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>4,845</td>
<td>702.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>1,003.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>7,840</td>
<td>809.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>9,250</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>8,968</td>
<td>137.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>30,862</td>
<td>41.3</td>
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000
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Connecticut’s traffic problem lies in the density of the state’s population, as well as the relatively undeveloped mass transit system. The density of Connecticut’s population per square mile manifests itself in a large volume of traffic. Also, with population slowly but steadily rising, the traffic situation on Connecticut’s roads and highways will become much worse. Table 2 shows how geographically small Connecticut is in relation to other New England states, yet how dense the population is per square mile. Connecticut with 702.0 persons per square mile is not as densely populated as the states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, but is certainly more dense than the northern New England states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Connecticut, as the data indicate, is far more dense than the national average as well. With the large number of inhabitants per square mile in Connecticut, along with the heavy reliance of Connecticut residents on automobiles for transportation, it is no mystery why Connecticut’s roads are often in a state of gridlock. Moreover, projections published by the Connecticut Department of Transportation clearly indicate that the state’s traffic problem will increase quite severely. Table 3 presents the Department of Transportation’s long-term projections regarding the volume of traffic. What is particularly alarming is how the volume of traffic is projected to increase dramatically throughout the sixteen transportation planning regions, with no region immune from traffic growth.

As the traffic data suggest, Connecticut’s highways and roads across the state will experience a marked growth in traffic volume during the next two decades. In most regions of the state, the volume of traffic will increase by more than 20% while in some regions the increase will be more than 30%. For those who commute long distances in Connecticut, such figures are quite disconcerting. Imagine oneself on one of Connecticut’s highways in the year 2025. The volume of traffic will be extreme and in some parts of the state intolerable. The flow of traffic in Connecticut thus poses a major challenge to the state’s policy makers and it is the responsibility of the Connecticut state legislature working in conjunction with the Department of Transportation to develop creative and effective solutions to what is rapidly becoming a crisis situation.
Table 3
Department of Transportation Traffic Projections: 2000-2025
Vehicle Miles Traveled Growth (%)

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<td>Planning Region 1</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>8.74</td>
<td>12.97</td>
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<td>Planning Region 2</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>5.55</td>
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Source: Connecticut Department of Transportation, Series 27 Travel Model Data, February 2002. Vehicle Miles Traveled growth is calculated from the number of vehicles in a designated region times the distance they travel.

The Challenge of Environmental Protection

The challenge of environmental protection is present in many states throughout the United States, and Connecticut is certainly no exception. Hazards to animal and plant life as well as to the health of human beings exist in many different forms. Although Connecticut seems to have a well-respected and somewhat aggressive Department of Environmental Protection, a review of threats to the state's environment suggest quite clearly that environmental protection is, and will continue to be, a most challenging task in the years ahead. A number of problem areas
have been cited, not only by Connecticut-based environmental protection interest groups, but also by the Council on Environmental Quality, a state agency which functions independently of the Department of Environmental Protection. The Council consists of nine members appointed by the governor and leaders within the General Assembly. A reading of the Council’s 2001 Annual Report suggests a plethora of environmental hazards within the state of Connecticut, many of which are invisible yet detrimental to the state’s quality of life.

According to the Council’s Report, there is a serious problem involving high levels of mercury in Connecticut’s air. Power plants that burn coal and incinerators that burn garbage and sewage are generating mercury, which in turn drifts into ponds, lakes, and streams across the state. Pregnant woman and children who eat fish contaminated by toxic methyl mercury appear to be the individuals especially at risk.¹³

In addition to dangerous levels of mercury, the Council identifies sewage overflows into Connecticut’s rivers, as well as the Long Island Sound, as posing a serious environmental challenge. Although the Council notes that substantial progress has been made with respect to the construction of storm and sanitary sewers, the evidence still suggests that such sewers carry more water than can be handled by local treatment facilities.¹⁴

Consumption of electricity due to increased use of electrical appliances will also take its toll on Connecticut’s environment, with a 10% increase in electrical usage predicted by 2015.¹⁵ The demand for increased electricity will, as the Council notes, result in more electrical power plants, resulting in increased air pollution and increased consumption of water.¹⁶

Beyond the problems of mercury, sewage overflow, and electrical consumption, the Council also identifies infestation by “invasive species” as a potentially grave threat to Connecticut’s environment. Invasive species, according to the Council, include “colonies of tiny zebra mussel” as well as chestnut plants that infest and eventually choke the flow of streams and rivers. The Council notes that certain invasive species, if not arrested, will undoubtedly inflict serious damage on Connecticut’s ecosystem.¹⁷
In addition to the Council’s Annual Report, it is instructive for those concerned with environmental challenges to review the chief concerns expressed by leading environmental protection interest groups currently operating in Connecticut. The policy agendas of such organizations further suggest that environmental protection is one of the important challenges for Connecticut lawmakers in the years ahead. Consider, for example, the concerns expressed by two of Connecticut’s foremost environmental protection groups, Save the Sound, and the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group (ConnPIRG).

Save the Sound, as the organization’s name indicates, is concerned with the preservation and protection of the Long Island Sound. An estuary 110 miles long and 21 miles wide, the Long Island Sound offers many forms of recreation to Connecticut residents, including fishing, swimming, and boating. Although to the naked eye the Sound may appear to be in no immediate danger of environmental destruction, the fact of the matter is that multiple environmental hazards are gradually and systematically destroying the Sound’s water and aquatic life. As reported by Save the Sound, human negligence, as well as residential and commercial development, have “greatly intensified the rate at which pollutants reach the Sound.”

Sewage, pesticides, household chemicals, and car exhausts are each in their own way contaminating various aspects of the Long Island Sound, a slow but steady form of environmental destruction.

ConnPIRG is another public interest group in Connecticut that monitors environmental hazards. According to this particular organization, air pollution generated by incinerators in power plants presents a serious health risk to all Connecticut residents. The quality of Connecticut’s air is declining and thousands of children suffer from asthma as a result. According to ConnPIRG, Connecticut is especially negligent with respect to recycling efforts, with approximately two-thirds of the state’s trash burned in incinerators rather than recycled. The end result is the release of dangerous toxins that inflict damage on all forms of life in Connecticut.

The environmental concerns identified by the Council on Environmental Quality, Save the Sound, and ConnPIRG clearly underscore why environmental protection is one of the great challenges for Connecticut lawmakers in the years ahead. The issues
are serious and very complex, but if the residents of Connecticut are to enjoy an environment free from dangerous toxins and pollutants, then it is incumbent among those in positions of political power to establish and enforce sound, sensible, and cost effective environmental policies. Indeed, the state's quality of life is at stake.

The Challenge of Ethnic Diversity

Another major challenge that will inevitably face state lawmakers concerns the changing ethnic character of Connecticut's population. Clearly, the demographic composition of the Connecticut population has undergone a rather dramatic transformation during the past two decades, resulting in a far more diverse and ethnically heterogeneous state citizenry. As ethnic heterogeneity increases, so too do the policy demands of the state's population. Such demands require lawmakers, irrespective of skin color, religion, and ethnic origin, to be acutely sensitive and responsive to the policy needs of population groups that at one time were without political voice. Federal census data presented in table 4 clearly reveal a state population in the midst of ethnic transition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
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*Source:* U.S. Census Bureau. Beginning in 2000 respondents were allowed to identify themselves as belonging to one or more racial/ethnic group.
Generally speaking, racial minorities will account for an increasingly larger share of the state’s population. In 1995, racial minority groups constituted 18.8% of the total state population, while in 2025 this figure is projected to be 33.1%: one-third of the population. The most dramatic change appears to be among the Hispanic population. From 1995 to 2025, the Hispanic population in Connecticut, which consists of persons of Mexican, Central and South American, Puerto Rican, and Cuban descent, is expected to double in size from 7.5% to 15.3%. Asians and Pacific Islanders are also projected to double from 2.0% to 4.5% of the state’s population, while Connecticut’s Black population is projected to increase from 9.1% to 13.1%. The percentage of American Indians, Eskimos, and persons of Aleutian descent will remain static, with no change projected. The white population in Connecticut, which includes a wide range of ethnic groups, is projected to decline from 88.6% to 81.9%, a 6.7% decrease.

The federal census data, assuming the projections are accurate, have serious implications for those who occupy future positions of political authority in the state of Connecticut. The source of political demands and the substance of political agendas are bound to become more complex as the state’s population increases by close to half a million new residents, and as the state assumes a more racially heterogeneous and multicultural character. The census trends also suggest that a multiplicity of policy issues most closely associated with Connecticut’s urban areas will undoubtedly require the close attention of Connecticut’s legislators, governors, and judges. Policy issues closely associated with Connecticut’s cities, in which most Hispanics and Blacks reside, will most surely be the subject of debate and policy resolution at the state capitol for the foreseeable future.

The residents of Connecticut’s inner cities, more than ever, will need the support of the state legislature to help elevate and enhance their quality of life. Despite former governor Rowland’s ambitious urban agenda, Connecticut’s cities are still in need of, and will continue to need, affordable housing, quality schools, job opportunities, safe roads and bridges, police protection, and adequate health care. Political demands from racial minority groups in Connecticut’s cities will expand in proportion to their
steady increase within the population, thus requiring the state legislature and administrative agencies to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of inner-city inhabitants. This is not to suggest that Connecticut's state government should be expected to "fix" all of the ills that plague cities such as Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, and Waterbury; indeed it is quite unrealistic to expect government at any level to somehow solve the problems that have beset America's urban areas. For Connecticut's cities to embark upon a successful path of redevelopment, government assistance must necessarily be supplemented by private sector initiatives, as well as effective civic participation. Successful urban policy making requires coordinated financial and political partnerships, rather than unilateral or disjointed problem solving efforts. Nevertheless, urban-based policy issues will most certainly affect the state legislative agenda in future years—census projections support this conclusion—and state lawmakers to the extent that is possible will be expected to offer creative solutions.

The Challenge of Ethical Political Leadership

Financial resources, strategic planning, and perceptive lawmakers are essential to the success of policy innovation and policy problem solving. Adequate levels of funding, carefully designed plans of action, and astute political leaders with vision will most certainly be needed in years ahead in order to deliver public services effectively to the residents of Connecticut. At the same time, it is essential that those individuals who are elected or appointed to public office be persons of sound moral character and who understand and appreciate the relationship between ethics and good government. High levels of funding for public programs and well-designed policy plans, albeit important elements of policy success, will for all intents and purposes mean very little if those in positions of public leadership betray the public's trust.

The challenge of ethics in government is an appropriate, although unfortunate, subject within the context of current Connecticut politics. For many years, Connecticut was known throughout the land for its clean and almost puritanical style of politics. Indeed, the state of Connecticut is known as both the
"land of steady habits" and "the Constitution State," due to its predictable and stable system of politics, as well as its long tradition of noble self-government. Connecticut's Fundamental Orders of 1639 was the first written constitution known to man, and it was in Connecticut that the tradition of constitutionalism began.

More recently, however, Connecticut government has been marred by activity that is fundamentally at odds with the state's long tradition of steady and ethical self-government. Corruption in government appears to be proliferating and political scandals now surface with alarming frequency. Such a condition is particularly distressing to those who teach political science and who attempt in their lectures to impress upon students the virtues of public service. Newspaper photos and clips on the evening news regarding political scandals, and which sometimes show political leaders being led away in handcuffs, contribute very little in the way of motivating young persons to engage in the political process.

The year 2003 was particularly troublesome with respect to ethics and public leadership in the state of Connecticut. The mayor of Bridgeport, Joseph P. Ganim, was convicted in federal court of engaging in a wide variety of corruption related activity. Twenty-one federal charges, including bribery, kickbacks, extortion, mail fraud, tax evasion, and racketeering, were brought against the once popular mayor, who up to that point was regarded as a rising star in Connecticut politics. Ganim had been elected to five terms as mayor of Bridgeport and was credited with revitalizing an impoverished and debt-ridden city. In 1998, Mayor Ganim was tabbed by the Democratic Party's candidate for governor, William Curry, to run on the Democratic ticket as lieutenant governor. Although the Curry/Ganim ticket was defeated, it was clear to most political observers that Ganim would be the frontrunner for the Democratic Party's gubernatorial nomination in 2002. The federal trial, which captured statewide and national media attention, resulted in sixteen separate guilty verdicts against Ganim. The mayor was subsequently sentenced to nine years in federal prison. Ganim's co-conspirators, who cooperated with federal prosecutors, received substantially lighter sentences.
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The Ganim trial revealed the inner-workings of a political cabal determined to obtain wealth by awarding preferential contracts to developers in exchange for lucrative kickbacks and other amenities. As the prosecution often noted, the city of Bridgeport under Mayor Ganim was "for sale." Political corruption of this sort has surfaced from time to time in American cities across the land, resulting in trials and convictions of urban political leaders. Thus, in some respects, the Ganim case was not unusual. Political scandal, however, does come in many forms, which was painfully evident from the lurid federal case against Waterbury Mayor Philip Giordano.

As the federal corruption case against Ganim was unfolding, so too was the federal case against Mayor Giordano, yet another mayor of a large Connecticut city in financial crisis. Giordano had been elected mayor of Waterbury in 1995, and in 2000 he was nominated as the Republican Party's candidate for U.S. Senate. In the senate contest Giordano faced the popular incumbent Senator Joseph I. Lieberman and not unexpectedly was soundly defeated in an enormous election landslide. Lieberman received 64% of the vote (813,265) to Giordano's 35% (440,306).

The F.B.I. initially began investigating the activity of Mayor Giordano as part of a federal corruption probe. There were rumors that Giordano had connections to underworld figures associated with the New York based Genovese crime family. Like the Ganim case, construction contracts, bribes, and kickbacks appeared to be the focus of the investigation. Also like the Ganim case, federal investigators employed wiretap devices in order to obtain incriminating evidence against Giordano. However, it was during such wiretaps that federal agents learned that the mayor of Waterbury was involved in matters far more serious and harmful than economic corruption. Wiretapped conversations between Giordano and a Waterbury prostitute, Guitana Jones, revealed that the mayor of Waterbury was engaged in sexual relations with minors, more specifically the child and niece of the prostitute with whom he was speaking. Giordano's use of a cell phone to arrange the sexual encounters with the children constituted a federal offense, resulting in the immediate apprehension and incarceration of the mayor. The issue of federal corruption and the mayor's
possible ties to organized crime paled in comparison to what federal investigators discovered about Giordano's sex life and how he had harnessed the prestige of the mayoral office to harm the lives of two children. The federal case against Giordano was airtight, and a jury convicted the former mayor on seventeen felony counts. Mayor Philip Giordano was subsequently sentenced to thirty-seven years in federal prison.

Political scandal has become a common feature not only in Connecticut's cities, but also at the highest levels of Connecticut state government. State political figures have also been the focus of extensive federal investigations. The federal case against former Republican state treasurer Paul Silvester is one such example. Silvester was charged by federal prosecutors with accepting bribes and kickbacks in exchange for investing $200 million of state pension money in the Boston-based investment firm, the Triumph Capital Group. Prosecutors claimed that Triumph Capital was given an unusual amount of discretion by Silvester regarding how best to invest the pension funds as well. The high-profile corruption case against Silvester was the subject of extensive media coverage and provided the Democratic Party with an opportunity to level ethical charges against the Republican Party and the Rowland administration during the 2002 gubernatorial campaign.

After a lengthy federal investigation, Silvester pleaded guilty to corruption charges and was prepared to serve as a government witness against Frederick W. McCarthy, chairman of the Triumph Capital Group, and Lisa A. Thiesfield, Silvester's former girlfriend. McCarthy and Thiesfield were charged with racketeering, bribery, conspiracy, and mail fraud. Shortly before the trial, however, McCarthy and Thiesfield negotiated a plea bargain arrangement with federal prosecutors, thus negating the need for a federal trial. Silvester was subsequently sentenced to fifty-one months in prison, and three years supervised probation.

The years 2002 and 2003 were troubling with regard to corruption in government and the apparent lack of ethics and moral character on the part of those elected to serve the state's citizenry. Unfortunately, 2004 was equally distressing. Governor Rowland, a Republican who had been elected to a third term of office, unprecedented in Connecticut, came under both intense
federal investigation and investigation by a bi-partisan Select Impeachment Committee formed within the Connecticut House of Representatives. The major concern of investigators was whether or not the governor awarded no-bid state contracts to construction companies, particularly the Tomasso Group, one of the state’s largest construction contractors, in exchange for personal amenities, gifts, and work done on his summer cottage located on Bantam Lake in Litchfield, Connecticut. Additionally, investigators were concerned with the special relationship between the governor and a businessman named Robert V. Matthews. Of particular concern was a condominium in Washington, D.C., owned by Governor Rowland and which had been leased to Matthews’ niece. The rental payment to the governor had been funneled from Matthews through the niece and was well beyond the going rate of rentals in the same condominium complex. Rowland received rental payment of $1750 a month, while the going rate for identical rentals was approximately $450 a month. In addition to the suspicious rental payments, Matthews bought the condominium through an associate, or what investigators identified as a “straw buyer,” for what appeared to be a very inflated purchase price. What was particularly disconcerting to investigators was that the rental payments and purchase of the condominium seemed closely related to multi-million dollar state loans awarded to Matthews for his personal business enterprises.

The House Select Impeachment Committee employed the services of the New York law firm Manatt, Phelps, and Phillips to conduct the impeachment investigation. Attorney Steven Reich, who had served as legal counsel to the Democratic members of the House Judiciary Committee during the 1998 impeachment proceeding against President Bill Clinton, meticulously coordinated and presented the corruption case against Governor Rowland. Witnesses were called to testify before the committee and several subpoenas were issued. One witness subpoenaed by the Select Committee was Governor Rowland. As many predicted, the governor refused to testify and challenged the legality of the subpoena on the grounds that the separation of powers doctrine within the Connecticut Constitution protected a sitting governor from testifying before an investigatory committee formed by the
state legislature. The case went to court, and much to the governor’s chagrin, the legal argument was not accepted. In a landmark 5-2 decision, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the separation of powers doctrine did not immunize the governor from a subpoena issued by the state legislature. In the view of the state supreme court, a subpoena issued by an investigative committee established by the state legislature was inherent in the impeachment power of the state legislature.

With the high court’s historic ruling, issued on Friday, June 18, 2004, it became apparent that the governor was left with essentially three options: appear before the Select Committee and testify as requested; appear before the Committee and plead the fifth amendment; or ignore the subpoena and let the impeachment inquiry proceed without his participation. Precisely how the governor would respond to the court’s landmark ruling was unclear, and political pundits along with legal analysts predicted one or another response. On Monday, June 21, three days after the Supreme Court’s decision, the governor publicly announced his decision. In a televised address issued from the patio of the governor’s mansion in West Hartford, the governor, with his wife Patty by his side, announced that effective July 1, 2004, he would officially resign from the office of governor. Although many political leaders, including those within the governor’s party, had been encouraging the governor to resign, his decision still sent shockwaves throughout the state and polity.

To describe the governor’s announcement as surreal is perhaps an understatement. For more than two decades, John G. Rowland had been regarded as one of Connecticut’s most extraordinary and gifted politicians. He began his political career as a Republican state representative from his home town of Waterbury, where the Rowland family name is synonymous with public service and good government. Indeed, Rowland’s grandfather, Sherwood Rowland, was credited with exposing a corrupt political ring operating in Waterbury during the 1930s, which resulted in prison sentences for the mayor of Waterbury and several top city officials. Following two terms in the state legislature, Rowland, at the age of twenty-seven, was elected to the United States Congress, representing Connecticut’s fifth congressional district which
included Waterbury and several surrounding towns. Rowland was the youngest member of the U.S. Congress, and according to some reports the youngest member ever elected to the national legislature.

After one unsuccessful gubernatorial campaign in 1990, Rowland was elected to the office of governor in 1994. He was then reelected in 1998, and again in 2002. What made Rowland's election victories even more remarkable was that a Republican governor could be elected to three consecutive terms in a state where the Democratic Party enjoyed a numerical advantage in party registration. Moreover, with the exception of a few legislative sessions, both chambers of the Connecticut state legislature for close to forty years have been under the control of the Democratic Party. The political dynamics of the Connecticut polity would suggest that a Republican governor would have limited success, although this was hardly the case. As a savvy and astute politician, Governor Rowland moderated his position on many wedge issues, and governed the state from a centrist position. The governor's budgets, despite the political posturing and opposition of his opponents, were normally accepted by the state legislature. Moreover, under Governor Rowland, the University of Connecticut was transformed into a world-class public university known not only for academic excellence, but also for its NCAA Division I men's and women's national champion basketball teams. The University of Connecticut's football program was also elevated to Division I along with the construction of a sparkling football stadium built to accommodate 40,000 spectators. Most important, Governor Rowland took a special interest in urban redevelopment and personally spearheaded programs and projects designed to revitalize Connecticut's troubled cities. In particular, the infrastructure of Connecticut's urban areas was vastly improved under his leadership. Most symbolic of the governor's commitment to urban redevelopment is the project known as Adrian's Landing, a $771 million convention and entertainment center scheduled for development in the city of Hartford.

Throughout most of his tenure, Governor Rowland enjoyed exceptionally high public approval ratings. However, once the
political scandal broke and stories involving unethical behavior on
the part of the governor routinely captured the headlines of
nightly newscasts and local newspapers, most notably the Hartford
Courant, his public approval ratings and public perceptions of his
integrity declined dramatically. Governor Rowland, in no
uncertain terms, lost the trust of the Connecticut citizenry and
resignation seemed to be the one and only appropriate course of
action. The political career of John G. Rowland, once filled with
promise and potential, including the possibility of a Cabinet post
in the administration of President George W. Bush, ended in
disgrace. As noted in the preface, Rowland was eventually
sentenced to federal prison.

On July 1, 2004, Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell, a
respected, moderate Republican from Brookfield, Connecticut, and
known for her ability to forge consensus on divisive policy issues,
was inaugurated as the state’s eighty-seventh governor on the
north steps of the state capitol. Governor Rell’s inaugural speech,
broadcast live and delivered before more than two thousand
persons who had assembled to observe the ceremony, emphasized
themes of healing, trust, and ethics in public service. As the newly
inaugurated governor boldly proclaimed: “We must and we will
recommit ourselves to ending the culture of corruption that has
plagued our state for far too long.” Governor Rell also announced
in her inaugural address that her very first official act as governor
of the state of Connecticut would be to issue Executive Order No.
1, “which imposes strict ethics restraints on those who serve in
government.” The Executive Order also provides for a public
integrity officer to be part of the governor’s cabinet.

The Ganim, Giordano, Silvester, and Rowland scandals are
among the most high profile political scandals that have emerged
in Connecticut in recent years. Beneath the offices of governor,
state treasurer, and big city mayors, one also finds a rash of
additional scandals, or alleged scandals involving state legislators,
a state judge, and in some instances mayors in Connecticut’s
smaller communities. Barely a day goes by in Connecticut when
there is not some mention in local newspapers, radio, or television
of a brewing political scandal. Precisely why political scandal has
proliferated at such an alarming rate in Connecticut is difficult to
explain and beyond the scope of this particular work. Nevertheless, it is painfully evident to even the most casual observer that something has indeed gone awry in Connecticut politics. A state once known for its pristine and fair system of politics, and characterized by ethical public servants, is now referred to by political commentators as “Corrupticut,” or “Connectigate.” Residents of Connecticut cannot be proud of this development, nor should they dismiss or ignore such a disturbing trend. Ethical leadership is a prerequisite for good government, and recapturing the place of ethics in public service is clearly one of the most serious challenges which currently confronts the “land of steady habits.”

The Challenge of Health Care

In most democracies, health care is regarded as a basic and fundamental human right. The national government in countries such as Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy provide a full complement of health services to citizens from the moment of birth to the time of death, in essence a “cradle to grave” public policy. In the United States, however, the policy of health care is, for the most part, a private affair rather than under the jurisdiction and administration of the government. Although over the years there have been several components of health care policy that have come under the control of both the national and state governments, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and, in Connecticut, the HUSKY Program and ConnPACE, the health care system in the United States for all intents and purposes is still very much in private, rather than governmental, hands.28

While the quality of health care in the United States is often described as exceptionally advanced, there are nevertheless inherent flaws and deficiencies in the health care system, particularly with respect to health insurance coverage. Indeed, data gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau reveal that the number and percentage of Americans without health insurance have been steadily increasing over the course of the past fifteen years. In 1987, slightly more than thirty-one million Americans (12.9%) were without health insurance, while in 2003, the figures had risen to approximately fifty million citizens, or 15.6% of the population.29
Although the percentage of Connecticut residents without health insurance is considerably below the national figure, the recent census data are still disconcerting. Among the state's 3.4 million inhabitants, 357,000 individuals were discovered in the 2003 census survey to be without any form of health insurance. This constituted 10.4% of the state's total population. Like the national trend, the percentage of Connecticut residents without health insurance has also been steadily rising. In 1987, the percentage of persons in Connecticut without health insurance was recorded at 6.4%. Thus, there has been a 4% rise in uninsured state residents over the fifteen year period.\(^{30}\)

The 2003 census figures also revealed that 8.3% of persons under the age of eighteen in Connecticut were without health insurance. In 1987, this figure stood at 4.5%. While the census figures for all persons in Connecticut without health insurance were not dissimilar to the percentages in other New England states, the percentage of uninsured under the age of 18, with the exception of Massachusetts, was considerably higher. In Maine, 6.0% of children in 2003 did not have health insurance, 7.9% of children were uninsured in Massachusetts, 5.5% in New Hampshire, 5.2% in Rhode Island, and only 3.9% of children were uninsured in Vermont.\(^{31}\)

Although rising insurance premiums, increasing deductibles, shrinking insurance networks as well as a severe shortage of health care professionals are also problematic dimensions of the current health care system in Connecticut, it is the lack of health care insurance or the fear of losing one's health insurance that is foremost in the minds of many state residents, regardless of income, occupation, and insurance status. Consider, for example, the findings generated from a four town focus group study organized and conducted by members of the Connecticut Health Policy Project just prior to the 2002 elections.\(^{32}\) The Connecticut towns selected for the study included Canton, Groton, Cheshire, and Putnam. In every group, the participants rated the issue of health insurance as equal to or higher than the policy areas of education, the environment, energy, transportation, and the economy.

Most participants, quite surprisingly, regarded the issue of health insurance as more important than the war on terrorism.
Moreover, the participants seemed skeptical, and in some instances disillusioned, with the manner in which the gubernatorial and legislative candidates in 2002 were addressing the issue of health insurance, and practically all respondents viewed powerful special interests, such as insurance and pharmaceutical companies, as responsible for preventing meaningful health care reform.

When asked if given a chance what they would say to candidates for public office about the status of health insurance, the focus group participants clearly echoed the sentiments of one another: “help,” “stop promising and do something,” “make health care a priority,” “the uninsured are real people, not just numbers,” and “the crack is widening.”

Whether lawmakers in Connecticut hear the desperate pleas of the uninsured and finally address the plight of this population group will depend, of course, on an array of political forces that ultimately condition legislative decision making. The force of public opinion, the resolve of law makers, election mandates, media reporting, gubernatorial leadership, special interests and lobbyists, as well as the economy and existing revenue are among the many variables that ultimately affect the policy of health care. Objectively, the prospect for reform in the immediate future looks rather bleak in light of the state’s political dynamics. Regardless, the number of persons without health insurance is climbing in Connecticut, and state legislators, irrespective of party, need to be cognizant of the physical, economic and emotional pain that envelops those who are without health insurance. As the Connecticut Health Policy Project succinctly puts it:

One in ten Connecticut residents lack any health coverage, and that number is likely to grow. Lacking health insurance puts people at risk for severe long lasting harm to their physical and economic health.

Indeed, as the evidence strongly suggests, the challenge of health care has descended on the state of Connecticut and it is the moral responsibility of state lawmakers to develop creative and meaningful solutions for those in need of assistance.
The Challenge of an Aging Population

Connecticut’s population is growing older (see table 2, p. 143), and as a result there is increasing demand for the state to accommodate the social service needs of the elderly. Data regarding age trends do not suggest that the elderly and retirees will dominate the state’s population by year 2025, but it is very clear that persons sixty-five and over will constitute a growing share of the Connecticut population. In fact, persons sixty-five and over are the only age category projected to significantly increase during the next two decades. Like those trends regarding racial heterogeneity, trends regarding age have public policy ramifications as well, perhaps most notably in the policy area of long-term health care.

As Connecticut’s population ages, there will be much greater demand for long-term care services for the aged. More nursing homes with trained professional staff as well as in-home services will be required to take care of the elderly. As many elderly exhaust their life savings and are often forced to sell their homes to pay for long-term health care costs, the state will be forced to assume responsibility for paying the bill. Currently, Medicaid is the primary means by which a state supports the health care costs for elderly who have become destitute. For all intents and purposes, the Medicaid program, which is jointly funded through state and federal taxes, can be viewed as a form of welfare. Although nursing homes in Connecticut are privately owned and managed, their very existence depends heavily on Medicaid payments. Trends in aging suggest quite clearly that more nursing homes and community-based long-term care services, along with more Medicaid payments, will be required to meet the health needs of Connecticut’s elderly. According to Governor Rowland’s Budget Proposal for Fiscal Years 2003-05, the cost of Medicaid is growing at a rate of close to 9% per year.\(^{35}\)

Is there an alternative means of providing health care to the elderly? Can Connecticut’s lawmakers devise a system of long-term health care that is less costly to taxpayers, and less economically devastating to the state’s aging population? There are no easy answers to questions associated with long-term health care
for the elderly and infirm, and providing cost effective and quality health care to Connecticut’s elderly population will be one of the most daunting challenges to state lawmakers in the years ahead.

The Challenge of Prison Overcrowding and Recidivism

Connecticut’s prisons are filled to capacity with individuals who are either serving their sentence or who are awaiting trial. Moreover, the rate of recidivism has reached alarming proportions, which further compounds the problem of overcrowded prisons. Indeed, the problem of prison overcrowding in Connecticut has become so acute that Connecticut is now exporting 500 prisoners to Greensville Correctional Center in Virginia to serve out their prison terms. Prison overcrowding is so severe in Connecticut that former Governor Rowland appointed a special commission to review the problem of prison overcrowding and to issue recommendations for resolving the overcrowding crisis. In the policy area of criminal justice, the problem of prison overcrowding is clearly regarded as the issue in need of the most immediate attention. Thus, it seems appropriate to add the issue of prison overcrowding to our list of pressing policy challenges.

Table 6
Annual Incarcerated Population: 1990-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>9,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>10,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>11,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>11,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>14,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>14,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>14,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>15,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>15,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>16,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>17,749</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.doc.state.ct.us/report/annualreport
Prisons have become a growth industry in the state of Connecticut, a sad, even tragic state of affairs. In 1982, there were thirteen state correctional institutions in Connecticut. In 2003, there were eighteen correctional institutions under the jurisdiction of the Connecticut Department of Corrections, seventeen prisons for males and one prison for females. For Fiscal Year 1989-90, the annual budget for corrections was $186,941,974. For Fiscal Year 2002-03, the corrections budget had ballooned to $576,803.09. On July 1, 1990, the total number of incarcerated individuals in Connecticut was recorded at 9,589. As of July 1, 2003, this figure was 19,121. This is a doubling of the state's prison population over the course of only twelve years. Table 6 presents longitudinal data which can only be described as alarming and very disturbing.

With the construction of several new prisons during the last twenty years, one might surmise that the Department of Corrections has effectively managed the problem of prison overcrowding. This, however, has not been the case. As noted in the 2003 Prison and Jail Overcrowding Commission's Report, to alleviate the problem of prison overcrowding, the state has been forced to reopen closed facilities, renovate existing buildings to create space, double-bunk cells, and, as previously stated, export 500 prisoners to Virginia. The Commission's Report also cites a figure of 850 inmates who are housed in "non-traditional living spaces," such as half-way houses and other transitional accommodations.

Prison overcrowding in itself is a serious problem for the state of Connecticut. However, the challenge of overcrowding becomes even more problematic when viewed within the context of the prison population's demographics. As of July 1, 2002, 8,490 prisoners in Connecticut were Black, 5,003 were Hispanic, 5,257 were white, and 123 were classified as Other. In short, 71% of the state's prison population is Black and Hispanic, yet only about 18% of the state's population is classified as such. These figures clearly underscore the plight of Blacks and Hispanics within the inner-cities of Connecticut. Chronic unemployment, deteriorating and underperforming schools, racial prejudice within the judicial system, as well as the disintegration of two-parent families are among the variables related to the disturbing number of Blacks
and Hispanics currently behind bars. Although it might seem unreasonable to expect state lawmakers and governors to resolve this most disturbing dilemma, the fact of the matter is that creative leadership and strategic public policies at the state level are desperately needed to improve the lives of young Blacks and Hispanics who reside in Connecticut’s cities. Job creation, improved housing conditions, and quality public education are policies clearly within the purview of state government.

The Challenge of Inner-City Education

Inner-city schools in the state of Connecticut have been the subject of much debate and controversy within the chambers of the Connecticut state legislature and before the benches of Connecticut’s courts. It is no secret that the public schools of Connecticut’s inner-cities are in need of desperate help. The school buildings are in need of structural repair, educational resources are lacking, and the quality of the educational experience is far behind that of schools in the more prosperous Connecticut suburbs.

The educational experience and performance levels of suburban school children compared to urban school children in Connecticut is so vastly different that the Connecticut Department of Education has specifically identified the “achievement gap” as one of the Department’s most important and immediate policy concerns. Indeed, regardless of what standardized academic measure is used, urban school children do not perform as well as suburban school children. For example, scores on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) reveal a marked difference in performance between white and Asian students, who normally attend suburban schools, compared to Black, Hispanic, and Native-American students, who for the most part attend urban public schools. The Connecticut Department of Education describes the results of the CAPT in these terms: “The performance of white and Asian students is substantially higher than that of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students in all subjects.”

Another measure of academic achievement frequently employed is the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Although the
SAT is by no means a perfect measure of a student’s academic ability or learning potential, the test nevertheless does provide college admissions officers with some indication of a student’s preparedness for college level work. One again, like the CAPT, the SAT underscores the very different educational environments of Connecticut’s suburban and urban schools. In 2000, for example, the average mathematics score on the SAT among all Connecticut students who were tested was 503. The average verbal score on the SAT was 501. The two scores combined reveal an average SAT score of 1004. The scores in urban communities, however, were substantially lower than the state average. In Bridgeport, the math and verbal averages combined show an average SAT score of 783. In Hartford the average score was 782. In New Haven the average score was 815, in New London 816, while in Waterbury the average SAT was recorded at 857.

In addition to the CAPT and SAT, dropout data compiled by the Connecticut Department of Education further reveal the plight of students in the state’s inner-cities. Table 7 presents the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>91-92</th>
<th>92-93</th>
<th>93-94</th>
<th>94-95</th>
<th>95-96</th>
<th>96-97</th>
<th>97-98</th>
<th>98-99</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartford</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Haven</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New London</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterbury</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As the data in table 7 indicate, the dropout rate in Connecticut’s inner-city schools is substantially higher than the state average. Although the data over a ten-year period suggest a gradual decline in the percentage of students who are dropping out
of urban schools, particularly in the city of Waterbury, which reports a rather dramatic reversal of the dropout trend, the larger picture that unfolds is that a significant portion of students who attend inner-city schools in Connecticut are far less likely to complete their high school education than students elsewhere in the state.

Although two very different educational environments have persisted in Connecticut for many years, it would be remiss not to identify recent efforts on the part of Connecticut’s courts to correct the apparent disparity. Indeed, there have been some very bold and racially sensitive rulings issued by the Connecticut Supreme Court, based on provisions within the Connecticut Constitution, which in one way or another have attempted to rectify the dichotomous character of Connecticut public education. Such rulings, although by no means a panacea for equalizing the two educational environments, demonstrate a concern on the part of Connecticut’s high court with correcting what has become a tragic and immoral educational situation. Two Connecticut Supreme Court rulings, issued approximately twenty years apart, reveal how serious this issue has become in the eyes of the court. Both decisions are regarded as landmark rulings within the context of state constitutional law.

In Horto n v. Meskill, 172 Conn. 615 (1977), and a companion case, Grace v. Meskill, 172 Conn. 615 (1977), the Connecticut Supreme Court addressed the issue of state support for local school districts. Citing the equality provisions contained within the Connecticut State Constitution, the court concluded that the state was required by law to assume a more direct and decisive role with respect to funding Connecticut’s public schools. More specifically, as a result of the Horton ruling, poor urban school districts, characterized by persons with low personal incomes and low property values, could now look to the state for funding assistance. It was the position of the state supreme court that students, regardless of their residence, were constitutionally entitled to a respectable level of financial support and that a system of public education that depended exclusively on the wealth of a local community and concomitant property values for funding was inherently unconstitutional. Thus, the state now
became more involved in funding elementary and secondary schools, and per pupil public expenditures were equalized to a much greater degree in urban and suburban schools. According to the Connecticut State Department of Education, Division of Evaluation and Research, in academic year 2000-01, 53.6% of public school funding was derived from local revenue, while 41.0% of the revenue was derived from the state. Five percent of public school funding was in the form of federal dollars, while 0.4% was identified as tuition and “other” sources of revenue.

Building on the Horton legal precedent, the Connecticut Supreme Court nineteen years later issued a dramatic and controversial decision regarding public education in the state of Connecticut. In Sheff v. O’Neill, 238 Conn. 1 (1996), the state’s high court ruled that the equality provisions of the Connecticut Constitution required the state to not only provide equal funding to urban and suburban school districts, which was the decision in Horton, but also to develop plans for racially integrating urban and suburban school districts. The Sheff case, which originated in the city of Hartford, was applauded by educational reformers as a bold and legally sound decision on the part of the Court grounded in the constitutional principle of equality. Critics of the ruling suggested a twisting of the state constitution to achieve a liberal social agenda.

Although little integration actually occurred following the historic Sheff ruling, the decision nevertheless suggests that the state supreme court did view the existence of two very different and separate educational environments in Connecticut as unconstitutional and inherently unfair to the state’s inner-city racial minority students. In January 2003, a legal settlement was finally reached in which both parties in the case, the state and Sheff, agreed to moderate and voluntary forms of racial integration. The most important aspects of the settlement appear to be an agreement on the part of the state to build eight new magnet schools in the Hartford area, to provide $45 million over the course of four years to help with integration efforts, and to expand “Program Choice,” which allows parents of urban school children to send their children to public schools in surrounding suburbs. Most observers and analysts conclude, however, that
despite the legal settlement, the vast majority of urban school children will still be confined to substandard, poor, and racially segregated public schools.\textsuperscript{44}

The Challenge of Higher Education

In 2003, the state of Connecticut was faced with a serious budget deficit. In his effort to close the budget gap, Governor John G. Rowland recommended to the state legislature a series of cuts in government spending, as well as a modest increase in various taxes. Although spending cuts appeared to affect a broad range of state-supported services and programs, the governor's proposed cuts in educational spending were among the most profound. Public institutions of higher learning in Connecticut, which include the state's four year public universities and two year community colleges, were definitely targeted within the context of the governor's deficit reduction plan. In 2004, to the surprise of many, the deficit no longer existed and a $100 million budget surplus was announced. Nevertheless, despite a $100 million surplus, higher education in Connecticut remained a rather low priority within the context of policy priorities.

In a report issued by the Board of Governors for Higher Education, state support for higher education has been steadily declining. As a percentage of total state appropriations, spending for higher education, as noted by the report, is at its lowest point since 1997. Table 8 presents what must be disturbing trends for those concerned with the quality and vibrancy of public higher education in Connecticut. The data in this table must be viewed as disconcerting for those who view the quality of public higher education as integral to the future of Connecticut's economy and more generally the state's quality of life. The one and only interpretation of this data is that government support for Connecticut's public universities and community colleges is declining. Although one can argue that the recent modernization and expansion of the University of Connecticut, along with the Connecticut State University system and community colleges tends to suggest otherwise, the fact of the matter is that percentage trends in operating budgets are the most telling figures regarding policy priorities.
Table 8
Spending for Higher Education as a Percentage of Total State Appropriations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>4.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<td>1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The issue of state support for higher education becomes even more troubling when placed in a comparative context. The amount of state dollars spent on higher education per capita in Connecticut compared to other states further suggests that education is not a priority item at the state capitol. Consider the following facts. In 2003, Connecticut ranked twenty-seventh among the fifty states in terms of per capita spending on education. Connecticut is thus in the lower half of states in terms of educational spending for individual state residents. Moreover, the state of Connecticut, quite astonishingly, is currently ranked forty-fifth among the fifty states with regard to support for higher
education compared to its wealth as a state. This figure is based on state funding levels for education compared to the state's ability to pay, which is reflected in the personal income of state residents.\textsuperscript{46} The problem of support for public higher education in Connecticut becomes more pronounced when trends in student enrollment are reviewed. Although student enrollment in public universities and community colleges has not dramatically increased over the last several years, it has nevertheless increased at a rather steady rate.\textsuperscript{47} Indeed, it appears that an inverse relationship currently exists between enrollment and spending within the state of Connecticut: as enrollment has increased, support for public higher education has decreased. Consider the following enrollment figures. In 1990, enrollment in the state's public universities and two year colleges was recorded at 66,246. This figure declined by more than 6,000 students in the mid 1990s but rose again beginning in 1998. In 2002, full-time student enrollment was recorded at 70,044, which was the fifth year of consecutive growth for full-time students.\textsuperscript{48} While an increase of 3,798 students over a twelve year period may not at first glance seem terribly dramatic, such an increase when considered in light of current spending cuts must inevitably be affecting the quality of education within Connecticut's public institutions. Spending cuts directly affect the extent to which institutions can hire additional faculty, along with the extent to which new forms of technology can be purchased and incorporated into the classroom. As such, faculty to student ratios are adversely affected by spending cuts, and constrained departmental budgets are unable to keep pace with the demands of the information era. These are not the trends one associates with educational excellence. How to maintain a system of quality public education in light of modest budgetary support is clearly one of the most difficult challenges facing policy makers in the state of Connecticut.

A Political Prescription

Thus, there appear to be ten complex policy challenges that await state law makers at the Connecticut state capitol in the years ahead. Although such policy challenges will be addressed in separate chapters, it is important to understand that no policy area
exists in a vacuum. Public policies in multiple ways are deeply interconnected, and effective policy management requires long-term and comprehensive plans of action. Public policy-making is in many ways a fine art, and policy leadership requires political leaders who are capable of understanding and grasping the economic and social interrelationship among seemingly disparate public policies.

Developing a comprehensive approach to public policy-making is by no means an easy task, and academics who study public policy, as well as the politicians who practice it, are seldom in agreement regarding which model of policy-making yields the most effective results. To complicate matters even further, the steady proliferation of special interest groups at the Connecticut state capitol has done little to foster an integrated approach to the policy-making process. Indeed, the rising power of special interests and lobbyists within the Connecticut General Assembly has in some respects contributed to a fragmented and “balkanized” system of governance hardly conducive to macro policy planning. Quite frankly, the Connecticut citizenry can elect honest and ethical candidates to public office, as well as candidates with impressive vision, but until the deleterious and fragmenting influence of special interest groups is brought under control, the efforts of our most skilled and well-intentioned political leaders will be seriously compromised.

Thus, for the policy process in the state of Connecticut to be effective one needs to consider, at the risk of appearing idealistic, political reforms that contribute to an integrated and more cohesive system of policy-making. More specifically, there needs to be a concerted effort aimed at restoring and revitalizing those governing mechanisms that for so many years contributed to a sound system of policy-making. Such mechanisms, which served as the heartbeat of Connecticut politics and the state legislative process are the political parties.

Although laced with imperfections, the political party more than any other political mechanism, is the most useful tool for effectuating direct, cohesive, and meaningful change in the policy process. Political parties foster teamwork among state lawmakers, and it is through the parties that a comprehensive, rather than a fragmented, governing agenda is advanced. In a political system characterized by party government, candidates for the General
Assembly are elected as members of a legislative team, as opposed to representatives of insurance companies, labor unions, or gun manufacturers. Indeed, it is through the party, not the special interest group, that legislative teamwork is advanced and a closer association forged between the legislative and executive branches of government.

When political parties structure the course of the governing process, there is likely to be a more cohesive, integrated, and directional legislative agenda. This is not to suggest that Connecticut's two major parties should be "left-wing" or "right-wing," or polarized to the point of hostility, but rather that political parties and party labels should represent a set of values that lawmakers embrace within the context of their legislative behavior. It is this model of government that political scientists refer to as "responsible party government" and that seems to offer the most hope with regard to a unified and directional system of public policy-making.

Equally important is that a political process characterized by responsible political parties lends itself to a fairly defined system of political choice at election time and contributes to the accountability of lawmakers elected under a party label. When political parties represent a particular philosophy of government, the labels of political parties actually have meaning. Voters at election time, who might have difficulty understanding the key policy differences between two legislative candidates, will at the very least be guided by a candidate's party label. Thus, a legislative candidate who may not be well known within a multi-town district will nevertheless be associated with a set of economic and social principles in a system characterized by responsible political parties. Voting choices are more simplified under this system of politics, legislative behavior becomes more predictable, special interest groups and political action committees have less chance of influencing and fragmenting the policy process, and lawmakers are ultimately held more accountable. A state senator or state representative who campaigns under a Democratic or Republican party label will be expected to act as a Democrat or Republican once elected to the state legislature.

Engaging in theoretical discourse regarding the virtues of political parties as governing instruments is, however, much easier than actually resurrecting the governing roles of parties. Moreover,
any discussion of party revitalization is immediately met with resistance by critics of political parties who depict party organizations as the province of “patronage politics,” “party machines,” and “party bosses.” There are those who view a strong system of political parties as inherently antithetical to the values of objective government, free-thinking lawmakers, and the values of participatory democracy. Opponents of party government seem to prefer the maverick lawmaker who acts independent of party and the pressures of a party-based legislative team. While such a model of government might on its face seem noble, the fact of the matter is that lawmakers with weak allegiances to political parties, what Alan Ehrenhalt refers to as “solo practitioners,” are in many ways the most vulnerable and susceptible to the influence of lobbyists and the corrosive influence of special interest campaign contributions. A state legislature comprised of individuals beholden to special interests is less likely to advance broad-based public policies that serve the needs of the people. Political parties are the institutions that advance broad and comprehensive legislative agendas, not special interest groups.

Thus, as we begin our examination of the complex public policy challenges in Connecticut, it is wise to reflect on the perspective long advanced by many in the political science profession. Strong political parties and coherent public policy-making are related to one another, and to effectively meet the policy challenges of the twenty-first century, we must first restore political parties to their rightful place within the governance process. Indeed, restoring the governing role of political parties is perhaps the greatest challenge of all.

Notes


22. “ConnPIRG Legislative Agenda.”


26. As of February 2004, there were 626,959 registered Democrats in Connecticut (34%) 422,204 registered Republicans (23%), 777,431 registered unaffiliated voters (42%), and 4,973 registered members of minor political parties (2%). Source: Elections Division, Office of Secretary of State.
27. A poll conducted by the Center for Survey Research and Analysis located at the University of Connecticut in April 2004 discovered that Governor John G. Rowland's public approval rating had declined to 20%. This was the lowest public approval rating recorded for any Connecticut governor since 1978, the year in which the poll was first conducted and public approval ratings first measured. In September 1998, the governor's public approval rating was recorded at 78%, indicating extraordinary support among the residents of Connecticut. It should also be noted that immediately following Rowland's resignation speech on June 21, the governor's public approval ratings were recorded at 33%. Source: www.nynewsday.com/news/local/wire/ny-bc-ct-rowland-poll, June 22, 2004. The public's growing disapproval and deep displeasure with Governor Rowland was also reflected in public perceptions towards the governor's personal integrity. A Quinnipiac University Poll released in February, 2004, discovered that 84% of persons surveyed expressed the view that Governor Rowland was dishonest and untrustworthy, while a mere 10% perceived the governor as honest and trustworthy. This was a dramatic change from previous years. In June of 1999, 30% of respondents perceived the governor as dishonest and untrustworthy, while 56% viewed him as an honest and trustworthy individual. Source: Poll cited and discussed in Hartford Courant, February 20, 2004, p. B3.

28. Medicare is a federally supported health insurance program signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965. Medical services are provided to persons sixty-five years of age and older, regardless of income, and the plan requires a small premium for health services. Medicaid, also signed into law in 1965, provides health services to the poor, including seniors unable to pay Medicare premiums, and is jointly funded by both the federal and state governments. HUSKY is a health insurance plan for poor children in Connecticut, while ConnPace provides prescription drugs for senior citizens who fall below a certain income level.


30. U.S. Census Bureau.

31. U.S. Census Bureau.

32. As noted in its publication: "The Connecticut Health Policy Project is a non-profit, non-partisan research and educational organization dedicated to improving access to affordable, quality health care for all Connecticut residents. The Connecticut Health Policy Project believes that empowered, informed consumers are the best engine to improve Connecticut's health care system for all." www.cthealthpolicy.org/aboutus.htm.
44. For a full treatment of the Sheff case, the subsequent settlement, and comments by observers, see The Hartford Courant, January 23, 2003, Section A.
49. Between 1999-2000, 927 separate interest groups were registered with the State Ethics Commission. See Gary L. Rose, Connecticut Government at the Millennium (Fairfield: Sacred Heart University Press, 2001), pp. 154-60.
50. My discussion of party government and the relevance of strong political parties is rooted in a large body of political science literature. The foundation work for this perspective was authored by the
Committee on Political Parties, Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1950). Although the Committee’s report addressed the centrality of responsible parties in national politics, the argument still has great relevance for the governance process at the state level as well. A forty-year retrospective on the work of the Committee, along with an excellent review of the literature and discussion of the current relevance of responsible parties can be found in John Kenneth White, “Responsible Party Government in America,” paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association, Providence Rhode Island, November 16, 1990.

CHAPTER ONE

The Challenge of Economic Growth

THOMAS D. CORRIGAN

The Connecticut economy faces many challenges as it and its citizens move deeper into the twenty-first century. Greatly influenced by the New York City economy, Connecticut was very much affected by the tragic events of September 11, 2001. In earlier years, Connecticut suffered through the pains of several New York City financial crises, but it also benefitted greatly from the stock market boom of the 1990s and other periods when New York City-centered financial-services industries were riding high. However, Connecticut, while strongly influenced by developments in its neighbor to the south, has an economic life of its own. This life is composed of a strong, indigenous financial center, a still viable manufacturing base, a well-established defense business, an excellent educational system, and a thriving tourist and entertainment industry. Connecticut’s economic fate will be as dependent on developments in these and other home-grown areas as it will be by the fortunes of New York City and the national economy.

The Connecticut Economy at a Glance

For its size, Connecticut’s economy is quite diverse. Ranked thirty-ninth nationwide in population size, the state depends on many different kinds of industries for employment, income generation, and tax receipts. Even today, after many years of decline, manufacturing still accounts for 11.8% of nonagricultural
jobs. Table 1 provides a breakdown of Connecticut’s employment by sector as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data in the table mirror earlier data and shows that since the overall economy officially hit bottom in 2001, the employment situation in Connecticut continues to be very difficult, with employment gains in the construction and the leisure and hospitality industries just offsetting employment declines in manufacturing and business services in 2003.

Table 1
Connecticut Nonfarm Employment May 2004
Seasonally Adjusted, in Thousands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Annual % Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total State</td>
<td>1,653.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>194.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade, Transportation, Utilities</td>
<td>305.7</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>142.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Business Services</td>
<td>194.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Health</td>
<td>266.8</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>249.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure, Hospitality</td>
<td>133.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Connecticut Department of Labor, Office of Research; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Strategically located between two major financial centers—Boston and New York—and housing a strong financial sector in its own right, Connecticut’s citizens have enjoyed one of the highest standards of living in the U.S. over the years. In 2003, with a per capita income of $43,173, Connecticut ranked first in the nation among the fifty states, a position it has held for at least
fifteen consecutive years. Employment rates have also consistently held above the national average, while the state’s 4.6% unemployment rate in mid-2004 was one full percentage point below the U.S. average. The state also boasts a strong and growing tourist industry—recently stimulated by the founding of Indian casinos—some of the best higher educational facilities in the nation, a world-class health care system, and an outward looking and innovative, albeit challenged, industrial base. In national surveys of the best places to live, Connecticut contributes its fair share of preferred towns and communities.

**Surmounting Challenges Through the Years**

Manufacturing has always been a mainstay of the Connecticut economy. Small-scale industries were established well before the American Revolution to supply the needs of the early colonists. The ability to meet these ever-changing needs stimulated an inventive class of business people, and with the effective use of water power, Connecticut manufacturing provided the principal means by which the state’s citizens fostered and enjoyed a steadily rising standard of living. In 2002, the state’s labor force averaged 1,773,000 workers, of which 195,000 were classified as manufacturing workers. The historical importance of manufacturing to the state’s economy also shows up in union participation. In 2002, 17% of Connecticut’s labor force belonged to an official union. Nationally, only about 13% of the total U.S. work force in 2002 was unionized and only ten states had higher unionization rates than Connecticut. Declines in both manufacturing and unionism in Connecticut over the years reflects the rapid growth in service jobs, a steady flow of manufacturing jobs emigrating abroad, the growing importance of women and teenagers in the work force, a strong anti-union movement within the state, and a dramatic rise in manufactured imports.

Despite the declining trend in employment, manufacturing continues to make a major contribution to the viability of the state’s overall economy. Connecticut’s manufacturing portfolio is composed of such diverse products as industrial machinery, office machines, turbines and engines, transportation equipment, and
defense products, including helicopters and submarines. The state also has a viable chemical industry, including pharmaceuticals, as well as thriving businesses in the manufacture of medical equipment, lenses and measuring equipment.

Connecticut still has a presence in the agricultural industry, although fewer than 2% of the state’s workers actively make a living in this sector. Similarly, the state’s small fisheries industry is a faint shadow of what it was in the nineteenth century. However, the state has taken aggressive action in recent years to protect the fisheries industry by implementing programs aimed at improving water quality and habitats. In addition, Connecticut was an early innovator in the private leasing of oyster and hard-shell clam beds. These activities and others have helped the fisheries industry to stabilize in recent years. They are also important to the future of the state’s tourism industry and to the recreational activities of citizens.

Offsetting to a significant degree the decline in manufacturing employment, the state’s service industries have increased their share of employment from 27% of total employment in 1991 to 38% by mid-2004. While some of this growth has been in low-paying jobs in the food-service industry and other occupations requiring low-skill levels, the principal areas of employment strength have been in the high-paying professions of business services, education, engineering, health care, and management services. Connecticut has also participated in the technology boom of recent years, ranking fifth nationally in the percentage of workers involved in all aspects of hi-tech, including software development.

Of all the service sectors, Connecticut is perhaps best known for its insurance industry. Dating back to 1810, insurance underwriting today by Connecticut firms covers the full array of insurance needs. However, like all industries in the state, the insurance sector has seen its share of changes over the years. After many decades of steady growth, insurance industry employment fell by 13% during the 1990s. All of the decline was centered in the life insurance component of the industry. Other areas, namely health insurance and casualty insurance, continued to grow, but only to the extent of covering one-half of the positions lost in the
life insurance segment. The factors behind these shifts within the industry are not fully understood but, overall, the industry continues to be important to the state’s economy, accounting for roughly 7% of the state’s Gross Domestic Product.

Where We Stand Now

Not surprisingly, given the diversity of its industry, Connecticut’s economy closely follows trends in the national economy. Connecticut was negatively affected by the mild U.S. recession of 2001 and like the national economy, has seen a very disappointing recovery during the past two-and-one-half years, particularly in the creation of new jobs. Like the national economy, the state has failed to gain significant momentum despite large federal tax cuts, rapidly rising defense spending associated with the situation in Iraq and homeland security, and the lowest interest rates in forty years. The impact of the 2001 recession, the outsourcing phenomenon, and subsequent sluggish growth has lead to 58,000 lost jobs since 2000 and a total employed workforce in mid-2004 about level with 1998.4

What separates Connecticut’s economy from the national picture is its key position in the manufacture of expensive defense items, like helicopters made by Sikorsky and submarines manufactured by the Electric Boat Company. The state’s economy is also the beneficiary of a sharp rise in gambling activity at two Indian casino complexes.

Unfortunately, gains in these areas are being threatened by significant problems in other areas. Like many other states, Connecticut’s fiscal situation is precarious at best. The large budget deficit in 2002 was covered by eliminating the “rainy day” fund and also by pushing some $220 million of spending into 2003. Tight spending controls and some pickup in tax revenues translated into a budget surplus of $200 million for the fiscal year ending in June, 2004. However, all of the recent surplus is being earmarked for the “rainy day” fund, which had been depleted going into 2004.5 In other words, these surplus funds are not now available to help rebuild the state’s stressed infrastructure or to fund other worthwhile projects. While the current surplus is
welcome news, the recent tendency to spend more than is available suggests that future spending initiatives will likely be covered by higher taxes and/or additional cuts in existing state programs.6

A more serious problem facing the state relates to the labor force. Currently, Connecticut’s unemployment rate is running a full percentage point below the national average. This encouraging statistic reflects the mildness of the 2001 recession but it also reflects a net migration of potential workers to other states, reducing the size of the potential labor force. In other words, Connecticut’s below average unemployment rate is more the result of people leaving the state than it is to the creation of new jobs for the unemployed and new entrants into the labor market. An employed or unemployed worker leaving Connecticut is no longer counted in the state’s labor statistics. If this trend of outmigration is not reversed, Connecticut’s economy will have a difficult time regaining the growth rates of the 1980s and 1990s simply because the workers needed to fuel economic growth will not be available.

Another concern relates to the substantial inequality that exists among Connecticut families. During the decade of the 1980s, the real incomes of all Connecticut families increased, but during the 1990s, the real incomes of the poorest 20% of families fell by nearly 20%. Only twelve other states experienced a similar falloff in the fortunes of its poorest citizens. For all of the fifty states, the real income of the poorest 20% of families increased by 12.3% in the 1990s. The next poorest 20% of Connecticut’s families fared little better, with their real incomes falling by 5.8% over the decade of the 1990s. At the other end of the spectrum, the wealthiest 20% of Connecticut’s families did exceedingly well in both the 1980s and 1990s. During the 1980s, this group saw real incomes rise by nearly 35% and then by a further 21% in the 1990s.7

Clearly, some portion of the growing gap between the rich and the poor during the 1990s can be attributed to the stock market boom during the second half of the decade. Some of these gains undoubtedly were given back in the 2000-02 period. The decline in manufacturing employment also contributed to the growing income disparity in the state. Manufacturing jobs tend to pay more than service jobs. The changing mix in Connecticut
hiring trends away from manufacturing towards services has put downward pressure on average pay scales of workers as a whole.

However, an even more important factor may relate to the high-educational requirements Connecticut companies are demanding from job candidates. High-skill and high-paying positions are not open to a large percentage of the state’s under-educated labor force. This gap between what companies demand in skill levels and what Connecticut workers have to offer may become even more acute in the years ahead if the needed educational opportunities are not offered by the state’s learning institutions and/or if new entrants to the state’s labor force otherwise fail to acquire the needed skills.

Where Are We Going?

The biggest challenge facing Connecticut’s future revolves around its labor force. With the southern and western parts of the United States experiencing rapid growth in recent years, Connecticut suffers from a barely growing population. In the decade of the 1990s, for example, the U.S. population grew by 9% but Connecticut’s population expanded by only 4%. These numbers are no surprise; population and job growth in Connecticut and the other New England states have trailed the national averages for the past 30 years. As a consequence, labor-force growth has also been below average—a negative 0.2% per year versus a national average of a positive 1%—and below what employers need in order to sustain growth. Because of the way the numbers are calculated, weak labor force growth has also translated into below-average unemployment rates for Connecticut and other northeastern states. Thus, at times, Connecticut has experienced the atypical combination of a tight labor market and slow employment growth. In other words, Connecticut’s relatively low—sub-5% unemployment masks a darker side of the state’s employment picture: there simply aren’t enough workers to go around when companies are trying to expand.

Ironically, Connecticut’s workers are among the most productive in the nation, with productivity levels one-third above the national average. Unfortunately, Connecticut companies can’t
take maximum advantage of these highly skilled workers simply because there aren't enough of them to meet the needs of fast-growing companies. Again, the solution to this endemic problem lies with the educational system. The state needs to lead and support the effort to train and re-train more of Connecticut's citizens in those skills most in demand. Relevant training programs may not halt the long-term decline in manufacturing employment, but training can help keep the overall employment numbers high, along with living standards, by improving the match between what organizations need and what Connecticut workers have to offer.

As mentioned, the long-term decline in traditional manufacturing is projected to continue well into the foreseeable future. This will not necessarily mean that manufacturing jobs will disappear completely from the state, but it does mean that manufacturing jobs are likely to become increasingly technical in nature. Very specifically defined segments of manufacturing have the capacity to grow steadily in the years ahead. These include the aerospace industry, shipbuilding, optics and instrumentation, fuel cell applications, and medical instruments to name an important few. If the needed workers are not available, the risk is that a growing number of Connecticut companies will be forced to migrate to other parts of the nation where workers of all types are in greater supply.

Encouragingly, Connecticut policymakers are now actively nurturing the state's manufacturing sector. Back in 1997, state officials adopted the concept of industry clustering as a way to open a channel for direct support to specific segments of the economy that hold the best promise for growth and jobs. State support to date has ranged from establishing grants for university research in neuroscience and precision manufacturing to providing seed capital to small, technology-oriented companies. Since 1997, six cluster groups have been identified for special attention. These clusters are made up of firms that produce similar products and are located closely to one another. They also tend to be export-oriented and have extensive business dealings with one another. Representing nearly half of the state's output in any given year, the clusters are: Tourism and Entertainment; Health and Biomedical services; Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing;
Communication, Information, and Education; Business Services; and Financial Services. While some of these clusters are not running at top speed at the moment, it is becoming increasingly clear that the state's economic success will be closely-tied to how these clusters perform in the future.\textsuperscript{10}

Within clusters, Information Technology (IT) occupations are expected to have the fastest growth over the next ten years, assuming, of course, that an adequate supply of high-trained candidates is available. Today, IT accounts for only about 2% of the state's 1.65 million filled positions, but it is expected that new IT jobs will account for 12% of all new hirings in the years ahead. For all of the technology industries, current employment represents 16% of the state's total number of jobs with new job creation growing faster than the average of all other occupations by 25% or more.

The dominant service-sector component of Connecticut's economy faces a unique set of challenges. The economic health of much of the southwestern part of the state will be very much influenced by employment trends in the financial services industry, especially by the fortunes of companies operating in New York City. Moreover, given the relative wealth of this part of the state, trends in financial markets will also have an inordinate impact on the net-worth positions of many above-average income households, which in turn, will influence their spending and investing activities.

Connecticut's fiscal health will also be key in assessing the state's economic future. Experiencing the same difficulties as many other states, Connecticut's large 2003 budget deficit resulted in substantial cuts in state spending along with sizeable increases in cigarette and business taxes. Not known as a business-friendly state in the past, the bump-up in business taxes could accelerate the migration of Connecticut companies to more tax friendly areas of the country. The budget problem is also being affected by the state's aging population and growing demands on Medicaid and other state welfare programs. The state also has to find ways to fund the rising costs of health insurance for both state employees and the large number of retirees, past and future.\textsuperscript{11}

The recent return to a budget surplus is an encouraging development, but spending these funds today will only make it
Despite its many problems and small size, Connecticut is still an integral part of the national economy. Under the assumption that the national economy grows at a 3.0% rate in the years ahead, it is reasonable to expect that the Connecticut economy will add an average 15,000 new jobs each year over the next decade. In addition, the state Department of Labor estimates that 40,000 positions will become available annually as older workers retire and as others leave the state for jobs elsewhere. The forecasts presented in table 2 assume that Connecticut’s economy grows at a slightly below average pace of 2.5% per year through 2013, held back to some degree by labor shortages. The state’s unemployment rate should rise no higher than the current 4.6% and gradually drift back down towards 3%. This 3% rate reflects the state’s continued slow population growth and a renewed tightening in labor markets, particularly in technologically advanced industries, once the effects of the constraining effects of the 2001-03 business cycle fully run their course.

The major caveat to the projections presented in table 2 is that they will only materialize if expanding companies have an adequate supply of trained candidates. There is a risk that new entrants to the labor force in the decade ahead will not possess the skills demanded by hiring enterprises. And because many of these high-growth organizations are small in size, they will not likely have the resources to provide in-house training. If the state’s colleges and universities fail to offer this needed training, many of these small companies will likely expand their employment levels in other parts of the country or leave the state altogether.

Conclusion

All trends point to a sluggish Connecticut economy in the years ahead. The state’s lackluster jobs market is expected to improve slowly but only in those sectors requiring highly skilled workers. Low skill positions will still be available in the retail and food service industries, but these are not the kinds of jobs that will keep Connecticut competitive in global markets. Nor will they help the state maintain its leading position in terms of per capita income. In order to sustain Connecticut’s competitive edge,
state government must act as a catalyst in bringing forth the human and capital resources needed to make sure that Connecticut's future labor force can successfully acquire the skills demanded by the business sector. Looking beyond 2005, the nurturing of the identified business clusters holds great promise for a renewal in economic vitality. In concert with a competitive tax and regulatory environment, economic policymakers working closely with current and prospective industry clusters have a golden opportunity to allow Connecticut's citizens to continue to enjoy an above-average standard of living. The forecasts presented in this study assume that these challenges will be met, but they will require hard work and good decision making from all interested players.

Notes


CHAPTER TWO

The Challenge of Transportation

WILLIAM B. KENNEDY

When Connecticut residents have traveled to work, appointments, or other sites, they probably have focused primarily on what would happen after they arrived at their destination rather than how to get there. Like many other services often taken for granted, transportation issues usually held less claim to one’s attention since they represented but a means to reach a given location and not an end result. This is not necessarily the case today on state roads and highways.

In recent years, Connecticut and much of the U.S. East Coast region from Maine to Florida, along with other sections throughout the nation, have experienced congested travel gridlock to the extent that federal, state, and local government measures to try to remedy the situation have multiplied. Motorist anxiety has grown as trucks, cars, and buses all vie for attention as they inch forward in long lines while special commissions, motorist organizations, and federal, state, and regional bodies all seek solutions.

A small state geographically, Connecticut lies along the major I-95 corridor between New York City and Boston and major North-South highways such as I-91 and I-84 which extend into Massachusetts and northern New England. It is in many ways a “pass through” state for those going elsewhere on weekends, holidays, or other given times as well as for numerous trucks traveling continually on the super highways. One often can observe the resulting traffic congestion, especially in southwestern
Connecticut, by trying to enter the I-95 corridor or Merritt-Wilbur Cross Parkway on Fridays, Sundays, or earlier or later in the week on three-day weekends. Cramped highway entrance-exit conditions, crawling or even stationary traffic, and a variety of non-Connecticut license plates all characterize the scene.

State residents, who far outnumber visiting motorists based on total highway usage, are normally out in force as well for weekend shopping or personal reasons. But their most significant contributions to state traffic congestion have been the morning and evening round-trip home to work and return commute during the week. This is the normal pattern for urban traffic congestion both on U.S. and Connecticut highways. State traffic often hovers close to or beyond road capacity as many commuters travel lengthy distances within a small state or beyond its state line five days per week, and congested urbanized travel conditions are more often the rule rather than the exception. Southwestern Connecticut's I-95 corridor is considered to be the most critical area. But major highways such as the New Haven-Hartford-Enfield I-91 corridor, Danbury-Hartford I-84 corridor, and the eastern Connecticut I-95 corridor are other examples of heavy traffic congestion.

Connecticut secondary highways are experiencing more traffic buildup as well. This often is where heavy suburban commuting starts and continues to grow as it spills over into many of the major state corridor highways during rush hour. Much of the morning commute begins at sites such as Route 111 in Monroe or Route 79 in North Madison and merges with traffic from other entrances onto the major arteries; as a result, it makes superhighways seem like the major culprit for massive commuter congestion when in reality such is not the case. Much like the fish that spawn in small streams and tiny lakes before pouring down wide rivers to the sea, the ceaseless flow of traffic moves from small roads to great highways which, in turn, experience the ultimate unfavorable results most associated with massive congestion scenes.

For a variety of reasons, workers continue moving from Connecticut's largest cities to the suburbs. Recent reports show that state domestic migration trends followed this pattern, with cities sustaining greatest population losses and smaller suburban
communities to be among top population gainers.\textsuperscript{1} With national internal U.S. and foreign immigration into Connecticut apparently more than offsetting state emigration losses, if suburbs continue to attract current levels of population growth within the state, more commuting undoubtedly will result.

Long-term major traffic issues in Connecticut thus are mingled with demographic suburban movement, and zoning decisions in affected communities become especially important in their long-term implications for the level of commuter traffic. Long-term efforts to address such changing population distribution certainly may require extensive state, town, and regional planning responses in the years ahead.

These concerns are not only a Connecticut problem. A 2001 report "Stuck in Traffic" by TRIP (The Road Information Program) noted that by 2000 an estimated $7 trillion worth of goods were being shipped nationwide and that changes in the manner of delivering them have increased the numbers of commercial vehicles on U.S. highways.\textsuperscript{2} State truck increases simply reflect this fact. The report further noted that by 2020, under present assumptions, national freight deliveries will probably double. It estimated that from 1982 to 2000, U.S. highway travel increased about 10 times faster than new lane capacity, traffic congestion delays 236\%, and highway travel 72\%. Yet only 6\% new road mileage reportedly was added.

Reduction of truck traffic on state highways has become a significant traffic issue in recent years. Expanding rail carrier traffic, developing more waterborne traffic on Long Island Sound, fully maintaining truck weighing station operations, establishing special truck lanes on major highways, and other solutions have been advanced. Responsible government agencies and other bodies are working on these and other proposals to try to reduce as much truck travel as possible and a period of increased innovation and experimentation with potential solutions can certainly be anticipated as part of any future highway planning.

"Suburbia and the Good Life," a program presented by the Connecticut Humanities Council and Connecticut Public Television in May 1997 on the Connecticut Experience television series, showed that the state has been in the forefront of road and
highway development. In 1907, the General Assembly approved planning for a state highway system. In 1923, the Post Road was created; in 1938, the Merritt Parkway was approved. By World War II, 3000 miles of paved roads already existed. In the 1950s, the creation of I-95 took place. It was followed in the 1960s and 1970s by an increased state road network as a result of further suburban migratory pressures and general traffic increases. Migration from Connecticut cities to the suburbs has continued to grow to the present day, with increased concern about traffic congestion and sprawl.

Business, commercial, and light industrial facilities relocating in growing numbers to suburban settings often cluster in locations accessible to commercial transportation on secondary roads. New shops and stores draw customers to add to local traffic growth and suburban travel has mushroomed. "Suburbia and the Good Life" presenters point out that more traffic actually moves from suburb-to-suburb than to Connecticut cities and will mean more construction and continuing repairs on secondary roads.

Through systematic annual planning, the state Department of Transportation (DOT) has been working to alleviate traffic congestion. A DOT report citing cumulative progress in the fourth year of a Five-Year Plan for southwestern Connecticut from 1997-2001 noted that 5,987 motorists were attracted to alternatives other than single driver vehicle travel.

The DOT has also been focusing on updating operation of the Metro-North commuter rail system. Through a sales-leaseback arrangement and other funding, it plans to renovate a fleet of obsolete railway coaches to upgrade the carrier system significantly. Harry P. Harris, Bureau Chief for Public Transportation at the DOT, considers it one of the more successful commuter rail systems in the nation in terms of ridership. Acceleration of improvements in basic service through new rail cars, station expansion, and rail coach refurbishing to address commuter concerns are current priorities for state action with funding authorization of $60 million to purchase rail cars and locomotives. Further funding for equipment, materials, or services for refurbishing and upgrading purposes is being made available through the State Transportation Strategy Board (TSB).
DOT commuter hearings have elicited a number of common concerns, including older rail cars, internal facilities and maintenance problems within the cars, inadequate number of cars during peak periods, and additional difficulties that require major attention. Addressing such concerns is a very important priority for state action.

Amtrak, in addition to its role as a primary provider of intracity service on its Northeast Corridor route from Boston to Washington, D.C., is playing a central role in rail maintenance and upgrading within Connecticut itself. It owns and is responsible for maintaining tracks, signals, and other such equipment, and upgrading the Corridor route from the Connecticut-Rhode Island border to the New Haven rail yard. It has been a funding partner in many state rail projects, including rehabilitation and reconstruction of the New Haven rail yard and reconstruction of the Stamford Intermodal Transportation Center.

Amtrak further funds a new interlocking system in Fairfield that will permit its trains to pass the more slowly-moving Metro-North trains. As contract operator for the Shore Line East commuter railroad, it supplies crews and currently maintains equipment, owns and maintains the track over which SLE operates, and owns the land upon which SLE stations are built. It further owns the corridor from New Haven to Springfield, Massachusetts, operating and maintaining trains on this route which is used by many of Connecticut’s short haul freight railroads.

The DOT currently is updating the State’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRP) which will cover the period 2004 to 2025. The Department conducted seven sessions to gather citizen input, and a final plan is expected to be in place by the Fall. The LRP will provide a framework for prioritizing projects and programs of state transportation, which will be updated every three to five years.

The state TSB was established in 2001 to provide future innovative approaches to address transportation issues. Several deal with proposals regarding transportation systems management, commuter and inter-city rail and infrastructure investment, expanded bus services, freight movement, and suggested funding options.
A special session of the Connecticut General Assembly convened on June 30, 2003 resulted in passage of Public Act 03-1, which approved an initial state transportation strategy submitted by the TSB. The Act requires completion of various projects and programs and authorizes more than $264 million bonding to fund them during a ten-year period. Increases in driver’s license, vehicle registration, and certain other fees are to serve as dedicated revenue to help defray the bonding costs involved.

Projects of more than $1 million normally will be accompanied by an economic development plan requiring analysis of the short and long-term effects of the TSB strategy initiatives on transportation, economic development, and environmental concerns. Priorities stressed include developing public transportation to improve or expand public highway traffic and encouraging employer and employee initiatives to assist in reducing vehicular traffic congestion.

The legislation requires the submission of a variety of annual and special reports from agencies involved to the appropriate General Assembly committees and other appropriate government officials in order to update progress on TSB projects. In addition, linkage of all transportation efforts with the state plan of Conservation and Development to take into account economic and community development needs, patterns of commerce, affordable housing objectives, and land use objectives is a continuing requirement.

TSB objectives involve strengthening and expanding state transportation during the next twenty years to enhance Connecticut’s prospects for sustainable economic growth and a premier quality of life in a manner consistent with environmental standards. The Board’s work will involve integration of land use with economic and environmental planning, as well as more effective coordination of air, rail, road, and water transportation systems. To reduce single occupancy auto trips, the Board will also explore movement by air, bicycle, bus, rail and ridesharing. Telecommuting and flex-time options will also be explored, as well as targeted road expansion.

With respect to air travel, Bradley International airport in Windsor Locks serves the Hartford-Springfield region and is listed as one of New England’s eleven regional airports. It is a
participant in a Federal Aviation Administration regional study to plan for future air traffic in New England and a recent FAA Terminal Forecast predicts that by 2020, the region could have 28 million more airline passengers per year—a 70% increase above present totals. The study is scheduled to conclude its first phase by the end of 2004 and is expected to identify initiatives to accommodate future demand.9

A detailed state General Assembly Program Review Committee report on the status of Bradley airport in 2000 focused on expanding its overall value as a regional transportation asset and recommended expanded marketing and increased focus on strategic business planning to help fully develop its future potential.10 With a recent new parking garage and upgraded terminal facilities, its value as an intermediate and long distance transportation hub for state residents already contributes significantly to Connecticut economic development and it should grow further in the years ahead.

In addition to the focus on rail and air alternatives, developing intermodal transportation centers with rail, bus, water and air connections and auto parking are reflected in TSB funding priorities. Some of these include construction or expansion of rail stations in Stamford, Bridgeport, and New Haven which can accommodate one or more other modes of transportation and provide substantial auto parking spaces; establishing bus or rail commuter service in the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield corridor, including connections to Bradley International airport; and expanding bus service frequency and connections in the Norwich and New London areas in eastern Connecticut.11


Besides the diverse ways to expand or sustain alternative approaches to auto occupancy noted above, DOT construction progress on highways and bridges has been continuous. Recent projects include enhancements along I-95 in Stamford and Bridgeport to increase ramp accessibility, bridge replacement over
the Merritt-Wilbur Cross Parkway at the Housatonic River junction between Stratford and Milford, and a major bridge replacement project in New Haven. Additional lane facilities to help with heavy I-95 corridor travel in eastern Connecticut, major I-95 repair in Bridgeport, and several other specific construction efforts to upgrade travel on state highways are also underway.

Telecommuting is growing as a means of trying to reduce commuting numbers. The DOT Five Year Plan four-year report quoted data issued by the Analysis of the Market Facts Consumer Panel that there were an estimated 37,000 telecommuters in Connecticut's southwest corridor. Future growth will continue to depend upon expansion of appropriate technology and various measures to increase employer interest. Responsible employees whose work can be done at least partly from home can be a central force to reduce commuter congestion and future state policy should definitely be directed toward telecommuting program growth.

TSB projects to develop alternative transportation options will remain open to regular annual agency and legislative evaluation. Since the TSB mission is to explore innovative ways to strengthen long-term state transportation effectiveness in order to help enhance sustainable economic growth and quality of life consistent with environmental standards, it will therefore be necessary to continually review progress and provide necessary recommendations essential to long-term success.

The state Conservation and Development Plan prioritizes concentrating future commercial and population growth in the major state urban core centers and such an approach may, in turn, result in more commuter accessibility due to greater diversity of public transportation in more heavily urbanized areas. Substantial government actions to expand open space land acquisition throughout the state also may have additional long-range implications for travel limitation in certain areas.

Both federal and state efforts to deal with traffic problems involve a few common questions for decision-makers. In Connecticut, some might be: What share of the state budget should go to transportation in relation to other budget priorities? Should funds be directed largely to growing suburbs or areas of greatest traffic
flow? How should available funds be divided within given modes of transportation such as highways, rail, buses, high-speed ferries, barges, and so on. These and other budget issues will continue to confront policy-makers when decision making takes place.

The federal government will continue to play a key role in trying to help states stabilize their serious congestion problems. Major issues ranging from terrorism concerns to highway, rail, water, and air transportation systems require the U.S. government to play a significant role in helping to resolve transportation problems in Connecticut and elsewhere. The state has been assisted by continued funding for transportation programs and operations but must continue congressional pressure to progress in dealing with current and future demands on its transportation infrastructure. It is always well to remember that congressional legislators face budgetary questions on a larger scale similar to those faced by state legislators. Given the competitive state demands for transportation dollars, the lobbying process in Washington promises to be an exceptionally challenging one.

There is no single magic bullet to reduce commuter congestion in Connecticut. Intensive and diverse projects to ameliorate the situation during future years should focus on highway improvements, alternative methods of transportation, telecommuting, staggered work schedules, linkage to coordinate transportation with economic development, land use, and environmental programs, and constant evaluation by government agencies to assure mission progress. A consistent and expanded planning process to respond to mushrooming vehicular traffic is clearly developing with a number of innovative and promising strategies being employed by both DOT and TSB.

Congestion problems related to “pass through” traffic, commuting from the suburbs, expanded numbers of large commercial carriers, and sprawl can have serious consequences for future state transportation. The average motorist can help by using alternative transportation where conditions permit, sharing rides, or encouraging employers to expand telecommuting to growing numbers of workers. Progressive congestion certainly need not become the norm for future state travel, providing that cooperative planning by all parties becomes the order of the day.
I am pleased to acknowledge the assistance provided by the following in the preparation of my essay: The Honorable Kevin Sullivan, former Senate president pro tem and current lieutenant governor of Connecticut; Katie Zito, state senate legislative assistant; former State Senator William Aniskovich; State Representative John Harkins; Harry P. Harris, former bureau chief for Public Transportation; Arthur J. Roque, former State of Connecticut Commissioner of Environmental Protection; and Dr. Bruce Fraser, executive director, Connecticut Humanities Council.

5. Information on Amtrak’s role in Connecticut Transportation System was provided via e-mail by Harry P. Harris, August 10, 2004.
6. Harry P. Harris, e-mail.

CHAPTER THREE

The Challenge of Environmental Protection

JENNIFER H. MATTEI

Across the United States, environmental degradation and some of the other challenges addressed in this book (e.g., transportation, education, economics, and health) stem in large measure from rapid human population growth. In past years, Connecticut has been no exception to this trend, with a population growth rate that averaged 3.6% during the period 1990 to 2000. However, Connecticut is in the midst of a demographic transition to a period of low population growth, with its population expected to experience minimal change through 2011. These demographic changes will help check the pressures exerted on the state's natural resources by population growth. They will also afford Connecticut's political leadership a unique opportunity to take steps to protect the state's environmental resources and enhance its environmental protection policies. A decade of relatively slow population growth—which is not to say slow economic growth—may allow Connecticut's politicians time to act on environmental challenges before irreparable damage occurs to the remaining common pool of natural resources.

Water, air, soil, energy sources, food, fisheries, forests, and biodiversity are common pool resources upon which we depend in ways that transcend political boundaries. Such resources, however, are difficult to manage at local, state, and regional levels. Of most concern today, worldwide and in Connecticut, is not only that our natural resources are being consumed at increasing rates, but they are
also being filled with our waste, rendering them inconsumable. Garrett Hardin, in his well-known essay entitled "The Tragedy of the Commons," predicted that as the human population grows a cascade of environmental problems will occur, accompanied by a precipitous decline of human health.\(^4\) Political activist and theorist Noam Chomsky rates environmental degradation as a top threat to human survival, second only to the pursuit of global domination by the United States and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.\(^5\) A common thread in all these prognostications, whether they are viewed as overblown or prescient, is that environmental degradation occurring within any one political jurisdiction can wield its destructive consequences on the citizens of neighboring jurisdictions.

What, then, can Connecticut's political leadership do to protect the state's common pool resources in the face of such interconnectedness? It should make use of the coming decade of opportunity to:

- Participate in coordinated regional planning and resource management efforts, and support the implementation of resulting plans and recommendations, such as the Long Island Sound Study.

- Pursue policies designed to preserve open space and forest (particularly large contiguous tracts) and to channel development in ways that will minimize fragmentation of riparian habitats.

- Provide adequate funding for the enforcement of existing laws regarding the proliferation in Connecticut of non-native invasive species and promote public awareness of the risks posed by such plants and animals.

- Promote partnerships between state government and the many nonprofit conservation organizations, universities, and local conservation groups that can assist in the task of advancing public education and awareness about environmental issues and, in the process, building political support for the pursuit of progressive environmental policies.
• Strengthen Connecticut’s emissions standards to exceed federally mandated levels where appropriate, as California has done for some time.

The Responsibility for Protecting the Commons

The two greatest environmental challenges facing Connecticut’s political leadership are how to manage and protect the state’s natural resources and how to manage and limit pollution. Confronting these challenges effectively will require an atmosphere of cooperation between groups of people advocating competing uses for resources that have open access (i.e., the problem of the commons) or uses of private property entailing the degradation of common pool resources (i.e., the problem of negative externalities). In thinking about these issues, it is useful to conceive of natural resources as falling into four general categories that define property rights, responsibilities, rules of use, and control:

• **Open Access Property:** This is the classic “commons.” Its key attribute is the absence of well-defined property rights. Common resources are freely available to everyone (e.g., parts of Long Island Sound, the atmosphere) and are often effectively unregulated.

• **State Property:** Common pool resources are sometimes owned by government, which may then exert its dominion and control as steward for the population as a whole. Government can regulate access and exploitation. It can use its police powers to enforce laws and can even subsidize use by some (e.g., Mohawk Mountain State Park and Forest in Goshen, Connecticut).

• **Communal Property:** These are resources held by a community of users able to exclude outsiders. A community that includes all users of the resource is able to self-regulate (e.g., exclusive communities, like Fox Hopyard in East Haddam, that only allow homeowners
in the community to utilize the golf course and open space within its specified boundaries). However, the uses of communal property may be constrained by social mores or external regulation (reflecting, for example, policies of nondiscrimination).

- **Private Property**: The opposite of open access property is, of course, private property. Private owners have the right to use their property in any way they deem appropriate, save those uses prohibited by law. Owners have the right to exclude others from the use of their private property, the right to call upon the state to enforce that right of exclusion, and perhaps the right to prevent activities by others that interfere with his/her rights. Private property may be freely sold or rented to others (e.g., most homes and businesses).

Two of these forms of ownership—communal property and private property—are not particularly well-suited to the preservation and management of common pool resources affecting the population at large. Indeed, it is not normally viewed as the responsibility of such property owners to subordinate their interests to those of the larger community. Such responsibility falls to the state.

**The Connecticut Forest as a Common Pool Resource**

The largest terrestrial common pool: natural resource still existing in Connecticut, and surely one of the state’s defining characteristics, is its forested ecosystem. However, Connecticut’s forests are overwhelmingly in private hands. Of the 3,205,760 acres that make up the state, approximately 56% (or 1.8 million acres) is forested. However, only 7% of the total land area of the state (or approximately 224,000 acres) is state property preserved as open space, of which approximately three quarters (or 163,000 acres) is wooded and fragmented into thirty-two state forests. Federally owned lands are minimal in Connecticut (at approximately 3,100 acres). Municipalities, private nonprofit land
organizations, and water companies own another 7% of the state’s land area (or approximately 230,000 acres) that is presently maintained as forested-open space. Therefore, approximately 1.4 million acres of Connecticut’s forested lands (representing approximately 78% of the forested land in the state) is private property susceptible to development.

The key environmental challenge relevant to this ecosystem is preventing the loss of contiguous forest, a phenomenon known as habitat fragmentation. Large contiguous tracks of forest can support balanced ecosystems, enhance species diversity, and protect watersheds. They are more resistant to disease and pollutants than fragmented forests. On the other hand, an equal acreage of forest fragmented into small patches is ecologically unstable, vulnerable to erosion and wind damage, and impaired in its capacity to withstand the effects of air and water pollution. Maps developed by the Center for Land Use Education and Research at the University of Connecticut, utilizing NASA satellite data, have shown that between 1985 and 2002 Connecticut lost an average of 12 acres of forest per day to new buildings, parking lots, and roads, totaling 170 square miles (108,800 acres) of forest. Large tracks of contiguous forest are becoming rare, particularly in Fairfield and New Haven counties, in the expanding suburbs of Hartford, in the areas along I-395 in southeastern Connecticut, and in expanding towns along lower Middlesex County, like Clinton and Westbrook.

An important reason forests are often the first lands to be leveled for development and often succumb to suburban sprawl is that their value as common pool resources tends to be significantly underestimated by town planning boards and by local and state politicians. Although the benefits and importance of wetlands are now well recognized, there is no comparable public awareness of the significance of forests. As a result, there are no environmental laws protecting forests in their own right. Rather, what protection they receive is largely derivative of that afforded to wetlands (in the case of forests that happen to be near a wetland) or to particular endangered species (in the case of forests that harbor such species).

However, scientists now understand that forested ecosystems can regulate local climate by trapping carbon dioxide, expelling
oxygen, and providing cooling shade. Forests are extremely important in hydrological cycles. The severity of floods can be reduced with the preservation of large tracts of forest because rainwater percolates through forest soils rather than sheering off as it does on streets and lawns. Forests slow and reduce water runoff, particularly in heavy downpours, prevent soil erosion, and slow the flow of streams to allow silt and sediment to settle out of the water. Forests capture and store various air, soil, and water pollutants, and thus provide clean water to recharge our wells and serve as natural filters for the water that runs into our reservoirs, estuaries, and inevitably the Long Island Sound. The cost of constructing water filtration plants will run into the billions of dollars, while a forested ecosystem can help keep our water clean for merely the cost of preserving it.

In addition to clean water, forests provide habitat for beneficial animals (e.g., pollinators, natural predators and parasites of insect pests). For example, bats require tree cavities in large intact forests for roosting during the day and at night; they feed on millions of insects, some of which are agricultural pests and others (i.e., mosquitoes) that may carry West Nile virus. Predators like hawks, foxes, bobcats, and owls all depend on forests to survive and they are highly beneficial to humans by reducing rodent populations. Various rodent species are carriers of pathogens that cause human illness (e.g., bacteria that causes Lyme Disease, Hantavirus, plague, and so on). Forests provide habitat for many organisms from birds and mammals to fungi and bacteria. Therefore, intact forests shelter our local biodiversity and directly benefit human health. When habitats become fragmented, local biodiversity decreases. Many plant and animal species experience population decline (e.g., bobcat, fox, owls, black bear, ground-nesting birds, and understory plants such as trilliums, orchids, and other ephemeral wildflowers). At the same time, other less desirable species (e.g., rodents, white-tailed deer, and crows) may experience dramatic population increases as predator species decline. As rodents, deer, and crows increase in number, so do their parasites and the pathogens they carry. Thus, habitat fragmentation in Connecticut can be directly linked to increases in the occurrence of Lyme disease and now possibly the spread of West Nile virus.
Beyond the undervalued ecosystem services provided by forests—clean air, soil, and water—a functional forested ecosystem has immediate economic value by providing renewable forest products (e.g., lumber, pulp and herbal medicines) and can generate millions of dollars annually for Connecticut residents from ecotourism. Large intact forests are also resistant to invasion of non-native species. Invasive plant species such as kudzu and Oriental bittersweet can smother native plant species and cause biodiversity to decline.

Connecticut’s current policy-makers need to find ways to encourage the owners of forested lands held as private property to preserve or manage them with a view to their common pool attributes. Encouraging the establishment of land trusts by offering greater tax incentives may induce more landholders to participate in such initiatives. It is vastly more cost effective to preserve the forests we have left than to try to restore them after they’re gone.

Traditionally, development has tended to occur most rapidly along major rivers and water courses. Riparian habitats (forested river banks) are thus in need of immediate attention both in terms of restoration and preservation. When Governor Rowland was in office, he proposed to double, over the next ten years, the state’s holdings of land preserved as open space. The current governor of Connecticut should give particular priority to riparian habitats in the expenditure of the funds that have already been set aside for the purchase of open space. Some federal and New York state politicians have learned this lesson and begun buying and preserving forested land around the reservoirs and watersheds that quench the thirst of over nine million inhabitants of New York City.

Pollution: The Fouling of the Commons

Clearly, reducing and managing pollution is a major environmental challenge for those governing Connecticut. The sheer volume of pollutants fouling the commons upon which we depend for food, water, and air must be reduced. Increases in human population, consumption rates, and dependency on the
automobile all add to the problem. This aspect of environmental policy can be analyzed from various perspectives, focusing on the type of common pool resource affected or, alternatively, on the source of the pollutant.

**Classification by Affected Common Pool Resource**

Pollutants are often classified and analyzed according to the common pool resources that they affect (i.e., air, soil, and water pollution). However, often these three can be interconnected. Air pollutants do not necessarily stay in the air and various pollutants can interact, causing even more damage to common pool resources. For example, sulfur dioxide, an air pollutant that can damage lung tissue if inhaled; often mixes with precipitation, causing acid rain. Acid rain or snow damages the soils it percolates through causing nutrient leaching, aluminum mobilization, and plant death. Eventually, the acid rain and leached nutrients run into streams, rivers, and lakes, causing algal blooms and fish die-offs. Acidic waters can interact with mercury, transforming it to the highly toxic methylmercury (CH$_3$Hg).

Mercury is itself a significant air pollutant that enters lakes, streams, rivers, and Long Island Sound in precipitation. The majority of mercury pollution in Connecticut is released into the air by electrical plants that burn coal and waste incinerators that burn mercury-tainted garbage. Fish ingest this pollutant, which is then deposited in their fatty tissues. When people eat fish tainted with mercury they suffer neurological disorders and other health problems.

The interactions of pollutants with each other and with the abiotic and biotic components of the environment are complex. If a policy-maker wanted to improve the water quality of a particular lake or river, for example, he/she would need to start with an evaluation of the air and surrounding lands. Additional support and funding at both the state and federal level is needed for the monitoring and study of the pathways traveled by pollutants and the identification of the places where toxins accumulate, both geographically and within the food chain. This support should not only go to the Connecticut Department of
Environmental Protection (CTDEP) and state universities, but also to private sector institutions pursuing research interests aligned with those of the state. Improved communication and coordination among these various groups is needed. Researchers should enhance their methods of communicating research results to government officials and the general public so that sound environmental legislation can be developed and implemented.

Point Source Pollution

Pollutants may also be classified by how they are generated. Pollutants that are generated by one particular source, like a factory, power plant, or landfill, are considered to be point source pollutants. In contrast, non-point source pollutants are usually produced in small quantities by many individuals causing a cumulative negative impact on common pool resources.22

Point source pollutants may cause major damage locally if left untreated. Danbury has been left with a major point source pollutant, mercury, from the hat factories that once operated in that town. The use of mercury in hat making was banned in the 1940s but even today, sixty years later, the waters in parts of the Housatonic and Still rivers are unsafe for swimming and fishing.23

Policy-makers in Connecticut should support environmental protection legislation that is tough on industrial polluters to prevent future incidents of severe and long-lasting environmental degradation. Support for increased monitoring and the development of emergency action plans can minimize environmental damage in the event of purposeful or accidental pollution incidents. For example, when a fire broke out at the Latex Foam Products, Inc. facility in Ansonia on May 14, 2001, the CTDEP tracked the fire’s impact on fish populations in the Naugatuck River, water quality of the river, and the cleanup of debris.24 The latex products that spilled into the river killed a number of fish and other organisms at the site of the spill. However, after the cleanup, the river ecosystem recovered.

Environmental policy must also address point source pollution events that may have occurred in the past where the point source polluter may not have been identifiable, or may have been
difficult to prosecute. Scientists have just begun to discover past pollution events hidden in sediments and soils of Connecticut. Risk assessments will have to be conducted by the CTDEP, and decisions made concerning whether, when, and how these newly discovered pollutants should be cleaned up. In the past, various industrial activities have led to severe pollution events that have made it onto the National Priorities List as Superfund sites. Connecticut has fifteen toxic, federally recognized sites that are in various stages of cleanup. Most of these Superfund sites have been listed since the early 1980s. These sites are unlikely to be removed from the list any time soon due to the drastic cuts in funding by the Bush administration to the Department of Environmental Protection. President Bush and Congress refused to reinstate taxes on chemical and petroleum companies which generated revenues that kept Superfund operating. As a result, the cleanup of Connecticut’s Superfund sites will almost certainly be the burden of the state taxpayers.

Non-point Source Pollution

Single pollutants may come from multiple sources and permeate a number of common pool resources. Toxic substances like PCBs (Polychlorinated Biphenyls) and mercury can accumulate in smaller organisms, become concentrated as they are passed along a food chain, and have toxic effects in top predators such as raptors, carnivores, and humans. In other cases, pollutants may be nontoxic in small quantities but deadly in larger quantities.

For example, nitrogen is a seemingly simple element that is atmospherically benign because it is a triple-bonded gas molecule ($N_2$) and does not easily react with other compounds. However, some bacteria and soil fungi have the ability to alter atmospheric nitrogen to form ammonia ($NH_3$), ammonium ($NH_4^+$), and nitrate ($NO_3^-$). Because nitrates are macronutrients necessary for plant growth, they are not harmful when produced in moderate amounts. However, ammonia and nitrates generated by human activity in large quantities can pollute soil and water. Tons of human nitrogenous waste products are discharged from Connecticut’s sewage treatment plants, particularly during storm events. Other
sources of nitrogenous waste or excess nitrogen include effluent from industrial facilities, fertilizers from orchards, farms, lawns, and gardens, as well as waste produced by domesticated animals (from cows to cats and dogs). All this eventually end up in Long Island Sound.

One of the effects of nitrogenous waste is known as hypoxia, i.e., water with very little dissolved oxygen. Nitrogenous waste has a fertilizing effect on Long Island Sound waters, causing algal blooms. As the algae die and sink to the bottom, bacteria decompose the organic matter and deplete the oxygen within the bottom two-thirds of the water column. Surface waters contain dissolved oxygen because of the close contact with the atmosphere. Hypoxia usually occurs in the western half of Long Island Sound during the months of August, September, and October. Most of the organisms inhabiting these waters (fish, crabs, shellfish, and other invertebrates) either die or leave the affected area during outbreaks of hypoxia.

Untreated waste waters are also hazardous because they carry pathogens into Long Island Sound. Humans can become ill from exposure to these pathogens. Gastroenteritis, salmonellosis, and hepatitis A are all caused by waste-related pathogens. Illness can result from ingestion of contaminated water by bathers, or as a result of eating raw shellfish harvested from contaminated waters. Virtually any pollutant that is flushed into one of the many rivers in Connecticut will eventually end up in Long Island Sound. The citizens of Connecticut need to take extra precautions about the fertilizers and pesticides they use around their homes because of the compounding nature of non-point source pollutants and their devastating effects on the Long Island Sound ecosystem.

The Sound is Connecticut’s largest and, together with its forest ecosystem, most precious common pool resource, second only to the air that we breathe. It has been designated by the federal government as an “Estuary of National Significance.” By its very nature, it is unfortunately the ultimate repository for much of the point and non-point source pollution generated in Connecticut and neighboring states. In view of the fact that the fishing, boating, and tourism industries depend on a healthy Long Island Sound ecosystem, the management of this open access
resource is of paramount importance to Connecticut. This task is complicated by the fact that it is shared by two neighboring states (New York and Rhode Island). However, the work conducted by members of the Long Island Sound Study (LISS)—perhaps the most ambitious and successful effort to date seeking to promote sound and collaborative management of this resource—serves as a model for the formulation and implementation of sound policy. The LISS is a cooperative effort involving researchers, regulators, user groups, and other concerned organizations and individuals. It is funded and administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with the purpose of protecting and improving the health of the Sound by implementing the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan completed in 1994.\(^\text{30}\)

*Pollution by Biological Agents—Invasive Non-Native Species*

Pollution can generally be defined as any matter or energy whose nature, location, or quantity produces undesirable environmental effects. In fact, the federal Clean Water Act states as one of its provisions that, "No discharges of chemicals, biological agents, or waste materials are allowed into surface waters, groundwater, or soils."\(^\text{31}\) Many people are unaware of the fact that biological agents can act as pollutants. The economic loss by the invasion, destruction, and loss of biodiversity to our natural resources by non-native species is estimated to cost $78.5 billion annually in the U.S. For example, the zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) was first found in North America in 1988. By 1990 it had spread to all of the Great Lakes.\(^\text{32}\) By 2002 the zebra mussel had invaded several of Connecticut's rivers. A single female mussel can lay 40,000 eggs in one breeding cycle. They can reach densities of 700,000 per square meter. They remove food for fish and other native species and cause thousands of dollars in damage by completely clogging a town's or company's water intake pipes.\(^\text{33}\)

The CTDEP estimates that nearly one hundred different invasive plant and animal species have become established along the Connecticut shoreline. The federal government has established an Aquatic Nuisance Task Force to help states begin to develop
management plans to comply with the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act. The Connecticut General Assembly has recently passed new legislation to fine people $100.00 per plant if they sell or purchase invasive plant species (Public Act No. 04-203, effective date February 1, 2005). For example, one species that may no longer legally be purchased in Connecticut is Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). Prior to its recent prohibition, this species was popular with home owners because of its tall stature and showy purple flowers. However, Purple Loosestrife has dominated and clogged many of Connecticut's freshwater wetlands. It overgrows our native cattails, sedges, and rushes, and degrades wildlife habitat. A single plant can produce close to a million tiny seeds that are dispersed by the wind and carried on the feet of waterfowl. It has come to dominate the wetlands in New England and has spread across the United States.

Purple Loosestrife is but one of many examples of the harm caused by invasive non-native plant species. Many of these invasive plants have escaped from landscaped properties that surround our homes and businesses. Successful invaders of common pool resources inflict enormous ecological and economic damage. It is clear that purchasing and preserving open space from development is only the first step to improve environmental quality in Connecticut. It is equally important to provide funding for the management of our parks and open space, including invasive species eradication and forest restoration.

Global Climate Change

Even climate needs to be thought of as a commons that human activity is changing, the effects of which are just beginning to be revealed. It is now well documented that polluting the atmosphere has local, regional, and global consequences. Climate change in Connecticut can no longer be ignored even though it will take regional and global cooperation to correct the problem. For example, the American lobster an inhabitant of cold coastal water, is found from Maine to Long Island Sound. As the average water temperature of Long Island Sound increases due to global warming, healthy lobsters are becoming scarce. Thus, in a few
years, we could witness the end of the lobster industry in Connecticut if policies are not put in place to reduce emissions generated by the United States and other industrial nations.\textsuperscript{36} This is just one example of how the polluting of a global commons, the atmosphere, can have a local impact. The price of global economic growth is just now being realized. The continued increase in the human population and consumption of natural resources has led residents of this state to the point where they must pay now to reduce pollution or pay later in the form of property damage due to rising sea levels, increases in storm events, lost coastline, and the loss of economically important species.\textsuperscript{37} The reduction of air pollution from industry and automobiles in Connecticut has both a positive local and global influence on the environment. New England states should act in concert to toughen air pollution regulations of industries in the area as well as promote better monitoring and restrictions of exhaust from automobiles.

Conclusions

Trying to decide which environmental challenge is most pressing, and deserves the most funding and attention is difficult. Multi-faceted problems often require unique solutions and cooperation between groups of people that normally have limited interactions. A number of the environmental laws from the 1970s are outdated and unable to prevent the air and water pollution of an ever-growing economy and human population. The National Research Council of the National Academies has labeled the Clean Air Act inadequate.\textsuperscript{38} The Bush Administration instituted new rules that allow coal-fired plants to expand without putting modern pollution control equipment in place, which would significantly increase mercury and other air pollutants.\textsuperscript{39} It is clear why asthma rates in children are increasing in Connecticut.

Air

The members of the Connecticut Senate and House of Representatives must push for higher environmental standards than what is required by the federal government. The General
Assembly is moving in the right direction by recently passing an act that requires passenger cars, sport utility vehicles, and light trucks to comply with California’s Low Emission Vehicle II standards (PA 04-84, sSB 119) for cars manufactured for the model year 2008. The Connecticut General Assembly should consider pushing for regional compliance of these standards as part of a regional plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The challenge will be getting the statewide emissions testing program functional and efficient for motorists and then enforcing compliance. The CTDEP commissioner is required to collect annual information both locally and regionally on direct smokestack greenhouse gas emissions (sSB 595 effective Oct. 1, 2004). Hopefully, after one year of information gathering, the General Assembly will pass an act to reduce these emissions.

Land

It should be a priority for the new governor of Connecticut to continue to purchase land to preserve open space and forests particularly in riparian habitats. Continued support of the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program administered by the CTDEP is important. For the past several years it has had no funding. Remarkably, this past spring, 2004, the State Bond Commission authorized $4.5 million for this program. This grant program provides financial assistance to municipalities and nonprofit land conservation organizations to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II water supply property (e.g., forested riparian and watershed habitats). The support for state bonding for acquisition and the creation of incentives to encourage donation of lands is of the highest priority to slow the ongoing forest fragmentation. Upland forests have very few regulations protecting them. A statewide development and management plan is needed to prevent the continued fragmentation of Connecticut’s forests and preservation of the existing large tracts of forest.

The restoration of urban contaminated and abandoned commercial and industrial sites, known as brownfields, needs further action. State policy makers need to support the Urban Site Remedial Action Program administered by the CTDEP and the
Department for Economic and Community Development. This program was created to address a key constraint to the conveyance and reuse of contaminated industrial properties: the fear purchasers and investors have of assuming environmental liability for pollution created by others. The utilization of brownfields could save green fields and forests for open space preservation.

The most important aspect of the Non-Native Invasive Plant Species Policy and regulations banning the sale of particular plants involves the identification of invasive species and the education of the public about problem species. Those two tasks alone would require much more funding and staffing than currently exists at CTDEP. To prevent any new releases of invasive plants the fines should be increased after a period of close policing of plant nurseries and educating landscape architects, nursemen, and consumers about the problem. The funds collected from the fines should be funneled back into the consumer education program.

Water

The monitoring and education of the public about point and non-point pollution of surface water is another Herculean task that needs much more support than it currently receives. Support and participation in the Long Island Sound Study is important as well as implementation of the Sound’s Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.

Education

Ultimately, policy-makers in Connecticut cannot conserve and protect the common pool resources on their own. By forging new partnerships with nonprofit conservation organizations, universities, and town conservation groups, state agencies like the CTDEP could accomplish more with fewer resources. One example of how this can be done is the “Trees and People Project” spearheaded by the Metro Forest Council and the NYU Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education. This program involves University professors training K-12 educators on basic forest ecology in parks close to public schools.
The objective is to make teachers comfortable conducting science projects in urban forests and to instill in students an appreciation of the forest ecosystem's value and function. Other environmental science research and education programs just beginning in Connecticut are Project Forest Watch, run by the University of New Hampshire, and Project Limulus, operated by Sacred Heart University, involving a consortium of federal, state, and nonprofit groups concentrating efforts on the conservation of the Long Island Sound ecosystem by utilizing horseshoe crab ecology as a case study. If children learn the importance of the environment from the beginning they will grow up to be more responsible adults.

If every Connecticut politician acted locally, pressuring the members of their district to abide by environmental regulations and push for local environmental conservation measures, then thinking about and developing state, regional, and global plans for environmental protection will not seem so insurmountable. Those governing Connecticut should lead by example and help turn the state into the model for the country of how to manage common pool natural resources by halting forest fragmentation, reducing pollution, and promoting environmental science education.

Notes

www.clear.uconn.edu for more information on the satellite maps and Connecticut forests.


15. Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis, 1 September 2004, ccea.uconn.edu/studies/tourism%201999/.


32. Its notorious ability to crowd out other life forms is illustrated by a submerged Volkswagen Beetle that was pulled from the bottom of one of the Great Lakes and was found to be completely covered by zebra mussels.


CHAPTER FOUR

The Challenge of Ethnic Diversity

GARY L. ROSE

As the census data in the introduction revealed, the state of Connecticut will experience a sizeable increase in the percentage of Blacks and Hispanics by the year 2025. Although the socio-economic status of Blacks and Hispanics has improved over the years, the economic and buying power of such groups will still lag behind that of whites in the foreseeable future. In 2001, the median household incomes of whites was $44,517 while the median household incomes for Blacks and Hispanics was recorded at $29,470 and $33,565 respectively. Within the Northeast region, the median family income for whites was $48,118, $29,268 for Blacks, and $30,731 for Hispanics. Moreover, the rapidly rising cost of homes in Connecticut’s suburbs will inherently prohibit the movement of many Blacks and Hispanic families from the cities to the white suburbs. Thus, the projected growth of the two population groups suggest that Connecticut’s cities will be even more densely populated by nonwhites by 2025.

Political Party Implications

The projected increase of Blacks and Hispanics in Connecticut will most certainly have political and public policy ramifications in the years ahead. Since the days of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, Blacks have had a very close relationship with the Democratic Party. The Party’s commitment
to government-sponsored social assistance programs, civil rights legislation, the rights of labor unions, and more generally the economic needs of the working class and poor have contributed to a close interlocking relationship between Democratic candidates at all levels of the polity and Black voters. The symbiotic political relationship between Blacks and the Democratic Party has continued unabated for more than fifty years. On the national scene, in what some refer to as “post-9/11 America,” 64% of Blacks eighteen years of age and older identify themselves as members of the Democratic Party, while only 7% identify themselves as Republicans. Moreover, Blacks identity with the Democratic Party remains firm despite variation in income. Sixty-three percent of Blacks who make less than $20,000, 66% who make between $50-75,000, and 61% with incomes of $100,000 or more identify themselves as Democrats. In the three income brackets, only 8%, 6%, and 10% respectively are aligned with the Republican Party. In the presidential election of 2000, 90% of Black voters voted for Al Gore, while only 8% voted for George W. Bush. Within the ranks of the Democratic Party, Blacks currently account for approximately one-fifth of the Party’s registered membership.

Common sense suggests that a sizeable increase of the Black population in Connecticut during the next twenty years will affect in various ways the internal dynamics of the state’s Democratic Party. The Black presence within the Democratic Party will be more pronounced in years ahead and the policy concerns of this important Democratic voting bloc will be quite discernible. Democratic State Senator Ernest E. Newton II, an African-American who represents the twenty-third senatorial district in the city of Bridgeport, agrees with this assessment, and suggests that Blacks will be an even more decisive voting bloc within the Democratic Party in years to come: “African-Americans can hold the Democratic Party accountable, and the Party is beginning to recognize this. If African-Americans turn their back on the Democrats, then the Party is finished. As the numbers increase, the Democrats will automatically get the message.” At the same time, Senator Newton, who also serves as the deputy president pro tempore, suggests that in addition to managing racial diversity within the Democratic Party, an even greater challenge that awaits
Democrats is the political mobilization of young Black voters: “Many young African-Americans are detached from the political process and don’t see any reason to vote. The younger generation has never experienced what older African-Americans have, and they don’t realize that many died fighting for civil rights.”

Democratic State Senator Toni Nathaniel Harp, an African-American who represents the tenth senatorial district in New Haven and West Haven, similarly stresses the potential political power of the Black community and noted that efforts are underway by the Democratic Party to reach out to the Black as well as the Hispanic population. Senator Harp, who serves as the chairperson of the Senate Appropriations Committee, states that the “outreach effort would have happened even if there were no projected increase in populations.” In her view, it is essential for the Democratic Party to include both population groups within the Party’s leadership structure as well as the agenda-setting process.

The Hispanic population also comprises a very important voting bloc within the Democratic Party, but not to the same extent as Black voters. Nevertheless, many Hispanics affiliate with the Democratic party for essentially the same reason as Blacks. The public policies supported—by the Democratic Party are perceived by Hispanics as more consistent with their economic and social needs compared to the more conservative economic and social policies advocated by the Republicans. Currently, 36% of Hispanics age eighteen years of age and older identify themselves as members of the Democratic Party, while 22% affiliate with the Republican Party. Although post-9/11 polling has discovered discernible movement among Hispanics towards the Republican column, most notably in the states of the South and the West, the Hispanic population of the U.S. is still regarded as a Democratic constituency. This is especially true in the Northeast, where Hispanics remain very loyal to the Democratic Party. Prior to 9/11, 42% of northeastern Hispanics identified themselves as Democrats, while 16% expressed allegiance to the Republican Party. In the post-9/11 period, 41% of Hispanics in the Northeast regarded themselves as Democrats with only 14% affiliating with the Republicans, suggesting no movement whatsoever towards the GOP. In the 2000 presidential contest, 67% of Hispanic voters
supported the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, Al Gore, while 31% voted for Republican George W. Bush. The projected increase of the Hispanic population in Connecticut from 7.5% in 1995 to 15.3% in 2025 suggests in no uncertain terms that Hispanics can potentially become an extremely powerful voting bloc within the state's Democratic Party, and it is likely that the policy concerns that reflect Hispanic interests will become more prominent within the Party's legislative agenda at the state capitol.

State Representative Felipe Reinoso, a Hispanic lawmaker who represents the 130th Assembly District in Bridgeport, believes that the growth of the Hispanic population in Connecticut, as well as in other states, will pose "enormous challenges" in the years ahead. Reinoso, who was born in Peru, suggests that the growing Hispanic population creates a definite need to elect "more Hispanics and Latinos to the Connecticut state legislature, and more should be appointed to state Boards and Commissions as well."

According to Reinoso, there are many economic and social issues that directly affect the Hispanic population and require Hispanic political leadership. He identified education as the issue that is first and foremost in the minds of many Hispanics, followed by economic development, employment, and the complex problem involving undocumented immigrants. According to Reinoso, Salvadorean, Peruvian, and Brazilian are particularly affected by current immigration laws, and such laws need to be immediately addressed.

It is important to note that the Hispanic population in Connecticut is of the ethnic variety that normally affiliates with the Democratic rather than the Republican Party. The 2000 federal census discovered that Puerto Ricans comprised 5.7% of the state's population, 0.7% were of Mexican origin, and 0.2% were of Cuban extraction. The remaining 2.8% of the state's population were classified as members of "other" Hispanic groups. Carmen Rodriguez, the former Executive Director of La Casa de Puerto Rico, Inc., a non-profit organization located in Hartford, believes that the Puerto Rican community will remain affiliated with the Democratic Party, but cautions that Democrats should not take the Puerto Rican vote for granted. According to Rodriguez, the Puerto Rican community will increasingly vote on
the basis of issues that are perceived as directly affecting Puerto Rican interests. Such issues, in Rodriguez’ view, include “education, health care, and access to resources.” As she put it: “If the traditional system does not work for us, and does not educate us, then that is a problem that will affect the way we vote.”

Although voting behavior among ethnic groups can never be predicted with perfect accuracy, it seems reasonable to assume that Blacks and Hispanics in Connecticut will constitute a sizeable segment of voters, or at least potential voters, within the Democratic Party’s electoral coalition. Although the two voting blocs are not by any means monolithic in their political behavior and political values, they do have similar socio-economic and political concerns. Thus, one can confidently hypothesize that as the Black and Hispanic populations increase in Connecticut, so too will their impact within the ranks of the Democratic Party. One can also surmise that more Black and Hispanic candidates from urban legislative districts will appear on election ballots, and it is probable that more candidates of African-American and Hispanic descent will be elected to major leadership posts in cities such as Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury and Hartford. The election in 2001 and reelection in 2003 of Eddie Perez to the office of mayor in Hartford could mark the beginning of this trend.

Gary Reardon, the chairman of the Democratic Party in Waterbury, one of Connecticut’s largest and most multiracial cities, confirms this perspective. According to Reardon, although the Republican Party has been courting the Hispanic vote, the issues that the Democratic Party stands for, such as job creation, urban development, and quality public education, will continue to attract the support of Black and Hispanic voters. The Democratic Party’s inclusiveness can be observed in the increasing number of minority candidates who run for public office under the Democratic Party label. Reardon notes that candidacies for the Board of Alderman in Waterbury tend to reflect this development. At the state level, there also appears to be a concerted effort on the part of the Democratic State Central Committee to include Hispanics and Blacks in the decision-making structure. Democratic State Chairman George Jepsen describes the Party’s attempt to connect the two “base constituencies” to the internal affairs of Democratic Party organization:
When writing our Delegate Selection Plan for the 2004 Democratic National Convention, we doubled our Affirmative Action requirements to ensure that African-American and Latino leaders have a substantial role at the national convention. Also, over the last year, we created a Democratic Latino Leaders Outreach Committee, and through that have produced a Latino Democratic video, which we’re broadcasting on local cable access networks throughout the state.18

Jepsen also calls attention to a very innovative Democratic Party plan of action designed to accommodate the policy concerns of Black and Hispanic voters, most of whom reside in Connecticut’s cities. The Party’s urban outreach program now includes an Urban Issues Forum that serves as the foundation for the “Urban Contract for the Connecticut Democratic Party.”19 The Democratic Party’s “Urban Contract” is reminiscent of the Republican Party’s “Contract With America,” that contributed to the Republican Party gaining a majority of seats in the House of Representatives in the congressional election of 1994, an election often described by pundits as a “political earthquake.”

Looking toward the future, as the Black and Hispanic population in Connecticut increases in size, it is inevitable that the policy concerns of both ethnic groups will become more pronounced, not only within the ranks of the Democratic Party but also in the committee rooms and legislative chambers of the state capitol. Turning a deaf ear to the important economic, social, and educational needs of Connecticut’s two largest minority groups will not be an option for state legislators, irrespective of party affiliation.

Public Policy Implications

The increase of nonwhite population groups in Connecticut will undoubtedly elevate the salience of public policy issues at the state capitol that have relevance to the economic and social needs of racial minority groups. While some might be under the naïve impression that perceptions toward policy issues are unaffected by
ethnic identity and the socio-economic environment in which one lives, the empirical evidence suggests otherwise. With respect to several public policy areas, Blacks and Hispanics express policy views that are markedly different from those of whites. Indeed, with respect to some policy issues, the differences are in sharp contrast with one another. Although the survey data that follow are based on national samples, one can confidently extrapolate the findings to policy attitudes among whites and nonwhites in Connecticut. The unfortunate paucity of Connecticut-based survey data that crosstabulates political and policy attitudes on the basis of ethnicity necessitates extrapolation.

Public Education: White and Nonwhite Perspectives

We begin our exploration of policy perspectives among whites and nonwhites with a focused survey regarding attitudes toward public education. The first question was posed as follows: “In your opinion do Black children and other minorities in this community have the same educational opportunities as white children?” In response to this simple and straightforward question, 79% of all persons surveyed replied “Yes, the same.” Such a high percentage, however, masks the serious differences between white and nonwhite respondents. The data, when crosstabulated by race, revealed that 83% of whites but only 57% of nonwhites responded “Yes, the same.”20 A 26% gap between white and nonwhite attitudes towards educational opportunities suggests in no uncertain terms that the two groups of respondents view educational conditions in very different ways. At the same time, it should be noted that the gap is not as large as the 38 point gap between whites and nonwhites that was discovered in 1978 by the same research organization. The difference between white and nonwhite perceptions toward educational conditions appear to have narrowed: somewhat.21

Given the serious differences in perceptions towards education, one cannot help but wonder if Connecticut’s lawmakers truly understand the unique needs of Black and Hispanic school children in the public school systems of Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury, and New London. Despite the landmark
state Supreme Court rulings of *Horton v. Meskill*, 172 Conn. 615 (1977), and *Sheff v. O'Neill*, 238 Conn. 1 (1996), discussed in the Introduction to this volume, it is still relevant to ask if Connecticut lawmakers are in fact sensitive to the disparity between urban and suburban school districts.

Paul Stringer, principal of Weaver High School in Hartford, believes that many state lawmakers, due to the composition of their districts and feelings among their constituents, are reluctant to address the issue of equal education for urban school children. In Stringer’s view, lawmakers have thus far demonstrated little effort to promote the goals and ideals of the *Sheff* decision: “It’s a difficult pill to swallow, and I don’t see how it’s going to happen.”

Perceptions of whites and nonwhites also vary with respect to the educational issue known as the “achievement gap.” The question was asked in this manner: “In your opinion is it the responsibility of the government to close the achievement gap between white students and Black and Hispanic students?” In response, 45% of all persons surveyed replied that it was the government’s responsibility to close the gap. When crosstabulated by race, however, 65% of nonwhites viewed closing the gap as the government’s responsibility. The nonwhite community, more than the white community, seems to believe that the government can and should do more to rectify the disparity in academic achievement between white and nonwhite school districts. Although the respondents did not identify what level of government was most equipped for this purpose, it is clear that nonwhites view an activist government as necessary for the purpose of narrowing this disturbing and unfortunate pattern of academic performance.

What exactly has the Connecticut state legislature done, along with the state Department of Education, to close the achievement gap between urban and suburban schools in Connecticut? This is a fair and important question to ask.

The racial divide over educational policy continues to surface when the subject turns to school improvement and presidential leadership, and the question asked was: “Do you believe President Bush will do a better job of school improvement than President Clinton or a worse job?” Forty-nine percent of all persons
surveyed replied that President Bush will do a better job than President Clinton in the area of school improvement. Broken down by race, however, 54% of whites and only 24% of nonwhites expressed this view. Thus, with respect to perceptions towards presidential leadership in the area of educational policy, there is obviously a wide chasm between white and nonwhite Americans. Whether or not President Bush’s “No Child Left Behind Act,” which is designed to address the achievement gap, can forge more confidence in the president among nonwhites remains to be seen.

Job Security and Racial Discrimination: Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Perspectives

Attitudes towards educational policy is not the only policy area where there is evidence of a racial divide. Survey data indicate that whites and nonwhites embrace different perspectives toward a variety of domestic policy issues and lifestyle concerns. In a CBS News/New York Times poll conducted in July of 2003, the attitudes and values of Hispanics living in the United States were explored in considerable depth. Although Hispanics expressed optimistic attitudes with regard to their economic and social opportunities, as well as their prospects of living the “American dream,” the survey still uncovered important attitudinal differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanics toward several policy-related issues. For example, fear of job loss surfaced as an extremely important concern among many Hispanic respondents. Such an attitude is perfectly understandable, as a significant portion of Hispanics are employed in jobs that are among the first eliminated when companies decide to downsize, relocate their operation, or outsource assembly work to Asian or Latin American countries. Thus, not surprisingly, 72% of Hispanics expressed concern about losing their job within the next year. This is in stark contrast to the 44% of non-Hispanics who expressed this concern. It is more than apparent that the country’s fastest growing minority group perceives itself as very vulnerable within the context of the American economy and job market. Although based on national survey data, such a finding does lead one to ask whether or not Connecticut lawmakers, when
fashioning economic policy, are cognizant of the anxiety and perceived economic vulnerability that many Hispanics currently feel with regard to job security.

Perceptions of racial discrimination also reveal a significant division between Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites. Although perceived discrimination is nowhere near the 73% recorded for Black respondents, a figure cited in this study, the survey nevertheless discovered that 36% of Hispanics could recall directly experiencing some form of racial discrimination. This was in contrast to 21% of non-Hispanic whites who perceived themselves as victims of racial discrimination.26

Equality and Social Justice: White and Black Perspectives

Additional survey data continue to document disparate views between whites and nonwhites in regard to policies associated with the concept of social justice. More specifically, issues that reveal sharp differences between whites and Blacks include explanations associated with racial inequality, the extent to which educational and housing opportunities exist, and the highly controversial topic of affirmative action.27

Concerning explanations for racial inequality in the United States, 33% of white respondents in year 2000 perceived racial discrimination against Blacks as responsible for unequal social conditions. In sharp contrast to this figure, 64% of Blacks attributed unequal social conditions to discriminatory practices based on race.28 Granted, this particular survey question is quite broad and more detailed responses would be helpful for the purpose of analysis. Nevertheless, there is clearly a feeling in the Black community that a condition of racial inequality exists in the United States, and that racial discrimination is at the root of this dilemma.

Concerning educational opportunities in the United States, 45% of whites believed that Blacks have less chance for an equal educational experience, while 57% of Blacks thought this to be the case. When asked if personal motivation was a contributing factor to racial inequality, 51% of whites replied in the affirmative, compared to 40% of Blacks.29 Such data strongly suggest that
whites and Blacks have different perspectives regarding the reasons behind racial discrimination. Blacks, to a much greater extent than whites, believe that racial inequality is rooted in societal discrimination and that fewer educational opportunities exist. Blacks appear to view racial discrimination as a function of systemic conditions, while whites are inclined to view discrimination as the end result of personal behavior. The evidence further underscores the thrust of this chapter: there is a serious racial divide in the United States, and by way of extrapolation, one can infer that the divide is present within the state of Connecticut. How long the racial divide will persist, and how deep this divide is are questions that no social scientist can fully answer. However, what is particularly distressing about the survey data is that an entrenched racial divide appears to continue well into the twenty-first century, with little sign of improvement. This is especially troubling in a country and state where the concept of equality is embraced and cherished.

The views of whites and Blacks also diverge when the subject of housing opportunities are probed. Eighty-six percent of whites in year 2001 believed that Blacks have "as good a chance as white people to get any housing they can afford," while 49% of Blacks expressed this perspective. Only 14% of whites responded that Blacks did not have the same chance as whites to secure housing, while 51% of Blacks viewed the housing situation in such terms. Precisely why Blacks do not perceive housing opportunities as equivalent to those of white home buyers, particularly if the house they wish to buy is affordable, is difficult to pinpoint. For many years, there have been claims from civil rights organizations that housing policies and real estate practices in the United States, and within the state of Connecticut, are racially biased against Blacks. Zoning laws in suburban communities that require the construction of only large and costly homes, banking practices that present obstacles for persons seeking home loans, and attempts on the part of real estate agents to "steer" Blacks into certain towns and neighborhoods are among the several complaints and charges leveled by the NAACP against the various institutions involved in housing policy. Indeed, it has been argued that housing policies in the United States are inherently racist and responsible for perpetuating
segregation. Although analyzing the extent to which racism is inherent in housing policy is far beyond the scope of this study, the attitudes of Blacks regarding this important issue clearly suggest a policy challenge for state lawmakers in Connecticut and elsewhere.

Affirmative action policies have for many years been a source of tension between whites and nonwhites, and recent survey data suggest that such tension will persist in years ahead. When asked to express a point of view towards special government expenditures for Blacks, 30% of white respondents in year 2000 agreed with the position that government spending was “too little,” 51% responded “about right,” while 19% viewed such spending as “too much.” Black respondents, however, viewed special government expenditures in different terms. Seventy-eight percent of Blacks responded that such expenditures were “too little,” 18% chose “about right,” while only 4% viewed government expenditures as “too much.”

In addition to perceptions towards government spending, whites and Blacks disagree over the issue of whether or not preferential treatment should be given to Blacks within the work force. Five percent of whites surveyed in year 2000 strongly favored preferential hiring and preferential promotion practices for racial minorities, while 70% strongly opposed such employment practices. Twenty-five percent of white respondents expressed views somewhere in between the two ends of the spectrum. It is clear that whites do not favor preferential employment practices for Blacks. In contrast, 53% of Blacks were strongly in favor of preferences in the work force, while 25% strongly opposed preferential considerations. Twenty-two percent of Black respondents were located in between the two positions. As we embark upon the twenty-first century it is apparent that whites and Blacks are at odds with one another with respect to this emotionally charged and controversial issue.

The Challenge: Bridging the Divide

The evidence presented above regarding party allegiance, voting behavior, and attitudes towards a variety of policy issues directly indicates that party leaders and state lawmakers in
Connecticut will in years ahead be confronted with the complex task of bridging the racial divide. Factionalism within the Democratic Party will more than likely be exacerbated as Black and Hispanic voters comprise a larger and growing percentage of the Democratic Party’s leadership and rank-and-file. As the Democratic Party in Connecticut increases in ethnic heterogeneity, one should anticipate a proliferation of policy disputes between the Party’s white suburban base and nonwhite Democrats from urban areas. Whether or not Democratic Party leaders and lawmakers can successfully unite the different ethnic factions within the Party behind a common and mutually agreed upon legislative agenda will be one of the most vexing political challenges in the foreseeable future. In Connecticut politics, Democratic Party nominations to the various constitutional offices, such as state treasurer, state comptroller, and secretary of state, have been one way in which the Party has demonstrated a commitment to the inclusion of ethnic minorities into political offices. Although such nominations certainly have symbolic importance for ethnic constituencies, it is unlikely that in future years such nominations alone will be sufficient to accommodate the political demands and needs of Connecticut’s nonwhite population.

The smaller, suburban, and more ethnically homogeneous Republican Party in Connecticut will be less likely to experience the challenge of internal ethnic politics. However, while this can be interpreted as advantageous to the Republicans with respect to intra-party management and legislative unity, it is still important from both an electoral and governing perspective for the Republican Party to consciously expand its appeal and political base to emerging and multi-racial voting blocs. Indeed, demographic trends in Connecticut pose distinct challenges for both political parties. Thus, the ability to understand the policy needs of Connecticut’s increasingly diverse population, a keen understanding of how policy needs translate into political behavior, and a grasp of the causes and consequences of the racial divide will be required among those who seek public office in the state of Connecticut.
Notes

2. The median sale price of homes in the forty-town Hartford area in 2003 was $206,500. In 2002, the median sale price was $185,000. Thus, sale prices rose $21,500, or 11.6%, within the space of one year. Source: Greater Hartford Association of Realtors. Figures cited in Hartford Courant, January 15, 2004, p. E1.
8. E-mail interview with State Senator Toni Nathaniel Harp, February 27, 2004.
13. Reinoso interview.
15. Telephone interview with Carmen Rodriguez, former Executive Director, La Casa de Puerto Rico, Inc. February 27, 2004.
21. Rose and Gallup Poll.
23. Rose and Gallup Poll.
24. Rose and Gallup Poll.
29. Krysan, “Data Update.”
31. Krysan, “Data Update.”
32. Krysan, “Data Update.”
CHAPTER FIVE

The Challenge of Ethical Political Leadership

BRIAN STILTNER

Sadly, there seems to be a never-ending parade of news stories to confirm the widespread impression that politicians are ethically flawed. The first few years of the 2000s have brought devastating blows to the public's confidence in the moral quality of Connecticut's public leaders. In 2003 alone, Bridgeport Mayor Joseph P. Ganim was imprisoned for corruption, Waterbury Mayor Philip Giordano was imprisoned for child sexual abuse, and Governor John G. Rowland admitted he lied about gifts he received from state contractors, leading to his resignation from office on July 1, 2004. This was followed by a guilty plea in federal court and subsequent incarceration in federal prison. Corruption and ethical violations by public officials have occurred at all levels of state government and in both political parties. Is Connecticut in serious ethical trouble? One might take heart from a recent report by the Corporate Crime Reporter that ranked states according to corruption convictions of public officials. Connecticut was thirty-first on the list, fortunately far removed by this data from the "most corrupt" states of Mississippi, North Dakota, and Louisiana, but not as clean as our neighbor, New Hampshire, in forty-seventh place. But even the lowest ranking on this scale would give a state no excuse to rest on its laurels, for politics is called to a higher goal. Something more profound than reputation is at stake: the vitality of our state political system. Connecticut can ill-afford the erosion of public confidence in executives,
legislators, and career public servants that results from continuous scandals.

Without a solid ethical foundation to state governance, the process of developing and implementing sound public policy is weakened. The scandal-ridden official loses credibility with colleagues and the public, hampering his or her effectiveness. More seriously, a flurry of political scandals and convictions may turn voters away from politics in disgust, a state of affairs that can only undermine the quality of the policymaking process. It would be a shame if Connecticut’s high level of voter registration and voter turnout were to sink toward mediocrity. In addition to the crisis of public confidence, ethical abuses foster systemic and long-lasting harms to state politics. Public resources are misdirected to the well-connected few instead of being efficiently used for the good of all citizens. For example, former Governor Rowland, even after admitting that he lied about receiving gifts and renovations for his vacation cottage worth tens of thousands of dollars, maintained throughout the crisis that he did not violate state law, because he did not influence public policy or direct public funds to benefit the gift-givers. Yet among these gift-givers were members of the Tomasso family, owners of several contracting companies that have received millions of dollars in state contracts. The Tomassos were significant contributors to Rowland’s campaigns and to the Republican Governor’s Association when it was chaired by Rowland. Whatever Rowland may believe about his intentions in this case, it strains credibility to claim that contractors who give gifts to high-placed public officials do so with no expectation of return and to claim that the officials are not influenced by their personal stake in the relationship. Even if Rowland sincerely believed that he gave no special consideration to these gift-givers, the conflict of interest is highly unethical and may well be proven illegal in due course.

The Rowland scandal, like many others, demonstrates that the personal and the systemic challenges for political ethics are two sides of the same coin. Very often, the causative factors of a politician’s misdeeds are not only personal: they had not only to do with his or her character, but with systematic features of the electoral system and structure of American politics. This system
requires candidates for statewide and national office to raise large sums of money in order to compete effectively; candidates and parties turn to wealthy donors and to interest groups that can pool large amounts of cash. Ever aware of the next election, candidates and their parties feel beholden to this money. Once in office, legislators write laws that maintain the advantages of incumbency, and officials enjoy perquisites not available to the general public. In this context, individual politicians can still be virtuous, but some start engaging in questionable behavior, while others blatantly abuse their power. Even worse, many ethically questionable practices—such as those having to do with fundraising and political advertising—are pervasive and legal. These practices are the most difficult to bring under ethical control, because many politicians do not even see the problem. They are just going along with the political game as they find it. My fundamental assumption in this chapter is that both the personal and the systemic dimensions of political ethics must be addressed. Too many politicians and pundits assume that the challenge is either character promotion or political reform, but wisdom lies in realizing that it is both.

Four convictions shape my recommendations in this chapter—none of them very sensational, but all of them essential when considering the ethical dimension of politics. First, public officials should be persons of the highest ethical character who monitor their own behavior. Nothing can replace the role of character and vigilance over one’s own actions. Second, citizens have the right to expect and demand ethical behavior from their officials. The public should not accept rationalizations from politicians or commentators that are based on a legalistic mindset or a false distinction between public and private spheres. Third, ethics laws and codes can set valuable boundaries in which public officials should act, but these regulations can only do so much. Ethics laws do their job best when they are bolstered by an active, independent, well-funded oversight commission and when there are procedures for proactive promotion of ethical behavior and not simply retroactive punishment of unethical behavior. Fourth, seeds of hope may be found both in policy reforms to promote good governance and in the work of institutions in civil society.
The sensational scandals are not the whole reality of politics. I believe that the majority of elected officials in Connecticut are committed public servants with records of high integrity. I doubt that any reader of this chapter, even one quite critical of the integrity of the political system, can fail to think of a current official serving at any level of government whom they consider a person of integrity. If each of us can think of such role models in politics, then we can ask: How do we promote that kind of leadership? What kind of environment—political, legal, and cultural—best nurtures leaders to act ethically and for the common good?

Connecticut Ethics Laws and their Violation

In the years just after the Watergate scandal, the federal government and many states strengthened their ethics laws. Connecticut followed suit: in 1977, Public Act 77-600 created the Code of Ethics for Public Officials and the Code of Ethics for Lobbyists. The basic requirement for public officials and state employees is that they not use their office for financial gain to themselves, their immediate family, or business interests with which they are involved. Among many other specifications, the law stipulates that officials refrain from acting upon matters in which they have a financial conflict of interest and that businesses with which they are associated not enter into contracts with the state except through an open and public process. Legislators, public officials, and state employees may not receive any gift from a lobbyist or a person or entity doing business with the state, except food and gifts of nominal value under very limited circumstances. Legislators, public officials, and certain high-level employees must file annual financial statements that specify the official's sources of income, properties, blind trusts, securities, creditors, and associations with businesses.

The Code of Ethics outlaws obvious felonies: bribery, bid-rigging, witness tampering, and offering and receiving kickbacks. These activities have figured in recent scandals, often in connection with steering state contracts to insiders. A business may give an official a bribe in order to secure a state contract without a bid. Or a politically-connected consultant may pay a
"kickback" to an official, that is, a cut of the consultant's fees as a reward to the official for steering the contract to the consultant's client. For example, Governor Rowland's former deputy chief of staff Lawrence E. Alibozek pled guilty to taking bribes (March 2003), former State Treasurer Paul Silvester pled guilty to taking kickbacks (September 1999), and Rowland's former co-chief of staff Peter N. Ellef remains under federal investigation for a plethora of financial misdeeds.

In order to supervise compliance with these laws, the General Assembly created the State Ethics Commission. The Ethics Commission is a seven-member citizen panel (soon to be increased to nine) whose members are balanced in terms of party membership and are appointed by the governor and other legislative leaders. The Commission employs an executive director/general counsel and six staffers, soon to be increased to nine staffers. The Commission can render advisory opinions, levy civil fines for violations of the ethics laws, and refer suspected felonies to the Attorney General. Clearly, the best way to deal with political ethics is to head-off unethical behavior before it happens. This is the role of the advisory opinion. The Ethics Commission is asked several times a year for its advice about the propriety of a certain arrangement (for example, if a legislator could receive a certain kind of memento as a gift from a lobbyist). The Commission applies the law to the case and tells the person who requested the advice whether they may engage in the action or not. Additionally, the Commission polices conflicts of interest by receiving and reviewing financial statements and reports of gifts that are allowed under the law. It registers and supervises the activities of lobbyists. (I must leave aside here the question of the ethics of lobbying: some condemn lobbying as a perverse force in the political process, while others see it as essential form of free speech. Given the reality of lobbying, it must be tightly regulated. See the last section of this chapter for further comments.)

The Ethics Commission issues dozens of advisory opinions per year. One can reasonably hope that many unethical activities have been avoided by this service. For those who do not bother to seek an opinion, the Commission has taken more than thirty enforcement actions since 1998 and has referred other matters to the
Attorney General for possible prosecution. For example, in 2003, the Commission required Governor Rowland to pay a $2,000 fine for receiving concert tickets and another $2,000 fine and almost $7,000 in repayment to the state for accepting vacation lodging from state contractors. In early 2004, the Commission’s Executive Staff assisted the legislative committee of inquiry into impeachment proceedings against Rowland. The Commission can also act against those who do not work for the government. The Commission has negotiated settlements with some consultants who engaged in illegal “contingent fee lobbying”—receiving a fee that is contingent upon the outcome of an official action. For lobbying the Office of the State Treasurer, St. James Associates, LLC, was required to repay approximately $1.75 million in finders’ fees and $150,000 in legal fees to the state. It is hard to know whether thirty enforcement actions is a heartening or disheartening number, and it is probably too early to tell. One indication will be whether the number of enforcements goes down over a number of years—as long as the oversight remains just as vigorous. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the Commission is staffed and funded to a level that enables it to do its work effectively.

If one reads the ethics statutes of Connecticut, they appear detailed and comprehensive. Yet loopholes appear: sometimes unforeseen, sometimes because the General Assembly bowed to political pressures and kept the law weaker than it could be. Some holes are allowed in the statutes to relieve the bureaucratic burden of reporting and maintaining reports on negligible gifts; other holes are allowed in the name of preventing the government from intruding into the privacy of officials and citizens. For example, the law allows exceptions in gifts and financial interests as a concession to everyday realities; otherwise, the rationale goes, public officials would be burdened by constant reporting and the Commission would be buried in paperwork. But any exception that is reasonable on paper can be exploited. For instance, one gift exemption allows an official or state employee to receive a gift of substantial value as the celebration of a “major life event.” The idea here is that the $10 limit could be transgressed if a lobbyist or business interest gave an official/employee a more expensive
baby gift upon the birth of a child. In September 2003, Public Works Commissioner Theodore Anson was forced to resign for accepting architectural plans worth $190,000 from a major state contractor. He has claimed that he did not violate the law because the plans were a gift in celebration of his adoption of three children. Clearly, this is a violation of the spirit of law. In this case, the loophole in the language of the law should be eliminated. Other obvious ambiguities should be removed so that a corrupt official has fewer places to hide. As much as possible, these arrangements should be brought into the open through “sunshine laws” that require disclosure of all gifts and financial conflicts of interest bearing upon a state employee’s work. For some persons, only the prospect of being caught will provide enough disincentive to unethical behavior, so the civil and criminal penalties must be severe.

Ethical Expectations and Confusions

Yet no amount of laws and harsh penalties can make a politician a good person. For that, we must look elsewhere. It is really no mystery what is expected of leaders. Ethical leaders are virtuous and put the common good ahead of their personal interests. Twenty-six centuries ago, Confucius described the qualities of an ethical leader, describing “the superior person” as one who is guided by propriety, humility, and truthfulness; who listens to sage advice; who wins the respect of others by treating them respectfully. He said of such a person, “He whose wisdom brings him into power, needs Goodness to secure that power” (Analects, 15:32). The ancient Greek philosophers presented a similar list of virtues, encouraging people to develop the habit of balanced action—to be, for example, neither excessively rash nor timid, but to seek the balance of prudence and fortitude. In a modern idiom, it has been said that “an ethical person ought to do more than he’s required to do and less than he’s allowed to do.” This crucial dimension of ethics is called character, which is the overall set of virtues a person has, leading to trustworthy, honest, humble, integral behavior that surpasses the standards set by laws and rules. Character cannot be enforced, nor can it be imparted to a public official late in life. Character is shaped by
family upbringing and other educational influences. Influences are just that: they are not the final cause of character. In the end, character is developed by a person's self-reflection and striving to develop habits over a lifetime. To consider character requires us to look beyond the impact of laws, important though these are. Ethicists Daniel Callahan and Bruce Jennings note four "mutually reinforcing factors working to support the ethical integrity" of public officials: "informal moral traditions, formal ethics regulations, political incentives in the legislative process and the electoral system, and . . . legislators' own personal commitment to live up to their ethical obligations." The first and fourth items are what we are talking about now. If we narrow our focus only to the second item, as is too commonly done, we skew our understanding of the causes of unethical behavior and of the required response.

Indeed, a narrow focus on acts and laws, at the expense of character, generates two confusions that stymie ethical reform. The first is legalism: the notion that as long as one stays within the bounds of existing law, one is being ethical, or at least "not doing anything wrong." This oft-invoked phrase is usually just a rationalization, but even when seriously offered, it is a cramped account of ethics. Even if a politician is steering a job to a friend and not asking for something in return, the politician is getting a psychological benefit at the public's expense. The expense to the public can be both tangible (taxpayers are paying the salary of someone who is not necessarily the best qualified and not every applicant had equal consideration) and more intangible but no less wrong (the symbolic value of fair and transparent government is eroded and such practices make a politician more likely to engage in future abuses). It is no excuse to a charge of ethical violation that no one was hurt by it. As ethicist Gilbert Meilaender affirms, people can be wronged even when they are not harmed.  

The second confusion concerns how to draw the line between the public and the private spheres. The line has shifted over time and it has always been contested. We should honor a line, but this does not mean that morality is irrelevant to governance, just that there are limitations in how we should hold officials accountable for unethical behavior. We should affirm that politics has a moral
foundation: its moral role is to promote the well-being of citizens and the nation’s common good. Ethical behavior is a boon to leadership and citizens rightly expect their leaders to embody it. A system of accountability should be graduated: the more an official’s behavior harms the common good, the more we as a society should seek restitution through political or legal means. This way of thinking about the matter honors the rough distinction we make between public and private morality, without our having to be sure where to draw a line, because in fact it is impossible to draw a firm line. And of course, people disagree about the meaning of the common good, so there’s no easy way out of the woods. But framing the matter this way should keep us from falling into stale debates where conservatives charge liberals with moral relativism and liberals charge conservatives with legislating morality. Politics is inescapably about morality, but especially the morality of creating a good and just society that honors citizens’ liberty, gives them assistance as they try to live well, and sustains their civic associations.

On this understanding of public morality, public officials should be persons of the highest ethical character, but they are not required to be saints. The ethical official makes mistakes, as Confucius said, but he corrects them as soon as he recognizes them—not when law enforcement officials are hot on his trail. I must say again that the expectations are no great mystery. The laws are a good guide, just not an exhaustive one, to the expected behavior. To read and apply the guide rightly, the official must consult his or her internal moral compass. And when in doubt, he or she should ask for advice. Giving advice, in fact, it is one of the functions of the State Ethics Commission.

What Can Be Done?

The ethical challenge is pervasive and touches on every aspect of public life. Bemoaning “human nature” or “the political system,” many throw up their hands. But there are things to be done that can improve the ethical climate of Connecticut politics. Moving to recommendations, I maintain my double focus on personal and systemic factors by suggesting five initiatives.
Tighten Ethics Laws

First, the General Assembly should undertake a comprehensive review of the ethics laws, including a comparison to other states and to federal law. The General Assembly should consider the following policy initiatives:

- Put more types of gifts in the forbidden, rather than the reportable, category.

- Tighten some language in the ethics laws to avoid subjective interpretations and loopholes such as the "major life event" gift exception.

- Strengthen confidentiality requirements. While these are not directly relevant to the recent scandals, they seem to be an underdeveloped aspect of the code of ethics.

- Put more restrictions on the use of consultants and other parties that attempt to negotiate financial arrangements between contractors and the state.

- Develop a code of ethics and regulations for state contractors. Businesses wanting state contracts should have internal mechanisms in place, such as an ethics code, ethics training, and a compliance process.

- Forbid a business from receiving future state contracts when it is found in violation of ethics laws. The business should also be required to go through a re-licensing process in order to become eligible again.

- Create "sunshine" provisions that require state contractors to report every gift that they give to politicians.

- Increase civil fines for violations.
In fact, in the wake of the Rowland scandal, the General Assembly passed several new laws in the spring of 2004. House Bill 5025 prohibits “any state or quasi-state public agency from executing a large state contract [over $500,000] unless it and the contract recipient certify that there was no fraud or collusion and that gifts were not exchanged from the date the contract planning began to the date the contract was executed.” Senate Bill 386 enacted changes to the State Code of Ethics: increasing the statute of limitations for filing complaints, giving the state more time to void a contract in violation of the code, increasing maximum civil penalties to $10,000, and raising the criminal penalty for intentional violations from misdemeanor to felony status. House Bill 5021 increases certain penalties for Ethics Code violations, requires Connecticut Lottery Corporation employees to comply with the Ethics Code, and puts strictures on the use of legal defense funds for officials being charged with violations. In addition, Governor M. Jodi Rell, who took over Rowland’s term, banned state employees from traveling with contractors or lobbyists to evaluate possible state projects. All of the above laws are welcome, but more work remains to be done.

Strengthen the State Ethics Commission

Second, the General Assembly should strengthen the hand of the Ethics Commission, primarily by increasing its staff and the funding for its activities. In recent years, Executive Director Alan S. Plofsky had complained that the Commission was financially strapped and could not fully investigate all complaints. The General Assembly should increase the size and funding of the Commission and see that it keeps pace with inflation. With Public Act 04-204, the General Assembly expanded the membership for the Commission by two, to a total of nine members, and protected its funding. In August 2004, Governor Rell authorized funding for three new staff positions for the Commission—an attorney, an accountant, and an investigator—and increased its budget.

The General Assembly should also strengthen the immunity of the Commission and its staff from political pressure. An
example of pressure occurred in January 2004 during the Rowland crisis, when the chairwoman of the Commission ordered Executive Director Plofsky to withdraw a draft advisory opinion and not to answer questions in public, even generic ones, about the laws the governor stood accused of breaking. The New Haven Advocate was right to call this a “muzzling” with fearful implications. Whatever the intentions of the commissioners, the result played into the hands of the governor’s legal team. The General Assembly should carefully review the situation and act to protect the independence of the Commission. At the same time, it is incumbent upon all persons involved in ethical oversight to act with the utmost professionalism and discretion. Plofsky himself has been chided for his public criticism of Governor Rowland, and following an investigation into his conduct was discharged from office.

Provide Public Financing of Election Campaigns

The third initiative is public financing of campaigns. The General Assembly has several times considered a bill to provide for public financing. Many observers consider this to be an absolutely essential step in preventing corruption in the electoral process. In scandal after scandal, it is clear that politicians, who need to raise large sums of money to win elections, seek the support of political action committees, lobbyists, businesses, and wealthy friends who do business with the state. It is only natural that these parties will seek a return on their investment, in the form of influence on policies and access to contracts. The pattern is clear: such a relationship is a temptation to misdeeds and an abuse of public trust. We should not have to wait until law enforcement catches someone paying a kickback in order to intervene. Even when there is no such direct remuneration, can the public feel confident when a company gives thousands of dollars to candidates and those candidates when later in office help steer contracts toward those companies? Is the public to believe that when a business political action committee or a labor union gives tens of thousands of dollars to candidates, their munificence has no bearing on the policies the candidates later promote? The
nexus between moneyed interests and public office must be broken. Legislators, when making law, should listen to constituents and all reasonable arguments, including those of interest groups, but those groups should not be financing the legislators’ place in office. The same holds true with the executive branch. The specific shape of campaign finance reform is beyond my purview here, but I think only full public financing of statewide races will completely break the nexus. In any event, the day has come for campaign finance reform in Connecticut. Unfortunately, it is by no means clear that there is the political will among the Democratic and Republican parties for substantial reform on this matter.

Establish Local Ethics Commissions

Fourth, the General Assembly should encourage the development of ethical oversight at the municipal level. According to a recent report by the Office of Legislative Research, only 48 of Connecticut’s 169 cities and towns have an ethics commission. Seventeen of these self-reported on the number of complaints that they hear. Their typical answer was that cases are infrequent: some towns said they have heard no cases, others said only one case every few years. Some towns also said they were “not sure.” The rate and type of responses to this survey may be cause for concern. If towns rarely hear ethics complaints because there is nothing to complain about or the commission is newly founded, that is fine; however, when the town government does not know how many cases are heard, that suggests a lack of seriousness about the process. Obviously, there are limits to what the state government can do at the municipal level. The State Ethics Commission has already developed a model code of ethics for town governments, as it was charged to do so by the General Assembly in 1994. With more funding and staff, the State Ethics Commission could create a manual for towns on how to create and operate an ethics board and could sponsor a conference for representatives from all Connecticut town governments in order to promote best practices. (The Commission already sponsors a biennial one-day ethics conference for legislators.) This effort is
important because corruption also occurs on the municipal level and because the public’s confidence in—or cynicism about—government in general is heavily influenced by local politics.

Responsibilities of Other Institutions

So far, I have canvassed four possibilities for policy reform, but another significant sphere requires attention. A large part of what we have to work on is the political culture of Connecticut, a diffuse but essential part of the problem and of the solution. Millions of citizens, tens of thousands of public and private institutions, and thousands of public officials take actions every day that shape the political culture. In such a complex and diffuse system, there are no simple guidelines for moving toward a goal such as “improving the ethical quality of politics.” Nonetheless, we can lay out some basic priorities for those institutions that are leaders in shaping the state’s political culture.

Nonprofit organizations and political interest groups that focus on good governance are always vital: Common Cause has been an important organization at the national scene and in Connecticut. Though this is difficult and often thankless work, we all benefit from critical oversight by these organizations. The same can be said of the press: the tenacious reporting of the Hartford Courant was critical in unearthing Governor Rowland’s problematic connections for general public view. Independent newspapers, such as the Advocate group, are very important as well. Unfortunately not as many citizens read these papers as read mass distribution papers or see the local television news. The troubling tendency in the last few years has been for local media to be bought up by corporate conglomerates, a trend that has been widely lamented yet poorly regulated in law. Journalists must be vigilant about maintaining their independent voice and they must cover the background of these issues, not simply the scandals when they break.

Political parties should play a strong role in holding their officials and candidates to high standards. Both major parties have had their share of scandals; both need to resist the temptation to close ranks around an unethical official. It is heartening that
several prominent Republicans in Connecticut were willing to call for Governor Rowland’s resignation. Certainly these politicians had the interests of their party at heart as well, but the very first to speak out against Rowland—six GOP state senators, and U.S. Representatives Rob Simmons and Christopher Shays—took a stance in advance of the Party and significantly increased the pressure on Rowland to resign. Unless this practice becomes typical and occurs early in the development of scandals, the public will remain cynical about the willingness of the parties to police themselves. Third parties in Connecticut have raised criticism of the major parties and provided an alternate route to political participation for disheartened voters. A Connecticut Party, founded in the early 1990s by Lowell P. Weicker, Jr., the Reform Party in the mid-1990s, and the Green Party in the early 2000s have elected some candidates to office, especially at the municipal level. But such efforts are typically short-lived. Whatever one thinks of the value of these parties, there can be little quarrel with encouraging some alternative perspectives and allowing voters to decide. Campaign finance reform would likely allow third-party candidates to receive a better hearing in statewide elections, and I think such competition will be to the good.

Lastly, we must note the crucial role played by the public itself, both the citizenry and various other social institutions, such as schools, universities, churches, social clubs, sports organizations, volunteer groups, and so on. These organizations do not often play a direct role in politics, other than communicating with officials or legislatures on policies that affect their interests. Some organizations, such as religious bodies, guide their members to express a unified voice on policy issues on a regular basis. Whether one agrees with the positions of these organizations, their promotion of civic engagement should be welcomed. All these groups are vital in the moral and civic education of children and in the ongoing formation of adult character. They would do well to reevaluate periodically the contributions they are making, or not making, to civic education.

As for citizens, does the old adage that “the people get the government they deserve” mean that Connecticut citizens deserved the scandals of the last few years? I think not. Indeed, the
basic ethical sensibility of the citizens was well expressed in its lack of tolerance for the violations of its officials. The adage expresses a basic truth: We voters have a fundamental responsibility to elect upstanding candidates and to throw corrupt ones out of office. But when officials lie and hide their financial dealings, the public can hardly be blamed. That's why we need watertight laws, vigorous oversight, independent voices, and an electoral process that does not pervert the information voters receive. The responsibility of citizens in this moment includes not only voting their consciences but pressing their representatives to put the electoral process and policymaking on a cleaner, more transparent foundation. It is a complicated and audacious task, but one from which we must not shrink.

Notes

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2. In the 2000 presidential elections, 58.4% of eligible voters in Connecticut turned out, and 77.9% of registered voters, ahead of the national averages of 51.3% and 67.5%. Turnout of registered voters in Connecticut was the third highest in the nation. See the Federal Election Commission statistics online at www.fec.gov/pages/2000turnout/reg&to00.htm.


6. For information on the membership, responsibilities, and activities of the State Ethics Commission, consult its website at www.ethics.state.ct.us. Increases in the membership and staffing of the Commission are discussed later in this chapter.

7. Susan Haigh, “Rowland Pays $9,000 to Settle Ethics Complaint,” Associated Press State and Local Wire (Connecticut), LexisNexis Academic database.

8. This and other cases are summarized by the State Ethics Commission, “Enforcement Actions (1998-Present)” at www.ethics.state.ct.us/Enforcement_Actions/enforcement_summaries.htm.


11. This quote has been attributed on the Internet to Michael Josephson, the director of an institute that promotes character formation and ethical leadership. But in a long list of famous quotes about ethics on Josephson’s website, this quote is not to be found. See www.josephsoninstitute.org.


23. This intolerance obviously mounts over time as misdeeds are revealed, which proves again the need for a vigorous press. Just before his December 2, 2004, press conference at which he admitted that he lied about gifts, Governor Rowland received a 37% approval rating in a poll, with only the same percentage considering him honest and trustworthy ("Rowland Job Approval Up Slightly" Associated Press State and Local Wire (Connecticut), November 21, 2003, LexisNexis Academic database). By late December, 55% of residents wanted Rowland to resign, and by June 3, 2004, 69% wanted Rowland to resign while 57% wanted him impeached (Matt Apuzzo, "55 Percent Say Rowland Should Resign" December 17, 2003; "Poll Says Majority of Connecticut Voters Want Rowland to Resign," June 3, 2004, both Associated Press State and Local Wire (Connecticut), LexisNexis Academic database).
CHAPTER SIX

The Challenge of Health Care Delivery in Connecticut

JODY BORTONE, MICHAEL J. EMERY, AND PATRICIA W. WALKER

The policy issues confronting the health care industry in Connecticut mirror those facing the rest of the nation. Most pressing are development and maintenance of a qualified and diverse workforce, access and financing for care, and the rising costs of health care services due to price inflation associated with rising personnel costs, malpractice insurance rates, including prescription drugs, and technology.

Health Care Workforce Shortage

Health care workforce assessment requires data regarding the present and future supply of health care workers and the demand for the workforce. In Connecticut, supply information is available indirectly through licensure data for the thirty-nine health professions that are licensed within the state through the Connecticut Department of Public Health. These data do not provide information about percent of work effort or setting. The Connecticut Department of Labor provides annual data on filled health care positions within the state, workforce growth based on retrospective employment data, and expected workforce needs based on projected industry growth. These data do not identify available workforce currently unemployed or underutilized.
Health workforce demand data is far more difficult to ascertain. Population studies can describe the number of health professionals required by a population or the amount of service typically provided, e.g., 900 RNs employed per 100,000 population or 40-60 physical therapy referrals/1,000 population/year.\(^3\) Vacancy and projected vacancy rates indicate immediate demand but may not represent actual needs for necessary care as vacancies are influenced by cost containment and reimbursement constraints that mask actual need. The Connecticut Department of Public Health has attempted to clarify this estimate of need for nursing by commissioning a study by an external agency to determine best methods of assessing nursing workforce supply and demand. In their report, the Health Care Decisions Group, Inc. provide the measurement strategies needed to quantify workforce shortage for nurses in Connecticut.\(^4\) Currently, these data are mostly unavailable for nursing as well as most other health professions in the state.

In May 2002, the Department of Public Health conducted a series of hearings, which included presentations of perceptions and anecdotal information regarding the nature and severity of the health care worker shortage in the most severely affected disciplines. The study also considered possible causes of the shortage and suggested strategies to address these.\(^5\) The shortage in most disciplines is described as cyclical although the current shortage is also noted to be one of the most severe in recent years. Several factors have contributed to the severity, including a gradual increase in the demand for health care services by the public, the aging health care workforce currently available in Connecticut, low enrollments and growing attrition for health career training programs, lack of faculty for health professions education, and the lack of resources in the health care industry available to respond to these shortages. These factors combine to create a more severe current shortage, a forecast of persisting shortages in the health care delivery system, and a sense of pessimism about addressing these shortages, given the lack of available resources.\(^6\)

For example, positions for registered nurses in Connecticut totaled 30,560 in 2002 with an expected increase to 36,740 by 2010,
an increase of 20%. In 2002, 863 RN graduates became eligible for employment while 1,235 RN openings existed. Existing shortages that year were 10.3%, up from 3.7% in 1997. In spite of this growing demand, qualified nursing candidates have been turned away from training programs because of a lack of qualified faculty and other resources available to nursing programs in Connecticut. With these trends continuing, the Health Resources and Service Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services projects the nursing shortage in Connecticut will be the fifth worst in the nation by 2020, with a 54.9% shortfall between supply and demand.

Increased health care service demand is the product of more informed consumers, greater availability of technology, and an aging population. As public awareness, public health education, and consumerism increase, so does the patient/client demand for health services. Even with the influence of managed care as a mediator to ration health care services, consumers have become more informed and more demanding in regard to health care services. Available technology offers more diagnostic tools and greater intervention options for consideration by both the health care provider and the patient. Also, as the national and state populations grow older, their health care needs increase. From 1990 to 2000 the Connecticut state population sharply decreased in the 15 to 34 year old category while increasing in the 35 to 54 year-old category. Specifically, health care needs due to chronic illness and disease increase, requiring in particular, more health care services such as long-term and home health care, polypharmacy, and rehabilitation and social services.

The aging health care workforce is an additional complication and is the result of several factors that demonstrate the complexity of the health care workforce shortage. These factors include greater alternative opportunity for traditional age female students as they enter post-secondary education (thus reducing those choosing health care as a career), a decrease in the desirability of health care as a career option for new students, and a greater number of older students entering health care training programs. As a result, the current workforce continues to age with insufficient replacement of younger workers leading to an increased
workforce shortage in the future. For example, the average age of an RN working in Connecticut has reached forty-six years.\textsuperscript{15}

Low enrollment in health professions programs is the product of more attractive career alternatives, particularly for health careers at the technical level. Stressful working conditions, low wages, and lack of career mobility are frequently cited by students as reasons to choose alternatives to technical level health care positions. For professional level careers, the cost of education, stressful and restrictive working conditions and the lack of professional recognition are cited as negative factors influencing enrollment in health care education programs. Growing attrition from all these programs is associated with limited student preparation in math and the sciences in middle and high school years, leading to less-qualified and more vulnerable students in health care education programs. In nursing, attrition in Connecticut has increased from 11% in 1995 to 18% in 2000.\textsuperscript{16} Enrollment in health professions educational programs still does not adequately represent the diversity of the population, suggesting that recruitment from minority populations can still be significantly improved.\textsuperscript{17} This is of particular concern when rural and inner-city health care settings often demonstrate the greatest need for health care personnel evidenced by their medically underserved designation, and yet students from those communities are not sufficiently represented.\textsuperscript{18}

Faculty shortages and associated limitations of other resources have prevented health professions programs from rapidly responding to increased applicant pools. Program costs are high on a per student basis, and budget increases to expand programs have been limited in both public and independent institutions. Enrollments declined gradually throughout the 1990s for most health professions. Although classes have increased modestly in the past three years, they have not returned to the class sizes of a decade ago.\textsuperscript{19} In the case of nursing applicants nationally, as many as 11,000 students annually have been denied admissions to nursing programs because of a lack of program resources, including qualified faculty, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.\textsuperscript{20} Ironically, some faculty members have left health professions education to return to the health care
workforce because salaries are more competitive and working conditions are more negotiable. This further constrains training of a future health care workforce.

New resources to address health care workforce shortages unfortunately are often used for the short-term solution such as enhancements to fill vacancies. Such short-term solutions (i.e., sign-on bonuses, hiring "traveling" or temp service health professionals) limits resources that can be used to improve working conditions and salaries for health care staff, provide retention incentives, and offer opportunities for professional development and career ladders. As a result, these resource inefficiencies lead to a persistent shortage of resources and a cyclical nature to workforce problems.

Disciplines most affected by the workforce shortages have been identified. These include nursing and home health aides, dental hygienists, emergency medical technicians, nurses (registered and practical), pharmacists, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, radiation technologist and sanitarians, physicians, and dentists. Plans to understand and address the health workforce shortage have been outlined by the Connecticut Department of Public Health. These have included the promotion of public education/health care industry collaborations for recruitment, training and placement of health care workers, establishment of an Allied Health Workforce Policy board to monitor health professions workforce data, development of career ladder strategies within the state to promote recruitment and retention of qualified students, and creation of a nursing faculty incentive program. These efforts create infrastructure to begin to address shortages, but their impact on the current shortage is likely to be gradual.

Access to Health Care

Access to health care is determined by two issues: (1) availability and distribution of health services, and (2) health care coverage to pay for services. In Connecticut, the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) monitors access to quality health care by examining the extent of health care coverage, measuring the numbers of uninsured Connecticut residents, and regulating access,
hospital utilization, and performance. OHCA’s primary functions are to advise governmental policy makers of health care issues, and design and direct health care system development.

Apart from non-emergency care, patients at Connecticut’s hospitals are treated regardless of their ability to pay, resulting in uncompensated costs to hospitals. OHCA balances the need for and access to health services with facilities’ financial health through the administration of two programs: One is the Certificate of Need (CON) program, which ensures access to quality health care for Connecticut residents and regulates service duplication and availability. Hospitals and health care facilities are required to submit Letters of Intent (LOI) and CONs to OHCA to realign, consolidate, or terminate health care services at their facility. The second program is the Disproportionate Share Hospital Program. Each year, Connecticut hospitals file financial data with OHCA, including uncompensated care costs. OHCA then distributes funds to the state’s acute care hospitals based upon each hospital’s care as a percentage of statewide totals. CONs and LOIs reflect major trends in the state’s health care delivery system. OHCA then uses this information to advise policymakers.

Certificate of Need applications through 2002 indicated a significant shortage of behavioral health services throughout the state, with a 20% increase in demand for inpatient psychiatric services. Private and public insurers reimburse behavioral health services at a rate less than the cost of care, so many facilities offering these services have decreased their bed capacity, terminated services, or closed. This has resulted in an inadequate number of inpatient psychiatric beds to meet demand, requiring persons in need of behavioral health care to wait weeks for services. In addition, private insurers require advance mental health screenings, restrict treatment and impose large deductibles, which impedes access to behavioral health care that is equal to that of physical health care. Availability of behavioral health care services is anticipated to be a major health care issue into the future.

Other critical health care access issues facing Connecticut’s future include: the establishment of full-service cardiac programs in community hospitals; procurement of new technology, such as
hyperbaric oxygen therapy and imaging equipment; the development of ambulatory surgical centers and standards for such; the overcrowding of emergency rooms and trauma centers in the state; and the restructuring of services and collaborative partnerships among providers. The trend to increase the availability of complex technological and ambulatory surgical services to a greater number of hospitals in the state has the unintended consequence of contributing to the rising cost of health care.

Health insurance is essential to preventive care and reducing the cost of medical treatment through timely intervention for medical conditions and reducing lost work time. The Kaiser Family Foundation reported that half of uninsured adults postponed seeking medical treatment when they needed it. Delaying treatment leads to serious consequences including increased mortality, more serious illnesses, health problems and delays in diagnosing diseases. Research conducted by the Institute of Medicine reports that the lack of health insurance results in the premature death of 18,000 Americans annually, and projects that the nation's mortality rate could be reduced by 5% to 15% if all persons had continuous health coverage.

Quality health care is plentiful but the ability to pay for care is inequitably distributed, with approximately 17% of non-elderly U.S. residents lacking basic health care coverage; two thirds of whom are from low-income families. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, the percentage of uninsured Connecticut residents rose from 9% in 1999 to 12% in 2003. While less than the national average, it is the state's largest increase in more than ten years, resulting in an estimated 351,786 non-elderly persons in Connecticut lacking health insurance coverage. The rise in the numbers of the state's uninsured is attributed to the 2001 economic downturn, when many of the state's residents lost their employer-sponsored insurance. Disproportionately more non-elderly adults than children are uninsured due to gaps and limits in both private and public health care coverage. Virtually all elderly persons over 65 years of age are eligible for health coverage through Medicare, and the elderly poor may also be eligible for Medicaid. Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) programs help fill
the gap created by the decrease in employer-sponsored coverage for children, however eligibility limits in these programs contribute to increasing the gap created by the loss of job-based coverage for non-elderly adults.

Sixty-one percent of Connecticut’s employed residents receive health insurance coverage through their employers, 9% of these offer employee only coverage, and 39% of Connecticut’s employers do not offer any health care coverage.\(^4\) Three-quarters of the employer-sponsored health plans in the state have work-week hour eligibility requirements and waiting periods, qualifying 80% of their employees for health insurance at any given time. Of eligible employees, three-quarters enroll in their employer-sponsored health insurance programs.\(^4\) Employees may elect not to enroll because they are covered under a spouse’s plan, but many do not enroll because they cannot afford the premiums or deductibles.\(^4\) The least expensive employer-sponsored health insurance premiums in Connecticut costs the employee an average of $88.41 per month for employee-only coverage, and $264.96 per month for dependent or family coverage.\(^4\)

Health care for Uninsured Kids and Youth (HUSKY) is Connecticut’s public health insurance program for children and teens under nineteen years of age. HUSKY was created by the state as a result of the national SCHIP program authorized by Congress under Title XXI of the Social Security Act, enabling states to implement health insurance programs with a mix of state and federal funds. It is administered by Connecticut’s Department of Social Services (DSS) and includes three health coverage programs: HUSKY-A provides health services through the federal Medicaid program and is free for children in families with incomes up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL); HUSKY-B was created specifically through SCHIP for children in higher income families with low-cost premiums scaled to family income and size; and HUSKY PLUS is a supplemental benefits plan for children with special physical or behavioral health care needs.\(^4\)

The SCHIP and HUSKY programs have been extremely successful in assuring greater access to health care through its health care coverage programs for the nation’s and Connecticut’s
low-income children. Seventy-five percent of Medicaid insured children received well-child visits vs. only 46% of uninsured children.\textsuperscript{45} The SCHIP program has been responsible for decreasing the percentage of the nation’s uninsured poor children from 22.4% in 1997 to 15.4% in 2003.\textsuperscript{46} Since HUSKY’s implementation in 1998, enrollment increased steadily to its present number of 190,000 children participating in HUSKY-A.\textsuperscript{47} Despite HUSKY’s success, 71,000 Connecticut children remain uninsured.\textsuperscript{48}

The HUSKY and Medicaid programs have been tremendously successful in assuring health care access to the state’s children, but budget constraints are jeopardizing these programs. In August 2003, Connecticut’s General Assembly passed its 2004-05 budgets, severely curtailing the Medicaid and HUSKY-A programs. Proposed changes include: instituting premiums; instituting co-payments on services for children; reduction of HUSKY-A benefits; and accepting a global cap on federal spending for the Medicaid program.\textsuperscript{49} With the exception of the optional Medicaid program for “medically needy” persons (elders and disabled persons whose income is above Medicaid eligibility requirements but who have high medical expenses), the proposed changes require a federal waiver of Medicaid’s minimum standards. Connecticut’s Department of Social Services (DSS) is reportedly working on a plan to apply for a federal waiver, but as of August 21, 2004, the Governor’s Legislative Office reports that DSS has not yet applied for the federal waiver.

The proposed changes to HUSKY-A and Medicaid spurred a flurry of bills presented to the Connecticut legislature in an attempt to reverse the negative effects of the proposed changes. The Connecticut Hospital Association and Georgetown University’s Health Policy Institute testified before state legislators as to the consequences the proposed changes would have on the health of Connecticut’s residents and its economy:\textsuperscript{50}

- 86,000 people in Connecticut could be expected to lose health coverage.\textsuperscript{51}

- 69% of these or 59,638 would be children.\textsuperscript{52}
• 1,006 would be pregnant women who will have difficulty obtaining pre-natal care. Their babies will not be automatically covered for well-baby care and immunizations.

• Half of those who lose coverage would be children and parents whose incomes fall below the FPL. The remainder would be children and parents whose incomes range from 100% to 184% of the FPL, further impeding the ability of financially struggling families to get their children health care.

• 7,330 medically needy elderly and disabled persons can be expected to lose Medicaid.

• Reduction of benefits and the elimination of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) are likely to increase the number and severity of preventable childhood health problems.

• Connecticut can expect to lose over $96 million in federal funding and experience an annual cost shift to hospitals of over $93 million as newly uninsured persons seek health care at their only remaining option, hospital emergency rooms.

If the proposed changes should be implemented, Connecticut would earn the dubious distinction of being the first and only state to institute premiums for families with incomes under the FPL, the first to charge co-payments for all children in its Medicaid program, the first and only state to accept a global cap on federal Medicaid funding, and the first to abolish federal minimum standards for children’s health care services.

Access to prescription medications and the rising costs of those medications has captured the nation’s attention. The lack of health insurance coverage for prescription medications are of particular concern to the public and legislators. Since 1992, the number of prescription drugs purchased by Americans increased from $1.9 billion to $3.3 billion; retail prices of these drugs
increased more than twice the rate of inflation each year for the past ten years; and the top selling prescription drugs are newer, higher-priced drugs that have replaced older, less-expensive drugs. With rising prices, the share of prescription drug costs paid by both private and public insurers has increased steadily. In 2002, private insurers accounted for 48% and Medicaid accounted for 18% of drug payments.

Still, prescription drug coverage offered by private insurers and employer-sponsored health plans varies from plan to plan and from company to company, leaving approximately 23% of America’s non-elderly adults and children and 38% of the elderly without prescription drug coverage. While the Medicaid and HUSKY programs offer prescription drug coverage, Medicare offers only a capped discount through the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA). Each state will be responsible for a portion of the cost of MMA for elders who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare. ConnPACE, Connecticut’s prescription drug coverage program for low-income seniors, helps to fill in the gap. The chapter on Aging in this book more fully discusses the issue of prescription drug coverage for elders.

Rising Health Care Costs

Health care spending in the United States exceeded $1 trillion in 2002. Expenditures represented 14.9% of the GDP in 2002 and is increasing at a rate twice that of the GDP. A comparison of U.S. spending to that of other industrial countries indicates that while the U.S. spends more, the U.S. was below the median on measures of utilization (physician visits, hospital admissions, average length of stay, and so on).

Hospital spending, the largest category of health care expenditures, approached $5 billion in 2002. While some of the increase in hospital spending is attributed to an increase in volume and intensity of services, the dominant source is price inflation. A large share of price inflation is attributed to rising personnel costs (exacerbated by the nursing shortage) and medical liability insurance costs. Despite the continued increase in spending for
hospital services, many hospitals are challenged to achieve a positive operating margin. This is especially true for hospitals in Connecticut.

Over the past ten years Connecticut hospitals have struggled financially. From 1994 to 2003, the consolidated operating margin for Connecticut acute care hospitals ranged from a high of 2.48% in 1996 to a low of -0.98% in 2000, where a 3% to 5% margin is considered an indicator of long-term financial health. In FY 2003, the median operating margin for Connecticut acute care hospitals was 0.3%, with thirteen out of thirty-one hospitals reporting losses. Statewide median total margins for Connecticut acute care hospitals declined from 3.1 in FY 2001 to 0.1% in FY 2002, and increased slightly to 0.4% in FY 2003.

Low operating margins in Connecticut hospitals are attributed to rising costs for personnel (salaries, pensions, and employee benefits) and technology, high insurance premiums, and increased demand for services. In FY 2003, pension expenses increased 63%, employee fringe benefits increased 17%, and malpractice insurance premiums increased 65% over FY 2002 costs. Forecasts by the OHCA predict an average 6% increase per year for hospital expenses through 2007 with the largest single expense (58%) being attributed to non-physician salaries and fringe benefits and the fastest growing sector (11% growth per year) being supply and drug expenditures.

In addition to rising costs, operating budgets are negatively affected by revenue-related issues, such as low reimbursement rates from federal and state funded programs, uncompensated care, and the 2002 drop in the stock market. Uncompensated care costs as a percent of total hospital expenses averaged 3.5% for Connecticut hospitals from FY 1999 to FY 2001 and dropped slightly to 2.1% in FY 2003. Reimbursements from public programs, as measured by payment to cost ratios, have remained at relatively steady but inadequate levels. While non-government reimbursement payment to cost ratios for FY 2001 to FY 2003 were between 1.0 and 1.2, reimbursement ratios for the Medicare program range were between 0.9 and 1.0, and were between 0.70 and 0.80 for the Medicaid program.

Total net revenue increases of 8.5% barely kept pace with an increase in total hospital expenses of 8.33% in FY 2003, as income
from development activities and appreciation of assets offset low or negative operating margins.\textsuperscript{75} The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) on behalf of its membership has developed an ambitious legislative agenda in which the improvement of Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospitals and relief from increasing medical costs of medical liability insurance play prominent roles.\textsuperscript{76} While there was much activity during the 2003 and 2004 legislative sessions, proposals for reform received strong support and strong opposition. Lobbying to achieve adequate increase in Medicaid reimbursement has had limited success as the state struggles with its own fiscal issues. This issue is likely to remain on the front burner for key stake-holders for the foreseeable future. Similarly, reform of the medical liability system is a controversial topic. Medical malpractice insurance will remain as a key issue for consideration by the state legislature during the next legislative session.\textsuperscript{77} One proposal (SB-61) for malpractice insurance reform remained alive during the 2004 state legislative session despite considerable revisions. This bill, if approved, would establish a "Healthy Connecticut Fund" that would allow health providers to deduct their medical liability premiums on their income taxes and provide for a reinsurance fund to cover a percentage of the costs of medical malpractice awards or settlements for physicians and hospitals that exceed a certain amount.\textsuperscript{78}

\textbf{Recommendations}

Solutions for the continuing workforce shortage are complex. More resources, while necessary, is not the singular solution, as health care expenditures in the United States already exceed any other industrialized country in per capita spending, yet result in average or below average indicators of health in the nation's population. Policy changes combined with resources are needed. First, opportunities for current health care workers, such as professional development resources, career ladders, and work schedules that accommodate family and community, are needed to aid in recruitment. Second, establishment of career tracks beginning in middle and high school, including early exposure to health professions, role modeling, and sufficient math and science
preparation will help create a greater pool of qualified and motivated students. Third, resources for workforce enhancement must be redirected toward longer-term solutions that promote retention, professional development, and workforce satisfaction, rather than short-term solutions that inflate health care costs without achieving workforce stability.

Information regarding the health care workforce must become a readily available resource for the policymaking bodies of the state, if they are to manage rather than react to health workforce shortages, and develop long-term solutions rather than short-term fixes. First, licensure agencies for health care workers within the Secretary of State’s office must provide data on the numbers of health care workers and workforce demographics, types of employment settings, current vacancies and projected workforce as indicated by currently enrolled health care students. Second, the Department of Public Health should develop health care needs projections based on population demographics, health indicators, and health care facilities and services. Trends in changing health care demands, technology, and health care financing should also be studied. Finally, the Department of Higher Education should develop plans to assist educational institutions, both public and private, to provide needed health professions education programs, student financial aid, and educational opportunities for health career advancement for the current workforce. Currently, much of the data needed for these initiatives are available through existing sources if collected, organized, and analyzed for these purposes. Similarly, resources for these initiatives may already exist but are directed elsewhere. The health care workforce shortage is a significant, persisting, and growing concern for Connecticut policy makers. It will require priority status in the distribution of the state’s resources and efforts in the coming years.

In regard to access, availability, and distribution of high quality health care services is more than adequate to serve the residents of the state, except for behavioral health services. Connecticut leads the nation in immunizations for children and boasts numbers of uninsured persons less than the national average. Despite this good news, approximately 351,000 of Connecticut’s residents still lack health insurance coverage. This number is likely to
rise by another 86,000 if the proposed changes to the state's Medicaid and HUSKY programs become a reality. A coordinated system of health care coverage is needed in the state that will provide incentives for participation of small companies, reduce costs for individuals currently covered, and extend coverage to those who are uninsured.

Availability of inpatient psychiatric beds remains a critical access issue in the state. Legislation is needed that requires public and private health insurers reimbursement rates to cover the cost of care and eventually achieve parity with reimbursement for physical health care. Otherwise, hospitals are motivated to decrease their psychiatric bed capacity.

Under the current systems of delivery of health care in Connecticut, hospitals and other facilities and individual practitioners will continue to experience climbing costs threatening their ability to provide quality services to the citizens of the state. As costs climb, so will prices, making services less affordable. The health care workforce will suffer as a result as health providers seek ways to cut their leading expense: personnel. If left unchecked, workforce shortages will worsen, due to an aging health care workforce, an aging health professions faculty, and the lack of resources to expand program enrollments in educational institutions. The state government and other payers will continue to contain costs by decreasing accessibility and limiting eligibility for health care services. The poor, the elderly, and the disabled, who are the primary beneficiaries of publicly-funded health care, will bear the burden. Systemic change is needed to ensure quality health care will be available when it is needed. Simply seeking increases in reimbursement rates or shifting the costs of malpractice insurance premiums from health care providers to tax payers is not likely to result in long-term solutions. Both providers and those who pay for services and goods will need to collaborate more than they have in the past to use their buying power to bring down prices. The approach to solving the malpractice crisis may also need to change its focus from capping awards and shifting the costs of malpractice premiums to taxpayers to reducing the monopoly that allows insurers to raise prices unchecked. Finding ways to create realistic expectations and improving satisfaction among consumers may also lead to a decrease in litigation.
Notes

32. COHCA, "2003: Report to the Governor," p. 3.
35. Kaiser Commission, "The Uninsured."
36. Kaiser Commission, "The Uninsured."
37. Kaiser Commission, "The Uninsured."
39. CHA, "Health care Coverage and Access;" and Connecticut Health Foundation and the Anthem Foundation of Connecticut, Health

41. COHCA, “2004 Small Employer.”
42. COHCA, “2004 Small Employer.”
43. COHCA, “2004 Small Employer.”


48. CHA, “Health care Coverage and Access.”


51. "The Impact of Premiums on Children."
52. "The Impact of Premiums on Children."
53. "Impact of Premiums on Pregnant Women."
54. "The Impact of Premiums on Children."
55. "Low-Income Elderly and Disabled."
56. "Co-Payments and Reduced Benefits."
57. Joan C. Alker, "Testimony."

64. Gerald F. Anderson, Uwe E. Reinhardt, Peter S. Hussey, and Vardhu Petrosyan, “It’s the Prices, Stupid: Why the United States is so Different from Other Countries,” *Health Affairs* 22, no. 3 (May 1, 2003): 89-105.


CHAPTER SEVEN

The Challenge of an Aging Population

NICOLE X. CAUVIN AND ELAINE B. DAVIS

The “Graying of American society” is the concept used to explain the reshaping of the population of the United States. This transformation of American society has already led to the emergence of many challenges, both at the federal and state levels. Foremost among these is how to provide for the quality of life of the elderly at a time when societal resources are stretched to the limit. Specifically, the provision of economic security, affordable health care and long-term care, adequate housing, and supportive services are necessary to maintain the well-being of an expanding elderly population.

To understand the challenges of an aging population faced by the state of Connecticut, the state must be placed within the context of the population revolution that has been going on in American society since the middle of the last century. However, the population projections for the future make the current challenges pale in comparison to those the society will face during the first fifty years of the twenty-first century. In the early 1900s, the United States was a young nation, with 50% of its population less than twenty-three years old, and a small percentage (4%) of the population over sixty-five. At that time, the median age of the American population was 22.9. The tripling of the sixty-five and older age category by the beginning of the twenty-first century brought the median age to 35.5, and elderly persons outnumbered teenagers.¹
The predictions for the next thirty years indicate that the sixty-five and older age category will make up 22% of the population. This substantial increase reflects the entrance of the baby boomers into that age group. And by 2030, the population of the United States will be reshaped to the point where more than 50% of Americans will be over 40 years old, and the median age will be over 39.²

The social structures of American society are severely affected by this transformation of its population. The older the population of a society, the more resources it must commit to assure the well-being of its elderly members. During a period of slow economic growth, this presents a major challenge for the society. Allocating resources to assure the well-being of its elderly population requires a balancing act on the part of the society, for inevitably people of different age categories are affected by the unavoidable shift in the allocation of resources that must be committed to the elderly segment of the society. Table 1 demonstrates the shifts in the age distribution of the population from 1998 to 2025.³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Age Distribution of U.S. Population from 1998-2025</th>
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<td>18.8</td>
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<td>18-24</td>
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<td>22-64</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, National Population Projections.

According to a publication by the Office of the Administration on Aging, “A Profile of Older Americans: 2002,” about one in every eight persons in the population is an older American. The sixty-five and older social category was overwhelmingly female. In 2000, there were 20.6 million older women to 14.4 million men, a ratio of 143 females to 100 males. The majority of the women seventy-five and older lived alone. The life expectancy of a female
who became sixty-five in 1998 was 84.2 years, and for a male it was 81.3 years. About one-third of the non-institutionalized older persons lived alone. Since 2000, the real median income of older people has suffered a decrease of 2.6%. The number of older Americans living below poverty level in 2001 was about 1.1%, and 2.2% fell in the category of the “near poor.” The Social Security Administration indicates that for 90% of retired older people, Social Security benefits are one of the primary sources of their income. Because it is the group that requires more services, the eighty-five and older age category is significant not only in terms of allocation of resources, but also because it is the fastest growing age category. Graph 1 presents the age distribution of the sixty-five and older population of the United States. While the seventy-five to eighty-four category decreases by 3.4%, the eighty-five and older group increases continuously by 4%.

Graph 1
Age Distribution in the U.S.
Population 65+ from 1990-2020

![Graph showing age distribution]


Since the racial and ethnic distribution of the sixty-five and older population in the United States reflects the racial and ethnic distribution of the total population, graph 2 gives an indication of the change in the diversity of the sixty-five and older age category. Except for the non-Hispanic white group, which will
experience a decrease in its elderly population by 2025, other ethnic and racial groups 65 and older will grow in their numbers. Although the non-Hispanic Black group is experiencing rapid growth, it is projected that Hispanic elderly will outnumber non-Hispanic Black elderly persons in 2025.7

Graph 2
Racial and Ethnic Distribution of
U.S. Population 65+ from 1998-2025

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\%} \\
0 \quad 10 \quad 20 \quad 30 \quad 40 \quad 50 \quad 60 \quad 70 \quad 80 \quad 90 \quad 100
\end{array}
\begin{array}{c}
\text{1989-2025}
\end{array}
\]


The brief survey of the challenges of an aging population at the national level presented above provides a context for understanding how these challenges are mirrored in Connecticut. Additionally, the survey provides a background for understanding how the state, through its policies on aging, is addressing the health care, long-term care, housing, economic security, and supportive services for its older residents, and how it is planning for an increase in this age category in the future.

Table 2 presents the age distribution of the population of Connecticut from 1995 to 2025. The data indicate that until the year 2000, the sixty-five and older age category in Connecticut made up a larger percentage of the state’s population in comparison to the elderly population at the national level. The same holds true for the projections for 2005 and 2015. However, in 2025, the projected increase for Connecticut is 1% lower than the increase projected for the nation.8
Table 2
Age Trends (% of Total Population) in Connecticut: 1995-2025

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<td>14.0</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
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</table>


The fastest growing age category in Connecticut, as is the case nationally, is the eighty-five and older population. The data in graph 3 show that, while all other categories experience a 2% decrease, the eighty-five and older category in Connecticut increases continuously by 4% from 1990-2020.9

Graph 3
Age Distribution of Connecticut
Population 65+ from 1990-2020


The data in graph 4 point out that the non-Hispanic white group sixty-five and older in Connecticut will decrease by 13% between 1995 and 2025, a slightly larger decrease than nationally. However, it is projected that all other racial and ethnic groups in
the state, just as in the nation, will experience an increase. Although at the national level the Hispanic group will outnumber the non-Hispanic Black group in 2025 by 1%, in Connecticut it will be larger by 5.2%.10

Graph 4


As the data presented above indicate, the rate of growth and the characteristics of the sixty-five and older residents of Connecticut create many challenges, especially during a period of slow economic growth. These challenges have expanded significantly over the past three years due to budgetary constraints combined with rising costs in health and long-term care, housing, and supportive services. Nonetheless, the priority of maintaining and improving the quality of life for elderly persons accentuates the need to support their capacity to live in their own homes for as long as possible with dignity and maximum independence. To address this need, it is imperative that the elderly have access to an array of community services including at the very least affordable health care, housing, and transportation.

Since the enactment of the Older Americans Act in 1965, the aging population in Connecticut has seen significant growth in the allocation of resources needed for nutrition, socialization, housing, health care, prescription drugs, long-term care, protection
and advocacy, transportation, and financial assistance. During the late 1990s, when the state budget surplus totaled more than $500 million, funds were appropriated to expand such programs as Connecticut Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract to the Elderly and Disabled (ConnPACE), the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE), the Elderly Nutrition Program (Meals-On-Wheels and congregate meals), the Statewide Respite Program (caregivers’ support), Senior Centers, Dial-a-Ride (transportation services), subsidized housing, assisted living, adult day care, and the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (protection of seniors from abuse).

Despite such expansion of programs and services to the elderly, several areas of unmet need are identified in the 2002-05 Connecticut State Plan on Aging, including, among others, health promotion and disease prevention, economic security, housing, transportation, accessibility of services for target populations (older, lower income, minority group members), and of particular importance, long-term care.¹¹ In recent years, due to budgetary constraints, the above-listed categories were subjected to funding cutbacks. As a result, the state faces ongoing challenges in developing a satisfactory and stable level of services for the elderly that is not vulnerable to economic fluctuations.

Within the category of health promotion and disease prevention, two service areas have been defined as needing further attention in consumer and provider surveys, needs assessments, and statistical studies: elderly nutrition and prescription drug benefits. Elderly nutrition is cited as one of the factors most likely to prevent premature institutionalization, due to the fact that poor nutrition places seniors at serious risk of chronic health problems, which frequently necessitate nursing home placement.¹² By 2002, $250,000 had been cut from the Elderly Services budget line for nutrition programs, including Meals-On-Wheels and congregate meals.¹³ With the introduction of Committee Bill 729 in 2003, funding was restored to the previous level, but the possibility exists that in the future there may be “a reduction in funding for home-delivered meals, resulting in the implementation of waiting lists.”¹⁴

The second area cited—the rapidly escalating cost of prescription drugs—has caused growing concern on the part of
Connecticut legislators since the introduction of the state-funded Connecticut Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract to the Elderly and Disabled Program (ConnPACE) in 1987. Although ConnPACE provides assistance for lower-income persons 65 years of age or older or those who receive Social Security disability benefits, in 2001, 165,000 Connecticut seniors still lacked prescription drug coverage, due to the fact that the income limits had not been modified for many years. In 2002, changes in the law expanded the capability of seniors to receive prescription drug assistance through a state application to the federal government for a waiver to use Medicaid dollars to help support the ConnPACE Program. However, with the ensuing budget crisis that occurred in 2002, Governor Rowland proposed several cost-containment limitations to the ConnPACE program that would include asset testing for assistance, imposition of asset recovery provisions on estates following the death of ConnPACE recipients, prior authorization for costly drugs, allowance of generic drugs only, and increases in the application and co-pay fees.

With a budget surplus in 2004, the state legislature appropriated $1.25 million to eliminate the ConnPACE asset test and estate recovery requirements, and appropriated $14.5 million to repeal the Medicaid co-payments that were enacted in 2003. Additional legislation was passed that maximizes the use of federal benefits for recipients of the ConnPACE program through a requirement that program participants with incomes below 135% of the federal poverty level obtain a Medicare Discount Drug Card to be used in conjunction with ConnPACE. Through combined benefits, the participant will pay the lower of the two co-pays up to the $16.25 limit imposed by the ConnPace program. Despite these recent enhancements to the prescription drug benefits, advocates for the elderly in Connecticut are concerned that future budget crises may produce further reductions in eligibility limits and additional out-of-pocket expenses for low-income seniors on fixed incomes.

Uneasiness over the future of Social Security, Medicare, and pension income have produced a general sense of economic insecurity in later life. In 2000, almost 4% of the state's elderly population was below the poverty level and experienced difficulty
in meeting such specialized needs as paying for the high cost of medical care and prescription drugs, housing, nutritional meals, transportation, and personal care services. While the segment of the aging population with the lowest income has access to an array of federal and state-funded programs and services, those whose income is slightly above Medicaid guidelines are ineligible for assistance. Over the past two years, in response to budget deficits, the state of Connecticut has enacted legislation that lowers state costs for services and raises out-of-pocket expenditures for consumers. For example, as of October 1, 2003, increases in co-payments for prescription drugs have been imposed on Medicaid recipients. Furthermore, recent legislation has attempted to require the elderly to assume a greater share of the expenses for their long-term care. Examples include the state’s Partnership Program, which promotes long-term care insurance policies; proposed changes in the penalty period for transfer of resources; transferee liability; and “Income-First,” which redefines how a couple’s assets are divided when one spouse requires nursing home care. In response to such measures, advocates of the elderly support expansion of eligibility limits for services, along with protection of the consumer who is ineligible for Medicaid support. The vast majority of elderly experience substantial cuts to their incomes following retirement. As the costs of services increase, aging persons, and especially those on fixed incomes, become less self-reliant and increasingly dependent on the state to provide for their basic needs.

Subsidized housing and transportation services for the elderly are two elements of independent living that promote security, self-sufficiency, and the capacity to remain in one’s home and community. In its 2001-05 Area Plan on Aging, the South Central Connecticut Agency on Aging cited “Connecticut’s failure to provide adequately for the transportation and housing subsidy needs of its older adults” as a barrier that decreases accessibility to the state’s elderly services network. Further, “In its 2001 Long-Term Care Plan, the Long-Term Care Planning Committee recognized that expanded transportation services and accessible housing are integral supports that allow older adults . . . to live successfully in the community.”
Most elderly persons choose to live in their own homes with supportive services that allow them to remain independent. However, the exorbitant cost of home care can deplete an individual’s resources within a relatively short period of time. For such individuals, the only alternative may be Medicaid-supported nursing home care. The 1999 U.S. Supreme Court Olmstead decision, which affirmed the right of people with chronic illnesses or disabilities to avoid institutionalization and remain in the community with appropriate support services, highlights the demand for more affordable, accessible housing and assisted living options. Moreover, significant increases in the cost of nursing home care have created a need to examine other viable alternatives for frail elderly who require services. In response to the Olmstead decision and the growing need for housing options, Connecticut has initiated several pilot projects that provide subsidized assisted living to elderly and disabled persons. Unfortunately, however, eligibility requirements still limit access to assisted living to those who can self-pay and low-income individuals eligible for Medicaid. Major housing priorities for the State of Connecticut over the next few years will include: expansion of access to assisted living by low- and moderate-income elderly, raising income limits for housing assistance, expansion of Reverse Annuity Mortgage (RAM) loans, and the provision of alternative housing options, along with increased subsidies for elderly housing.

Those most in need of transportation services tend to be older, lower income, minority group members who live alone and require assistance with personal care and routine activities. According to the 2003 Legislative Summary by the Connecticut Elder Action Network (CEAN), the state has not met the need for elderly transportation services due to insufficient funding, lack of state oversight for dial-a-ride programs, and because no coordinated system of regional transportation services exists for older persons. The Elderly Services Division of the Connecticut Department of Social Services stated as one of its objectives in the 2002-05 Connecticut State Plan on Aging that it would expand its advocacy efforts to establish coordinated transportation services for the elderly and disabled and would explore the feasibility of innovative transportation programs. No new legislation on
transportation services was introduced in the 2003 session of the legislature. In 2004, House Bill #5006 proposed that $500,000 be allocated to the Department of Transportation to assist municipalities in funding the Dial-a-Ride program; however, no action was taken on this bill prior to the close of the legislative session.\textsuperscript{25}

Although lower income, minority seniors comprise the group of elderly who are most in need of supportive services, they are also more likely to experience economic, cultural, linguistic, and informational barriers to services. Moreover, African-American and Hispanic elderly tend to under-utilize the health care system and therefore are more vulnerable to chronic illness and eventual nursing home placement.\textsuperscript{26} Due to the significant growth in Connecticut's minority population over the past ten years, a commitment to serving older, low-income members of minority groups has received increased attention in the legislature and in the State and Area Plans for services to the elderly. Other target populations that have been prioritized in the 2002-05 Connecticut State Plan on Aging include older women, isolated elderly, and residents of rural communities.\textsuperscript{27}

Historically, long-term care was interpreted to mean nursing home placement, and the state legislature traditionally supported funding for nursing home care as the primary response to an aging and infirm population in their later years. Medicaid reimbursement has also favored institutional care over home and community-based care. During the 1990s, Connecticut allocated the vast majority of the state's Medicaid long-term care spending for institutional care. The past decade, however, has witnessed a growing movement toward assisting elderly persons in their capacity to remain independent and continue to live in their homes and communities. The 2004 Long-Term Care Plan for Connecticut states that "Individuals should receive care in the least restrictive setting with institutional care provided as a last resort."\textsuperscript{28} And, as noted in the 2001-05 Area Plan for Aging, "Today, the expansion of the long-term care system into a continuum of interrelated home and community-based services has become a high order priority at both the state and local levels in Connecticut."\textsuperscript{29}
At a cost of almost $60,000 per year for nursing home care in Connecticut, and with the growing numbers of older elderly persons (eighty-five years and older) who require care, the state is being forced to adopt measures to ensure a balance in the proportion of funding allocated to institutional and home-based care. Although there has been a slight shift in recent years, during 2003 70% of Medicaid long-term care funding was still allocated to institutional care, while only 30% was spent on community-based services. Moreover, 52% of elderly persons received Medicaid funding for institutional care, while only 48% received assistance for community-based care. To increase the percentage of Medicaid spending for community-based care, the state has enacted legislation in recent years that expands home and community-based services through CHCPE. Other measures recently adopted by the state legislature have eliminated the income eligibility caps for CHCPE, and offer additional assisted living and elderly housing options. Nonetheless, substantial increases in spending for home care will need to be undertaken to meet the objectives of the 2004 Long-Term Care Plan for providing community-based care to 75% of the elderly population by 2025. As noted in the Connecticut Elder Action Network (CEAN) 2004 Legislative Summary, "Despite significant commitment on the part of the State to the concept and practice of home and community-based care, however, the level of public resources devoted to institutional care still remains disproportionate to that expended for home care supports."

Thus, as the baby boomers approach retirement age and the growth in the elderly population begins to expand rapidly during the first quarter of the twenty-first century, Connecticut will face daunting challenges in providing vital resources and services to its elderly population. Specifically, Connecticut needs to provide economic security, affordable health care and long-term care, adequate housing, and supportive services necessary to maintain the well-being of its expanding elderly population. Moreover, the relatively recent shift in thinking about how to care for the aging population necessitates taking a fresh look at the proportion of Medicaid dollars allocated to institutional versus home and community-based care. Finally, the commitment to individual-
choice, to independent living for as long as possible, and to community-based care will depend on the willingness and capacity of the legislature to seek innovative methods of funding services for the elderly of Connecticut.

Notes


7. Total Population by Age.


17. "OLR Major Acts."


CHAPTER EIGHT

The Challenge of Prison
Overcrowding and Recidivism

PEARL JACOBS

If you ask people what they fear most in present-day society, no doubt many will say becoming a victim of a crime. Coupled with this is the belief that the only way to eliminate this fear is to incarcerate criminals for a very long time, maybe forever. It is possible that such a philosophy is actually creating more crime. If criminals are incarcerated for longer periods of time then there must be prison space to secure these individuals for these extended periods. This requires the construction of additional prisons. Most law-abiding citizens are opposed to the use of government funds to build prisons. The existing prisons are forced to accommodate more criminals leading to overcrowding. Rather than rehabilitating individuals in our correctional facilities and returning them to society with the potential to become productive citizens, overcrowding has transformed prisons into holding facilities with little or no opportunities for rehabilitation. Prison overcrowding produces individuals unable to cope or survive in free society. Crime and not honest work becomes the ex-offender’s survival method because the criminal world is the only world this individual is accepted into and can succeed in. It is a vicious cycle. We attempt to fight crime by incarcerating criminals for longer and longer periods of time in existing facilities. These people leave these facilities after serving their sentences much the same as they entered. They are still not
prepared to function in legitimate society. Ex-offenders then resume their criminal careers returning again and again to prison. Thus, the recidivist, a major source of crime in our society and a contributor to Connecticut's prison overcrowding problem, is created.¹

The state of Connecticut is currently dealing with a growing prison population. Research has determined that incarceration may be responsible for about a 25% decline in the crime rate. However, 75% of the drop in crime may be due to factors other than incarceration.² An Urban Institute report indicated that "massive incarceration practices weaken the informal social structures long associated with crime prevention (i.e., strong families, individual and social capital, workforce participation of men in the community) and a tipping point is reached where crime is less inhibited."³

There is a solution to this problem; however, there is a great deal of reluctance to pursue this solution because it means supporting a politically unpopular group, the individuals convicted of crimes. I am not suggesting that we ignore the crimes committed by these individuals. I am suggesting that we consider alternatives to reducing the recidivism rate rather than relying on incarceration. Reducing recidivism will also reduce prison overcrowding. Thus, we should focus on programs and policies to alleviate recidivism.

Studies indicate that there are indeed legitimate alternatives to incarceration as a means of reducing the rate of recidivism. For example, it has been suggested that we concentrate on expanding intervention programs dealing with drug treatment, employment, and education. Such programs have been found to reduce the recidivism rate.⁴ One question that may be asked in response to the suggestion that we support the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders is simply, why? Why should we assist this group of unpopular and unproductive individuals? If we are seeking safety and security in our society then we must provide assistance and support for this very large group of individuals, ex-offenders, who without such support threaten the security of society. They are expected to leave the controlled and restricted environment of a prison and immediately become productive citizens. They
cannot do this without major assistance. They are, after all, a very large group of people. It is estimated that 47 million people in this country have criminal history files. That is about 25% of the adult population of this country. In 2003 it was reported that Connecticut was number three in prisoner population increase. The Connecticut prison population had grown 7.9% from the previous year. This represented the third highest growth rate in the country.

Large numbers of offenders are released from state prisons each year and returned to society. In 1999 over 500,000 individuals were released from state and federal institutions. Most of these ex-offenders were not convicted of violent crimes but rather drug-related or property crimes. Data indicate that 71% of state prisoners have non-violent conviction records. The major reason for prison admissions in the U.S. since 1980 is some kind of drug offense. In addition, deinstitutionalization has resulted in increasing numbers of mentally ill inmates. It has been reported that almost 1 in 5 inmates in the U.S. prisons is mentally ill. The conditions fostered by prison overcrowding exacerbate the mental illness. Despite these problems, states are spending increasing amounts on prison operating costs but not on rehabilitation. This translates into individuals leaving prison without having their employment, education, or substance abuse problems addressed.

Individuals released from prison today remain unprepared for reintegration into society. They often have no skills and lack a family support system. In addition, they have the stigma of a prison record. Their lack of preparation for successful reintegration into society places them at risk to become repeat offenders. In a report for the National Institute of Justice on ex-offenders returning to the community, Joan Petersilia wrote:

Most arrests occur in the first 6 months after release. Fully two-thirds of all parolees are rearrested within 3 years. The numbers are so high that parole failures account for a growing proportion of all new prison admissions. In 1980, they constituted 17 percent of all admissions, but now make up 35 percent.
Ex-offenders face enormous obstacles trying to reconnect with society and get a job. Many have substance abuse problems, limited work experience, limited education, and physical and mental health problems. Successful reintegration is extremely difficult given these many barriers. Most researchers agree that employment is essential for the reintegration of ex-offenders. Employment creates stability, commitment, and responsibility. Providing assistance to ex-offenders in obtaining employment reduces the likelihood of recidivism.

There is, in fact, national support for prevention and rehabilitation programs. That is, we as a society do care about these people. We do believe that assisting them will help reduce crime. The results of a recent survey demonstrate society’s support for these individuals:

Almost two-thirds of the respondents agreed that “the best way to reduce crime is to rehabilitate prisoners by requiring education and job training,” twice as many as supported long prison sentences to incapacitate prisoners. The poll also found that three-quarters of those surveyed favored supervised mandatory drug treatment and community service rather than prison time for those convicted of drug possession and minor drug sales offenses. These results and other indicators suggest greater public support for criminal justice policies which are not just “tough on crime” but which fairly and effectively increase public safety and reduce recidivism.11

Research has indicated that one common factor shared by most ex-offenders is the difficulty of finding permanent employment. There is evidence that this is related to recidivism.12 This problem has been made worse by the change in policy in the late 1970s that increased the incarceration period for individuals convicted of crimes. Beginning in the 1970s the philosophy of rehabilitation that was integral to the model of indeterminate sentencing began to erode. Indeterminate sentencing is defined as “a period of incarceration set by a judge as a minimum term that must be served before a decision on parole eligibility is made and
a maximum term at the conclusion of which the sentence has been completed (for example, five to ten years)." Indeterminate sentencing encompassed a wide range of possible sentences that supported the correctional goal of rehabilitation. In the mid-1970s critics began demanding change for various reasons. A report by the Urban Institute describes some of these reasons:

For instance, civil rights activists and defense lawyers, citing evidence of widespread racial and class disparities in sentencing and correctional administration, called for limiting the discretion of judges and other correctional authorities in sentencing matters. On the other hand, political conservatives pointed to rising crime rates and research findings that questioned the effectiveness of rehabilitation and advocated sentencing reforms as a means to enforce tougher standards and crack down on criminals. This ideological and political shift away from the framework of indeterminate sentencing has had significant effects on federal and state sentencing policy. The unifying sentencing approach of the past has been replaced with a variety of state-level experiments in mandatory minimums, abolition of discretionary parole release, three-strikes laws, sex offender registration, sharply reduced judicial discretion, and truth-in-sentencing policies among others.¹⁴

Thus, ex-offenders are being released after being away from society and employment for longer periods of time. We also know that since the 1990s pre-release programs involving education and vocational training have declined. The so called “tough on crime” measures are largely responsible for this. This action encouraged, “similar retrenchment at the state level.”¹⁵ Fishman wrote about the effects of these policies on prisoner re-entry in New Jersey:

In 1996, for example, almost $22 billion was spent on prison construction, staff and maintenance of facilities and prisoners, but only 6 percent of that amount was spent on education, job training, treatment, and similar program
activities. This is particularly troublesome because the majority of prisoners enter prison with substance abuse problems, but only 10 percent reported receiving treatment in 1997, compared to 25 percent in 1991.16

Ex-offenders need support after their release; the research tells us that they are most likely to commit crimes within their first year of release.17 Assisting ex-offenders in their search for employment during this critical time can reduce the rate of recidivism. Employment offers stability and provides less time to engage in illegal activities. There have been many government programs that have tried to provide job placement services for ex-offenders, beginning with the Manpower Demonstration and Training Act of 1962 and ending with the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (CETA). CETA funding ended in 1982 and so did government-assisted employment programs for ex-offenders. These programs were not very successful because they concentrated on job placement rather than “job readiness.” That is, they failed to consider the problems faced by many ex-offenders, such as substance abuse, lack of proper housing, low literacy levels, and mental illness as well as the stigma associated with being an ex-offender.18

The status of “ex-offender” also legally excludes these individuals from certain occupations such as health care, government positions, and criminal justice occupations. In addition, special statutes close certain occupational fields to those with a “lack of good moral character,” commonly associated with individuals with criminal backgrounds.19

It is not just certain types of discrimination and lack of job skills that limit the successful reintegration of ex-offenders. It is their low literacy levels as well. There is insufficient education and training available to prison inmates to change this situation. Prior to 1994, inmates could avail themselves of Pell Grant funds. Inmates received a mere 1% of these funds. Although limited, these funds did provide inmates some opportunity for rehabilitation through education. But the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 denied access to these funds to anyone in a federal or state penal institution, despite research that
supports a positive correlation between education and a reduction in recidivism. The reintegration of ex-offenders is made even more difficult by the fact that they are often denied access to public assistance. A report by the Great Cities Institute noted the significance of this denial of aid:

Ex-offenders are also confronted with severe financial hardships after they are released. The difficulties of earning a living wage through employment are magnified by the restrictions imposed on ex-offenders through the new welfare reform laws. A key provision in the federal welfare law of 1996 requires states to permanently bar individuals with drug-related felony convictions from receiving public assistance, including food stamps, during their lifetimes. The denial of welfare benefits makes it more difficult for the increasing number of individuals with drug-related felonies to participate in drug treatment and job readiness programs that are critical for their reintegration into society.

Ex-offenders also face problems with securing adequate housing. According to the law, if individuals commit a drug-related offense that results in eviction from public housing, they are denied eligibility for such housing for three years. Thus, many ex-offenders find themselves homeless.

It seems clear that individuals who have been incarcerated need assistance making the transition from inmate to ex-offender. Pre-release programs have been developed to ease this transition. The problem with most current pre-release programs is that they are not long enough nor are they offered soon enough. This must be corrected.

The state of Connecticut is beginning to understand the special needs of ex-offenders. It is beginning to act on the research supporting the correlation between employment and lower recidivism rates, but so far the government's response to this pressing need has been minimal. In July 2002, Connecticut received $200,000 in federal funds to assist the reintegration of ex-
offenders. We continue to invest in prison expansion despite evidence that incarceration costs far exceed the costs involved in rehabilitation and reintegration.\textsuperscript{22} For example, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 supports stricter punishments and funding for the construction of new prisons. It does not provide funding for the education of offenders or ex-offenders.

We need to invest more in reintegation programs if we are truly determined to reduce recidivism and thereby reduce crime and prison overcrowding. We will not be successful in helping ex-offenders sustain employment until we address the problems affecting their employment. These problems begin at the so-called “moment of release.” Ex-offenders are often released from prison without the necessary identification required for employment or information on how to obtain substance abuse treatment or apply for public assistance. The extensive use of pre-release and follow-up programs might reduce the rate of recidivism and result in more-successful reintegration after release.\textsuperscript{23} These pre-release and follow-up programs should also be used to create awareness of the need to support ex-offenders and eliminate the fear that employers have concerning the hiring of ex-offenders. A report prepared under the direction of the Department of Labor stated that “perhaps the most serious barriers to employment are the bias and stigma arising from having a criminal record. Many employers are hesitant to hire applicants with conviction histories.”\textsuperscript{24} If we are serious about reducing crime then we must be aggressive in supporting the employment of ex-offenders. Perhaps the state of Connecticut should consider providing services that would ease the fears of employers, such as drug testing and verifying prior employment records.

Employment for ex-offenders can be secured and continued if officials become familiar with employers who are willing to hire ex-offenders. There are such employers. They are aware of the economic benefits of such hires, and should be sought and cultivated. One way of encouraging employers to participate in the hiring of ex-offenders is to make them aware of the financial incentives available. These include the Federal Bonding Program, tax credits, and Workforce Investment Act assistance.\textsuperscript{25}

In addition, an attractive incentive that the state could provide to employers is free human resource services, to help match the
employee to the position. This would be of particular benefit to smaller employers who can’t afford human resource departments. Larger employers would benefit as well from the ready source of employees. The state could save employers additional funds by providing information on the employees and eliminating the need for costly background checks.\textsuperscript{26}

There are substantial difficulties even the most determined and motivated ex-offender must face once he or she secures employment. We must develop programs that consider and deal with these issues as well. For example, individuals placed on probation or parole must adhere to certain rules. Finding employment is not the only requirement of probation or parole. Individuals convicted of drug offenses have additional obligations of attending counseling sessions, drug screenings, and meeting with probation and parole officers. It is difficult to find a job with the flexibility to meet all these obligations.

Perhaps some attention should be given to the adjustment of parole requirements. A report by the Urban Institute indicated that first time offenders were more successful on parole than recidivists. Parole agencies could use this information to identify those individuals more likely to return to incarceration.\textsuperscript{27} This report suggests that states could use this information for resource allocation:

For example, states often have a standard set of release conditions that applies to all parolees under supervision. All parolees may be required to report to their parole officer within the first 48 hours. All parolees may be required to check in with their parole officer on a weekly basis. All parolees may be prohibited from traveling more than 50 miles from their place of residence. Knowing that first-releases are more likely than re-releases to succeed may suggest a different set of standard conditions for the two groups, allowing finite fiscal and human resources to be targeted better.\textsuperscript{28}

There are also several post-employment services that the state could provide to help ex-offenders sustain employment. They include childcare, transportation, and training courses. The state
could also mediate problems between the employer and the employee. A report by the Department of Labor states that "by taking the initiative in addressing issues that might otherwise compromise the working relationships of your participants and their employers, you will be providing an additional incentive to employers to hire your clients." 29

The road to employment and reintegration of the ex-offender not only involves preparing the employer but preparing the ex-offender as well. The ex-offender will most probably be asked to discuss his or her criminal record. The manner in which he or she does this will determine whether or not he or she remains a candidate for the job. Individuals must be encouraged to be completely honest. Employers conduct a variety of background checks and they will discover erroneous information. Such information constitutes legal grounds for dismissal. There are legitimate ways of approaching this issue that should be taught to the job seeking ex-offender. There is literature that describes the techniques involved in this process. For example, Mukamal suggests the following:

Persuade participants to explain any mitigating circumstance connected to a particular offense. Efforts at rehabilitation should be emphasized. Particular attention should be paid to any vocational training or education, employment experiences, community service performed, and successful alcohol or substance abuse treatment the client has attained since committing the offense. While participants should be advised to tell the truth about their criminal records, you should discuss with them ways to limit their responses to employment applications to the specific information asked of them. For instance, if an application asks a person to list all "convictions" or convictions of all "offenses," the applicant should identify both criminal (felony and misdemeanor) and noncriminal conviction but need not list any arrest that was not followed by a conviction. On the other hand, if an application asks about "crimes," "convictions or crimes," or "criminal offenses," only misdemeanors and felonies need to be identified. 30
The Ex-Offender Employability Task Force of the State of Illinois researched a series of ex-offender employment programs and prepared a list of recommendations. These recommendations address specific issues related to ex-offender employment. Many of them are worthy of consideration and application to ex-offender employment programs in Connecticut. They include:

- Make personal contact with inmates early in the incarceration period and provide information about resources.

- Conduct a broad assessment of ex-offenders’ skills, interests, strengths, and talents. Use assessment results to help ex-offenders build a realistic and meaningful employment plan.

- Insure that practitioners are available to assess and respond to ex-offenders’ issues in a timely and supportive manner.

- Provide ex-offender participants access to vocational training opportunities to qualify them for career path jobs.

- Create relationships with a broad range of community service providers, including substance abuse, housing, and legal services, to meet ex-offenders’ needs.

- Cultivate diverse entry-level job opportunities to match the diverse skill levels of clients.

- Follow-up with ex-offenders intensively immediately after placement.

- Create personal relationship with employers through consistent follow-up and responses to problems when they arise.

- Create linkages with Community Colleges to supplement the community-based ex-offender employment programs with Basic Adult, GED, and credit educational programs.
We need to show ex-offenders that they are still part of our society. We should treat them "humanely and creatively while at the same time expressing society's condemnation, not of them as persons, but of their conduct and the conditions underlying their conduct." As Harold J. Berman points out:

Today everyone knows that no amount of force which the police are capable of exerting can stop urban crime. In the last analysis, what deters crime is the tradition of being law-abiding, and this in turn depends upon a deeply or passionately held conviction that law is not only an instrument of secular policy but also part of the ultimate purpose and meaning of life.

We will have a safer and more secure world if we can incorporate ex-offenders into society and show them that the law is designed to benefit and protect all of us.

Notes

CHAPTER NINÉ

The Challenge of Inner City Education

LOIS A. LIBBY

There are two Connecticuts described in public education circles: One Connecticut includes a set of school systems that are suburban, educating predominately white and/or Asian students. These school districts are relatively affluent with a high success rate in all indicators of educational progress: standardized test scores, college participation rates, and dropout statistics. The other set of Connecticut school systems is urban, comprised primarily of students of color, and of low socio-economic status. These systems have low ratings in educational progress including failing ratings on standardized tests (the most recent including the results on the No Child Left Behind Assessments [NCLB]), high dropout rates, low SAT results, and low college participation rates.\(^1\) The purpose of this chapter is to focus on this latter set of schools, provide some history of their development, look at the indicators of poor progress in more detail, review options for ameliorating the urban school systems, including assessments of state efforts to date, and offer some perspectives and conclusions.

History of Public Education as a State Responsibility

The earliest laws of colonial Connecticut required every parent to see that the children under his/her aegis learned to read and write.\(^2\) According to State Historian Christopher Collier, in the Calvinist Connecticut colony, “you served God in two ways,
one through worshiping Him and the other through your worldly
calling—your trade." The colonial governors not only expected
that parents educate their children, they enforced their
expectations through constables who tested children’s reading and
writing skills and fined parents who did not comply. As will be
seen with the enforcement of federal No Child Left Behind
regulations, in 2003 the state has almost come full circle.

Since the 1700s, the Connecticut legislature has consistently
exercised its authority over public education by requiring towns
to establish schools, and when it had the resources, by developing
a school fund to share the role of supporting schools with local
communities. In the 1800s, the legislature also encouraged towns
to consolidate public schools when schools in disrepair failed to
improve, and finally, in the middle of the century, mandated that
schools be free to students ages 4-12. In the 1900s, the high school
became a focus for the legislature. For roughly the first half of the
twentieth century, only urban districts were able to afford public
high schools and suburban students were bused into the cities for
regional high school programs. Eventually, state dollars allowed
suburban districts to build their own high schools, leaving the
urban schools to only those students who live in the cities.¹

Thus the population of city schools became dominated more
and more by children of color and poor students whose parents
did not move to the suburbs. This trend has continued to the
present. Moreover, white (and some minority) parents who have
remained in the cities and can afford the cost of tuition have opted
to send their children to private and parochial schools. This
phenomenon has been exacerbated by the mandated desegregation
plans of public schools in the cities in the 1970s, which remain in
effect.

The city of Bridgeport offers a specific case study of the
development of racial isolation in city schools in Connecticut.
Until the late 1950s, students from suburbs such as Trumbull
traveled to Bridgeport to attend high school. Trumbull then built
a high school in the late 1950s, removing predominantly white
students from Bridgeport’s three high schools. In 1975, the city
became the subject of a federal desegregation suit based on the
claim that the schools within the city limits needed to be racially
balanced. When mandatory busing became the rule within city limits, Bridgeport experienced more "white flight" to the suburbs as parents enrolled their students in private and parochial schools. For a period of time in the 1980s, the city actually paid for busing private school students to the private schools in suburbs.

The demographics of the population of public schools versus the overall population demonstrate the impact of white flight to this day. The overall population of the city of Bridgeport is roughly 33% white, 33% Black, and 33% Hispanic. The school population is 89% nonwhite (predominately African-Americans and Hispanics) and 11% white. In 1970, the nonwhite enrollment in the Bridgeport School system was 53%; in 1980; 74%; in 1990, 82%; and in 2003, 89%. This is an overall increase of 36% in the proportion of nonwhite students since 1970. The teachers of the students, however, remain predominantly white, which is another disparity issue for the litigants in the continuing desegregation suit against the city. As a result, the judge has ruled that Bridgeport must hire two nonwhite teachers for each white teacher.

**Litigation and the Two Connecticuts**

The state courts have been called upon to intervene in improving equity of educational opportunity for the students in the second Connecticut. In both *Horton v. Meskill*, decided in 1977 and the current *Sheff v. O'Neill*, decided in 1996, the plaintiffs have cited the state's responsibility for educating all of its citizens. Given the variable levels of local resources in the state, the suits have challenged the principle that local fiscal support of education, even enhanced by state assistance, can provide equitable educational opportunity. Since the local resources are generated from taxing the grand list of property in each community, the plaintiffs have railed against the "sheer irrationality of a system that allocates education on the basis of property values" (*Horton v. Meskill*).

In the *Horton v. Meskill* case, the defendants of the status quo argued that towns' sovereign immunity was a precedent for maintaining local autonomy with respect to administering education. They also testified about the lack of conclusive evidence
of a correlation between amount of funds allocated for education and the educational product. The plaintiffs, on the other hand, cited citizens' rights for equal protection under the law. They noted the great disparities among such local municipalities such as Greenwich and rural Canton, the site of the plaintiff's school, in their ability to fund education. The state lost the Horton v. Meskill case, as summarized by the following memorandum included in the decision:

Under the equal protection clause, as interference with the fundamental right to education requires strict judicial scrutiny, the state's statutory system of delegating its duty to provide education to municipalities is not entitled to the usual presumption of validity and the state must carry a heavy burden of justification.

Since this decision, the State Department of Education has established a number of study commissions to determine state systems of funding based on equity factors. Prior to the court decision in 1974, the state education grant was a flat grant based on average daily membership on the schools' rosters. The remedy since 1974 has been to do away with flat grants in favor of formula grants based on the educational needs of students and the ability (or lack thereof) of communities to fund education.

In the Sheff v. O'Neill case, the issues focus specifically on equity of opportunity in the cities, specifically Hartford. The defendants cite the population trends of minority and poor students in the center cities where the schools are in increasingly run-down condition and resources are sparse. They provided evidence of disparity of educational opportunity between the cities and the suburbs and attribute the inequities at least in part to racial isolation. Among the questions raised was whether students must be educated in venues that reflect the diversity of the greater metropolitan areas.

The Sheff v. O'Neill ruling determined that the plaintiffs were correct in their assertion that the poor educational outcomes in Hartford were due to racial and economic isolation, and that diversity in educational populations is critical for students to be
fairly and properly prepared for society's needs. One remedy is to charge the state to broaden administrative oversight units from municipalities to larger regions (for desegregation purposes). If there were regional administrative units charged with desegregation, the state could provide incentives for schools to be constructed in sites on borders of two communities, thereby attracting diverse students. The state could even insist that grants for school construction include provisions for serving diverse populations. Currently, school construction grants do offer a 10% bonus for including space for out-of-district enrollment.

Under Lowell P. Weicker, Jr., as governor, the 1994 state legislature increased the pressure on voluntary regional desegregation through Public Act 93-263, which required the development of regional plans for quality, integrated education. The community administrators for each region were charged to devise projects and programs that would not only address desegregation within schools but also the issues of housing and poverty. These plans were drawn up and were either endorsed or voted down by regional representatives from the communities. When Governor Weicker stepped down, his successor, John G. Rowland, announced that he would not enforce the implementation of the plans.

To respond to the judicial pressure of Sheff v. O'Neill and the overall poor performance of the urban schools in the second Connecticut, the Connecticut State Department of Education appointed a blue-ribbon panel to recommend responses to the court finding that the state needed to redress the inequities in educational opportunities in the second Connecticut. As a result, the state has implemented a number of initiatives, including incentive funding opportunities for voluntary desegregation as well as grants to the cities in targeted areas such as literacy and early childhood education. In fact, current Commissioner of Education, Betty Sternberg, has indicated that the preponderance of state resources for education should focus primarily on the cities and address the "achievement gap" between students in the cities and the suburbs.

Initially in the 1980s, the state of Connecticut labeled urban school districts as "priority" in terms of need for educational funding and support from the Connecticut legislature. These
included the largest city school districts in Connecticut (Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven) as well as the next larger tier of city districts (Bristol, East Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, Windham, Waterbury, New London, and Stamford). Norwalk, Torrington, West Haven, and Danbury were added to a later list. Putnam is the only rural area listed as a priority district. As a result of the priority designation, these districts have been given weighted consideration in larger proportions of funding pots, for awards of discretionary grants, and in funding formulas for state aid. The 2004 legislature provided $43.5 million for annual grants to priority school districts. These grants include the following, listed according to population:

- Hartford: $6 million
- Bridgeport: $5.5 million
- New Haven: $5 million
- Norwalk: $2.8 million
- Ansonia: $700,000

Programs and Projects in Response to Litigation

Subsequently, the following specific initiatives have been directed at improving the academic performance of students in the second Connecticut. The earlier projects, included in Public Act 97-270, can be grouped as efforts to counter racial isolation in the cities through intradistrict as well as interdistrict, regional efforts. Later efforts include grants for the cities, frequently to the exclusion of the suburbs. These are targeted toward improving academic performance in specific areas or for specific target populations. For the city of Hartford, these efforts have also included a takeover of the administration of the school system from 1997-2002.

*Project Concern and Project Open Choice*

In the 1960s, Project Concern was initiated to allow selected urban students to attend schools in surrounding suburbs. State grants paid for the transportation as well as tutors, social
workers/school counselors, and bus aides, and the grants to suburban districts included small stipends for each student accepted. Although the project waned in the 1980s, due to criticism that the program had minimal impact on the urban population overall in the cities and that the cities selected only "model" students for participation, some suburban school districts continued supporting students who had started attending their schools through the 1980s. In the 1990s, as a partial response to the concerns of Sheff v. O'Neill, the state legislature created a new "two way" busing program that is still in effect. For selected urban areas (Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport) contiguous suburban and urban school districts must indicate the number of openings they have for students from the urban districts. Students apply and if selected (by lottery if necessary), they enroll and are transported at public cost. The receiving district is granted $2,000 per pupil. Urban students predominate in this busing program, although some suburban parents who work in cities opt to send their children to schools near where they work. This program was briefly extended to New London, Windham, and Waterbury, but has been discontinued for these urban areas. The Connecticut Center for School Change notes that the implementation of Project Choice has resulted in the following criticisms:

Since the program is predicated on available space, in Bridgeport, in 2000-01 only 23 of the 457 students who applied were able to participate. (Students who gain entry into the program must be allowed to complete high school in their receiving districts, and suburban districts who are strapped for space cannot be induced to making a legal commitment to students for twelve years).

The current transportation grant is much too small for the way that Project Choice is implemented in the New Haven and Hartford regions.

The students who choose to attend schools are not reflective of the racial make-up of the sending communities, e.g., African Americans are much more
likely than Latinos to participate and minorities from the suburbs make up the majority of students who attend the urban schools. For these reasons, the program has not had a significant effect on racial balance in the public schools.⁵

*Magnet Schools*

In the 1970s, after the implementation of federal court-ordered desegregation plans that involved court-ordered busing of students within cities, Connecticut, like other states, experienced “white flight” to the suburbs in its major cities. To counter this phenomenon, the United States Department of Education offered federal grants to develop magnet schools to attract students back to the cities’ public schools. These schools used funds for resources to develop special themes to capitalize on interests of students, such as the arts, technology, foreign languages, or environmental education. Most of these magnet schools are still operating, and the federal magnet schools assistance legislation still awards a minimum number of grants in multi-year cycles, frequently to help older magnet schools to update their resources or add technology. Originally there were entrance requirements and/or testing to entice the “best students,” but the federal government has recently disallowed testing as a requirement for admission in its more recent rounds of grants. If more students apply than can be enrolled, lotteries are conducted for different racial and ethnic groups to ensure diversity, and school districts provide transportation for the students who choose and are selected for the magnet schools. Due to the demographics, white students have had better odds for admission. Since there were only a minimum number of magnets developed (three in Bridgeport and one in Norwalk, for example), there have never been enough magnet school openings to meet the demand. By contrast, in New Haven’s open enrollment program and in Montclair, New Jersey, all elementary schools are magnet schools with varying themes, so all parents truly have a choice. Targeting interdistrict projects, the Connecticut State Department of Education now provides the bulk of grant funding for magnet school projects in urban centers.
Interdistrict Magnet Schools

In the 1980s, it became apparent that major Connecticut cities' schools, for all intents and purposes, were racially isolated. Desegregation with a significant number of white students required going beyond city boundaries. Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport had and continue to have nonwhite enrollments upwards of 86%. Thus another voluntary response to concerns of *Sheff v. O'Neill* became interdistrict magnet schools and interdistrict projects.

The Connecticut State Department of Education offered incentive grants to develop interdistrict, regional magnet schools. Currently thirty-one such magnet schools are in operation in the cities of Hartford, New London, New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Norwalk. There are six part-time interdistrict magnet school programs, in which students attend their locally assigned school for part of their educational program and the interdistrict magnet school for a special academic focus (e.g., Japanese, the arts). Two of these interdistrict magnet schools have been approved but are still searching for sites. Some of the schools were developed with support from the federal magnet schools assistance legislation as well as construction grants from the Connecticut legislature. They enrolled 10,640 students in the 2003-04 school year and are operationally funded primarily by the State Department of Education, with some contributory funds from the participating districts. They have magnet themes, such as combining childcare and education in all-day programs, the arts, and technology. These magnet schools have added grades or the next level of school (e.g., middle school) as they have gained in popularity.

Interdistrict Cooperative Program

The interdistrict cooperative program includes projects to increase the contacts between urban and suburban students for educational purposes, such as regional summer schools, joint arts and music programs, and shared use of educational facilities, such as Norwalk's Maritime Aquarium. The amount of the grant for
interdistrict projects is determined by the number of students who will participate from both the urban and suburban districts, and by the length of time and number of shared experiences in which the groups of students will be involved. Currently there are over a hundred interdistrict projects, enrolling at least 60,000 students.

Charter Schools

In the 1990s, the State Department of Education initiated a charter school program under Public Act 97-290 to develop innovations in schools as well as to provide yet another option for desegregation, especially across district lines. These schools are frequently smaller in physical size, have a lower ratio of students to teachers, and the leaders in the school take on full accountability and responsibility for the school. Charter school developers apply for and receive their charter directly from the State Board of Education. Act 97-290 has a provision for consideration of the reduction of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation as a factor in approving new charter schools. There are currently thirteen charter schools in Connecticut, predominately in the major cities. They enrolled 2,224 students in the 2002-03 school year, but according to the Center for School Change, each school draws its students from one or two towns only, reducing their contribution to racial and socioeconomic isolation. The charters must be renewed every five years.

One school option that the Connecticut legislature has discussed but has not implemented is a voucher program. In 1995, the state legislature debated legislation to offer vouchers to poor children (those eligible for free and reduced lunch). Students could use the vouchers in private and public schools who offered spaces. It came within one vote of passage. Former Governor Rowland and Senator Joseph I. Lieberman endorsed vouchers, although Rowland backed away from them prior to resigning from office. In a letter to the author, Lieberman states:

Private school choice can open doors for children in our poorest neighborhoods, where religious schools—particularly Catholic schools—often have had better
results than public schools. I have long believed what some research has shown: that the success of parochial schools is in part due to their students’ and teachers’ shared beliefs and strong moral values. Lower-income parents who want their kids to learn in a religious environment should have that chance, just as wealthier parents do.⁸

Educators within the state have expressed concern that the institution of vouchers will result in even lower-performing urban schools, since experience in other states demonstrates that the parents who exercise choice options typically have higher incomes and are better educated than the parents whose children stay in the low-performing schools.⁹ Moreover, the amount of the vouchers that was proposed in 1995 did not meet the total cost of the student’s tuition; therefore, parents with the lowest incomes would likely find the voucher program cost-prohibitive. Still, vouchers will likely be instituted as a “remedy” for students whose schools do not meet state standards within two years as result of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

More recently, major new initiatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education have moved away from addressing racial isolation per se, although state funds continue to support charter and interdistrict schools that were developed in the 1980s and 1990s. As mentioned earlier, only two of these new types of schools are in the planning stages. It should be noted that new regulations for school construction and the overall lack of state funds due to state deficit spending have essentially made constructing any new schools difficult. It should also be noted that not all magnet schools or charter schools require new construction, since space may be provided by the school district.

The more recent funding initiatives to address the achievement gap between students in the two Connecticuts include direct interventions for or grants to the cities. These approaches do not address racial isolation as a possible factor in poor academic outcomes. The funding initiatives include urban preschool programs (these result from promising academic outcomes for Headstart and other preschool programs); literacy programs to
include early intervention and literacy tutors; and summer school and after school remedial programs. The underlying assumption is that the more time spent in school academic programs will increase student performance. Many of these projects are funded by federal grants. It should be noted that much of this money is being redirected to pay for the mandated testing required by the NCLB Act or in block grants to states.

Yet even with all these initiatives there were 149 schools in Connecticut on the list of under-performing schools recently published in reporting for the federal NCLB Act, and 80% were in the urban schools of the second Connecticut, the preponderance of which were, as expected, in the three largest cities, Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport. Connecticut typically is cited as the “best in the nation” in assessments of basic skills overall, but the NCLB Act highlights Connecticut’s failures in improving the performance of urban students.

Columbus School in Bridgeport offers a case study of the difficulties in improving performance. According to school administrators in a report in the Connecticut Post:

Enrollment has only grown since it was targeted by the state in 1999 as in need of improvement. Most Columbus students come from low income families. There is a high minority population. Many are bilingual and spend half the year here [at Columbus], half in Puerto Rico or Brazil. Despite teacher training and new instructional programs, Connecticut Mastery Test scores have remained flat.10

The Connecticut Post article also reports that teachers in Columbus School argue that testing students who have minimal English-speaking ability and learning disabilities is unfair. Under the NCLB Act, 95% of all students are expected to take the test, although 60% of students in one testing class have been in this country for less than one year.

If the students’ performance at Columbus School and all but four of twenty-five elementary schools in Bridgeport, as well as the other schools on the NCLB list, does not improve to meet
NCLB standards, the parents in those schools will be able to gain vouchers to send their children to “better” schools. Rosemary Coyle of the Connecticut Education Association notes in an article in the Hartford Courant that since Connecticut has had state testing for two decades,

we are painfully aware that some students are not achieving at grade level. Our challenge has been and continues to be adequate social programs and innovative school programs that meet the needs of every child.\textsuperscript{11}

The national demographer, Harold Hodgkinson, offers an outsider’s perspective on the funding of schools within the second Connecticut, both with respect to the causes of the disparities among communities and the progress for reform. He cites the “major reliance on towns as funding mechanisms” and notes that in comparison to other states, there is “no intermediate governmental level” for tax purposes, such as counties; moreover, school districts have no taxing authority.\textsuperscript{12}

Section 1-15 and 10-240 of the Connecticut state laws makes every town a school district, and education expenditures compete with all other community expenditures. This system differs from a state like Illinois, in which the school district can be its own taxing authority. The introduction of a state (e.g., California or Florida) or county system (e.g., Fairfax County, Virginia) to fund education would broaden the city and small town base to provide resources for public education and would also provide a broader base for desegregation. Connecticut’s dependence on the immediate local community for funding enhances the opportunity for disparities between communities, and, in fact, the discrepancy between the highest and lowest amounts of funding per child is almost two to one.

Hodgkinson réitérates Connecticut’s lack of success in dealing with “the percent of Connecticut’s children who are at serious risk of failure in school and life.” He notes that “to neglect this 10% causes no immediate harm to Connecticut’s political or business leadership in that they are confined to a small area—mainly the cities of Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport. He
warns that this “underclass” is growing, however, and notes that Connecticut’s “poverty population is increasing more rapidly than the wealthy.”

Among the typical national “solutions” to addressing the non-college-bound students in public education in both the cities and suburbs are regional vocational education programs. It should be noted that four of the eight state high schools that were on the NCLB Act’s list as demonstrating lack of academic improvement were vocational technical schools located in the cities of Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, and Stamford. The State Department of Education has direct administrative oversight of these programs. Their poor performance gives credence to Hodgkinson’s theory that the state is not “seriously attending to the needs of the ‘underclass’ students” in the second Connecticut.

As a result of conducting national research and forums within Connecticut to test out ideas, the Center for School Change has proposed a “radical solution” to the inequities of the second Connecticut. The proponents conclude that voluntary efforts to address the racial and economic isolation cited in Sheff v. O’Neill will not work. In the forums conducted in the major cities of the state, the researchers found a general acceptance of the belief that ethnic diversity is important but not critical to public education. The Center’s proposal, therefore, is that the state should mandate large administrative regions for public education, such as found in Jefferson County, Kentucky, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, and then provide for a system of forced choice among schools to the parents and students within the regions, i.e., the administrators would assign spaces within each school in the region and parents would choose among the spaces available. The resulting school population would ensure integration either on the basis of racial or ethnic groups or on the basis of socioeconomic status.

Simultaneously, there would be an effort to improve the quality of the public schools in the urban communities, perhaps by making smaller schools and smaller class sizes as well as funding preschools. The funding of the administrative regions could be accomplished either by allowing the large region taxing authority or by requiring that each participating community pay
a share of the cost of the regional programs. The proponents suggest, at a minimum, that a pilot program with these attributes be initiated with the support of non-profit and business communities. In considering the viability of such proposals, Hodgkinson notes that:

Connecticut's tradition of very autonomous towns has made it difficult for the state to lead in an era of state togetherness as suggested in . . . federal legislation. Being small in size and population is not necessarily an advantage in "getting your act together" as a state.\textsuperscript{15}

Conclusion

Even with the variety of attempts to ameliorate the problems of the second Connecticut, the publication of the NCLB Act testing results has highlighted the continuing, growing achievement gap between the cities and the suburbs. The efforts to address racial isolation have not been sustained, as evidenced by the decline in new interdistrict projects. Hodgkinson suggests that Connecticut has not seriously addressed the issues of the major cities as a priority, even though their minority, disadvantaged population is growing in the state and even though employers are already relying on this population to fuel the state's economy.

Bolder programs, such as tinkering with regional administrative units for educational purposes to provide a broader base for resources and desegregation, have not been seriously considered. Single urban areas such as Bridgeport are noteworthy in 2003 for having the highest combined state and local taxes in the nation and therefore are in a poor position to generate more taxes to serve their disadvantaged population. Adding an intermediate governmental unit akin to a county system would be difficult since county government is essentially moribund in Connecticut, as compared to other states, but this solution would expand the tax base and encourage school construction to integrate students across districts. Recruiting teachers and reporting test results across districts in the larger region should lead to increased expectations for all students within the new administrative boundaries.
In 2005, per the regulations of the NCLB Act, parents of children in low-performing city schools can choose to send their students to “better schools.” It is difficult to speculate on the extent to which they will exercise this option and which schools will open their doors to these students, but the impact on the “schools left behind” is predictable. When parents are allowed to “choose” their children’s schools, it is the better-educated, higher-income parents, or parents who have a particular religious or cultural school of choice, who have taken these options in the past leaving the lower-income, neediest at risk students in the inner city schools. Moreover, it was noted earlier that the label of “low performing” does not necessarily decrease the numbers of students in the schools, as evidenced by the Columbus School in Bridgeport, which has been labeled “low performing” since 1999, but has experienced considerable growth especially in its non-English-speaking population.

The NCLB Act, with its standards and unfunded mandates, may exacerbate the achievement gap between the cities and the suburbs to the breaking point so that the State of Connecticut takes the “second Connecticut” more seriously and develops the political will to take more drastic measures to address the growing disparities between trapped, deprived students in the cities and those of their suburban counterparts who live in adjacent and proximate communities. Employers needing to employ city dwellers may also drive strong efforts to improve the lot of students in the cities. It would appear that comprehensive action plans by regions as articulated by Governor Weicker need to be reestablished, in which school district regions articulate goals, objectives, and programs that they will undertake to “unify” the equity of educational opportunities and increase racial integration in each region. Implementation of strong action is required if Connecticut wants to remain in the forefront of overall educational performance. The state needs to consider innovative strategies designed to promote equity of educational opportunity and the well-being of all of its students, not just those in the suburbs. It is important that all students have access to high goals and expectations, especially the students in what is now “the second Connecticut.”
Notes

Jack Hasegawa, educational consultant in the Connecticut State Department of Education, has provided guidance and resources to the author in preparing this chapter.

CHAPTER TEN

The Challenge of Higher Education

STEVEN MICHELS

It appears that, if the trend in state expenditures is any indication, higher education is not a priority in Connecticut. As a percentage of the state budget for FY 2005, money going to our state’s colleges and universities is 4.0%, which is down from 1989, when it enjoyed 6.6% of total state appropriations. Although it is an increase in actual dollars—up by $14.1 million—nearly 80% of the increase ($11 million) went to salaries, which does nothing to address the affordability of a college degree in the state. Other states have similar trends, however, and while some are spending more money on education, many states are holding fast or making cutbacks.

But state expenditures are not a measure of success. The spiraling cost of education, the spread of technology, and the competitive nature of the job market have changed the very notion of what education should be and who should pay for it. Simply put, if there is a challenge of higher education, it involves more than just a balancing of the books. We must begin by addressing current economic realities, but in the end, we cannot ignore the general direction and purpose of higher education.

This chapter proposes a series of practical reforms, designed to work within the existing structure of higher education. The underlying assumption is that higher education in Connecticut is best served by allowing the natural forces of the market to
determine the direction of growth and development. Minimal government interference will mean the greatest amount of choice and the highest quality of education for students in the state.

Funding

When adjusted for inflation, tuition at public and private institutions nationwide has increased about 38% over the past decade. While many point to state cutbacks as the reason for the increases, a recent Congressional report shows that "tuition increases have persisted regardless of circumstances such as the economy or state funding, and have far outpaced inflation year after year, regardless of whether the economy has been stumbling or thriving." Tuition at public institutions has increased in all fifty states over the past year, even though thirty-eight states either held spending constant or increased appropriations.

With regard to average annual tuition at public institutions, Connecticut ranks near the top, at $4,531, with the ninth highest average tuition, considerably higher than the national average of $3,718. Connecticut is more modest when it comes to tuition at two-year colleges, ranking twentieth, while neighboring New Hampshire and Vermont are near the top. No one can deny that the rapid increase in tuition is unprecedented and problematic, but the overall cost of a degree from a public institution in Connecticut is not as high as some of the heated rhetoric suggests.

We should not be surprised, therefore, to discover that the changes in state funding have not affected enrollment. Loans are still readily available, particularly for those most in need, and nearly all schools offer a range of academic and athletic scholarships and need-based tuition waivers. Consider that the percentage of tuition actually paid by students was lower in the 2004-05 academic year than it was a decade earlier, as student aid topped $122 billion, an 11% increase from the previous year. And even though tuition has gone up, the percentage of students paying the full amount has dropped from 37%, as it was in 1990, to 19%. Colleges might be raising tuition, but they are also covering more of the cost.
A recent national poll discovered that, for whatever reason, nearly 65% of students and 58% of their parents either could not estimate tuition costs or overestimated the costs by more than 25%. In this sense, the economic crisis in higher education has been misunderstood and exaggerated. In reality, there are countless affordable opportunities for high school graduates who wish to continue their education. Because student loans are available to all, the decision not to incur debt has no bearing on the issue of access. While it is true that students from poorer backgrounds are more reluctant to take on debt, these students should find comfort in the fact that the difference in income between those with and without college degrees continues to increase. In short, today's college education is a great investment.

This is not to say that the institutions themselves are economically sound. Many are making cuts in faculty, staff, and services. Faced with severe economic hardship and the danger of closing, the University of Hartford, for example, recently cut faculty by 5% and staff by 20%. In addition, Hartford halted its across-the-board annual raises, closed an MBA program located in Paris, and sold some residential property. Since that alone would not have saved the University, Hartford followed these steps with a change in their admissions process. Instead of using the more common method of mass advertising and admissions decisions based on grades and test scores (the "shotgun approach"), Hartford identified the type of student that would thrive at the University and spent the bulk of its resources recruiting students that fit that profile. Through a targeted-admissions process and a sophisticated marketing strategy, Hartford was able to maximize its financial resources, without requiring a lengthy fund-raising campaign or resorting to tuition increases. From 1998-2002, not only has Hartford become fiscally solvent, but applications have doubled and the minimum SAT score for the entering classes has gone up 75 points. The current economic climate might make cuts necessary in many institutions, but it is also an opportunity for every institution to rethink its mission and to consider how efficiently it is serving its students.

In addition to following the Hartford model of admissions and marketing, public institutions should also consider cutting fees and tuition rates for out-of-state students. For prospective students, the
differences in out-of-state tuition can be outrageous. A resident of Connecticut attending the University of Connecticut in 2005-06, for example, paid $15,760 (including room and board), while an out-of-state student paid $28,264. An out-of-state resident wishing to enroll in one of Connecticut’s community colleges pays an even higher cost in tuition and fees. Penalizing potential customers on the basis of geography is not good policy under any circumstances, much less when budgets are tightened. By contrast, most private schools, which receive far less state funding, do not have out-of-state tuition. Private schools seem to better understand that healthy competition is the surest way for institutions to maximize revenue and improve the quality of education offered to students. This is particularly important in states such as Connecticut that face competition from many nearby states.

There have been steps in this direction. The New England Regional Student Program (RSP), established by the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), allows students to cross state borders without paying out-of-state tuition. Although many of the region’s public colleges and universities participate in this program, it is rather limited. The principle of the program should be extended, without qualification and prejudice, to students beyond New England. If legislators or tax-payers have a problem with providing an education to students from other states, then more need-based grants should be given directly to students, who would then be free to take them across state borders to the institution of their choice. This would also provide an opportunity to address the growing concern that the wealthy are receiving more financial support than the poor. In any event, Connecticut needs more than a limited regional strategy if its institutions of higher learning are to succeed.

Increasingly, schools are looking to the corporate world to balance the books, an option not without controversy. While this solution should be approached cautiously, it should not be summarily dismissed. Certainly, corporate monies should not be accepted if they come with overly burdensome stipulations, but the fear that intellectual independence is compromised by corporate influences is unfounded. Not only are academic matters typically isolated from financial decisions, but it is mistaken to think that faculty members would readily give up their autonomy.
And while corporations are more likely to fund areas that benefit industry, such as business schools and research laboratories, the money saved can easily be redirected to the humanities and departments ignored by corporate donations.

There are better reasons why universities should not be reluctant to work with the corporate world. First, if businesses have money to give, it will go somewhere, perhaps to a competing university. Microsoft’s recent $25 million grant for educational technologies research would have gone somewhere, if not to MIT. Moreover, forging a link between the business world and the academy will ease the transition for students as they enter the work force. A college education can only be enhanced by students having internships, working on research projects, and forming networks with would-be employers.

Somewhat surprisingly, not all institutions are cutting back to remain competitive. Many have chosen to expand the services and amenities available to students. The University of Wisconsin in Oshkosh, for example, offers students massages and manicures, and Washington State University has recently constructed a Jacuzzi that holds fifty-three people. Although costly, institutions such as these are gambling on the notion that there is a market for such extravagance in education.

In any event, there are structural realities concerning funding. As Arthur M. Cohen notes concisely, “Colleges are always short of money.” They can either break even or run a deficit, but they can never show a profit. Private institutions have more flexibility, although they too are operating under conditions that are hardly ideal. “In sum, it is a no-win game,” Cohen contends. The number of recent closings (thirty-one since 1997) and mergers (about eleven since November 2000) only testifies to the competitive nature of higher education. If economic hardship is the norm, then what higher education needs most is economic discipline.

Technology

Faced with severe budgetary cutbacks, many institutions have turned to digital—some might even say virtual—solutions. Online instruction, for example, is a way to expand the student body
without spending money on buildings, classrooms, or permanent faculty members. It is particularly useful for institutions that experience rapid growth or an irregular ebb and flow of students. In addition to cutting costs and raising revenue, technology allows institutions to use their resources most efficiently. The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC), created in the fall of 1996, organizes much of the distance learning in the state.

Yet technology does have its price. The pace of technological development has made computers virtually disposable. Institutions are in a permanent state of updating outmoded equipment, a feat undertaken under the discerning eyes of a generation unable to remember what life was like before the Internet. While making available a new source of revenue, technology also changes the nature of competition among schools, especially given the rise of online colleges, such as the University of Phoenix, which was the first to offer online degrees. Founded in 1976, Phoenix, the nation's largest private educational institution, has served over 171,600 students through its Web-based instruction, a number that is likely to grow exponentially since it cut the minimum age for admissions from 23 to 21. Recent studies have found nearly 2 million students are taking online courses, with about one-third of that number taking all of their courses online. The fastest growing part of higher education, the number of students taking on-line courses is expected to soon hit 2.6 million. Technology gives institutions flexibility, but it also gives students greater choice with regard to where they spend their tuition dollars.

Of course, this does not address the quality of online instruction. According to a recent report, 57% of instructors polled claim that an online education is as good as or even superior to more traditional "on-ground" course of study. If technology is to be integrated into higher education successfully, we must at least be honest about what it can and cannot do. Technology has done much good for higher education, and even the most technologically incompetent instructor could benefit from using e-mail, developing a website, or using computer-generated lecture materials. But we should be wary that content will be displaced as the primary focus of education or that the
medium will define the message. Socrates, philosopher and teacher
par excellence, did quite well without the aid of a computer.

Because public institutions have made the greatest forays into
online education, there is a real and growing fear that online
education will be limited only to those who cannot afford the
standard university education. Nevertheless, it is likely that the
increase in online education will continue, unless educators begin
emphasizing the things that make the classroom an experience
without equal.

Despite all of the recent attention paid to the cost of
education, any comprehensive policy of reform must include some
notion of quality, for cost should never be considered independent
from quality. One of the more insightful comments on the cost of
education comes from Alan Ryan, a professor of political science
at Oxford University. The scandal, Ryan notes, is not that
students are paying $30,000 a year for a degree from an Ivy League
university; it is that they are paying that much money for
introductory language courses and other subjects they could study
more cheaply elsewhere.22 We must be on guard for increasing
costs while allowing a decrease in quality, or, worse yet,
intentionally sacrificing quality for the sake of convenience.

Missions and Measures

When assessing the success or failure of our institutions of
higher learning, it is misguided to consider them with regard to a
shared mission or common purpose. The mission of a small liberal
arts college, for example, is different from a large research
institution, and both are different from a community college, as
well they should be. While there are commonalities—such as the
attention to writing and critical thinking skills—competition for
students and diversity among missions can only work to improve
the quality of higher education.23 Understanding how missions
differ will make admissions policies more targeted, the key
element to Hartford’s resurgence.

When all of the statistics from the various universities,
colleges, and schools are compiled, Connecticut is serving a very
low percentage (56%) of its high school graduates, with nearly half
choosing to study elsewhere. While the number has grown in recent years, reversing a decade-long trend, it pales in comparison to the national figure of 81%. The state must recruit more out-of-state residents, to be sure, but it must also do a better job of serving Connecticut. Allowing institutions to develop their own particular identity is the only way our institutions can meet this challenge.

The fact that institutions will have varying missions means that state legislators should resist the urge to dictate the terms of education reform in the state. Centralized decision-making runs the risk of doing harm to all institutions, as policymakers disregard the particular needs of each institution. For instance, in order to meet state and federal regulations, many institutions have needed to add mid-level administrators to provide services to students, such as counseling and other health services which raises the cost of tuition and turns institutions of higher learning into what one observer has deemed a “sort of student-welfare state.”

Stanford University estimates that federal and state regulations account for about 7.5 cents for every dollar spent on higher education. Legislators should work to remove the restrictions that inhibit the natural development of higher education, especially if they continue the cuts in appropriations. As Stanley Fish, the former dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago, pleads to lawmakers, “Give us liberty or give us revenue.”

Authority and, with it, accountability should be placed in the hands of each institution’s administrators—that is, those who are best able to make decisions consistent with the mission and interests of each institution. As Frank H.T. Rhodes contends, “Unlike the planned ‘command’ educational systems of Europe and elsewhere, the unplanned, opportunistic, pluralist ‘system’ of the United States has proved adaptable, flexible, and remarkably successful.” If institutions of higher learning are to weather the economic storm, they need to become less dependent on state aid and more independent of state policy and regulations. Several states, including Michigan, Texas, and Colorado, are taking steps in this direction. Recently, the governor of South Carolina proposed letting some state public colleges become private, in order to let them have more autonomy from state governing boards.
Other states have passed laws regulating tuition increases, which was the purpose of a recent Republican proposal in the U.S. Congress. While it makes perfect sense as a policy for certain institutions, it should not become federal law. Thankfully, the College Access & Opportunity Act (HR-3311) had little support, and it was withdrawn by its sponsor, Harold “Buck” McKeon (R-California). Even worse is a Democratic proposal that would cut funding for states that reduce support for higher education. While the intention is to penalize states, it is unimaginable that students would not suffer in the process. Not to be outdone, President Bush, in his 2004 State of the Union address, proposed $250 million for job training at community colleges. While Bush is right in placing greater emphasis on community colleges, the nation would be better served were this money to be given directly to the students who need it. The plan will be an improvement, however, provided the colleges retain the authority to administer the funds as they see fit. At this time, the greatest threat to institutional autonomy is the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, which, following in the wake of the controversial No Child Left Behind Act, will most likely expand the national government’s interference in higher education.

Related to quality and mission is the issue of grade inflation. While much attention is paid to cheating and plagiarism, grade inflation is the most often overlooked component of academic integrity. It seems to be a problem without a solution, given the current climate in the academy. Harvard professor Harvey C. Mansfield—or “Harvey C. Minus,” as he is referred to by students—has instituted an “ironic grading system,” whereby students receive two grades: one noting their actual achievement and one inflated in accordance with what students are used to receiving at an institution where 50% of the grades are A or A-minus. While clever, it is not a complete solution; but it is at least a step in the right direction.

Getting a degree and a job is one way to measure education, but it is not the best way. We do nothing for our students if we do not help them to discover their passion and realize their potential. Education is not the achievement of a singular goal; it is a never-ending process that requires dedication and candor on
all sides. Education should not be measured by state expenditures, but by the extent to which our students know the virtue of lifelong learning and have the skills necessary to guide themselves in that endeavor.

Conclusion: Discipline or Perish

In his soberly titled *As if Learning Mattered*, Richard E. Miller discusses how the criticism of higher education has been nearly constant since the middle of the nineteenth century. For better or worse, whether it is a question of access, purpose, quality, or cost, there will always be talk of higher education reform. Yet the general perception of higher education is encouraging: a recent poll shows that a solid majority (about 60%) of Americans has faith in higher education, and 93% consider it one of our most valuable resources.

The policies recommended in this essay are not intended to drastically alter the system of higher education; rather, they are designed to work within the existing structure. Economic discipline, targeted admissions, and an appreciation for the market are first steps to fiscal solvency. Certainly, tuition increases will be necessary, but if the education of our young people is truly a priority, then the increases should be used as a last resort. Our students deserve at least that much. For that reason alone, we cannot forget that the cost of education can never be determined independently of quality. Serious reflection on the uses of technology, grade inflation, and the mission of our institutions should be the foundation for any substantive reform. Whatever the direction, policy must be made by individuals at the lowest possible levels, and by those who will be held accountable for the decisions they make.

Notes

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11. http://uconn.edu/about/tuition.php


13. For a collection of arguments pro and con, see Buying in or Selling Out? The Commercialization of the American Research University, ed. Douglas G. Stein (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004). For a more skeptical approach on the issue of corporate financing in higher education, see Derek Curtis Bok, Universities in the Marketplace: The


20. At $440 a credit hour for undergraduate study, the University of Phoenix is not as competitive as its lack of overhead (and popularity) might suggest. “Tuition and Fees,” www.online.phoenix.edu/Tuition.asp.


