



# Connecticut Legislative Update

January 2021



*The following report is from LDAC Lobbyist, Carrie Rand of Nome Associates.*

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## Did You Know?

The lumber and building materials industry employs more than 36,000 people in Conn.

## Issues Update:

The 2021 legislative session, which began on January 6th, will run until June 9th. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the session has moved to an online format, meaning hearings will be conducted via Zoom, with the ability to follow along on YouTube or CT-N. Information on how to watch proceedings will be available on the Legislative Calendar.

On top of the unprecedented virtual format, there is also a new generation of leaders that have taken over at the Capitol, including:

- Speaker of the House: Rep. Matt Ritter of Hartford replacing Joe Aresimowicz of Berlin
- House Republican leader: Rep. Vincent Candelora of North Branford replacing Themis Klarides of Derby
- Senate Republican leader: Sen. Kevin Kelly of Stratford replacing Len Fasano of North Haven

Connecticut lawmakers have embarked on this unique session with several important items on the agenda, including the state budget, vaccinations, recreational marijuana, the bottle bill, online lottery, and sports betting.

The main issue will be the Governor's new biennial budget proposal, which is due to the General Assembly in early February. The Office of Fiscal Analysis predicts a \$4.3 billion budget deficit over the next two years. The state's rainy day fund is expected to cover much of the COVID deficit.

The Office of Legislative Research reports that lawmakers may replace some revenue losses by postponing or reversing tax policy changes scheduled to take effect in 2021. That includes diversion of sales taxes to specific accounts. They could also roll back or eliminate sales tax exemptions, expand the sales tax to new services, or they could create new revenue streams from policy changes.

At the committee level, most committees are limiting the number of bills they are taking up and have agreed to work in a bipartisan fashion and avoid dissent and strife in light of unrest at the federal level. It is likely we will see more lawmakers working in concert than ever before.

Other issues on the table include predictive scheduling and the unemployment compensation fund. There is a tolls bill introduced by Senator Kasser (Senate District 36) and Senator Haskell (Senate District 26), but it is unlikely to make any progress.

There will undoubtedly be challenges moving forward, as an extremely social business has gone virtual. With restricted access to the Capitol, grassroots is key. Active LDAC membership is critical to advancing priorities.

LDAC's legislative committee is enthusiastically working on your behalf to ensure your voice is heard in these discussions. We will be sure to keep you posted on important issues as the session continues.

## Questions?

Please contact Kirk Ives, Director of Legislative & Regulatory Affairs at 518-880-6376 or [kives@nrla.org](mailto:kives@nrla.org).