



LET'S WELCOME 2024!

Happy New Year Connecticut Tourism Coalition constituents! I hope everyone had a happy and healthy holiday season. It's hard to believe that this is the start of my third term as your President, and I am honored to serve and help lead this great organization. I am always humbled by your trust in me and continue to be inspired by the support and leadership of our board, staff and general membership as we all work to advocate for a sustainable source of funding to properly market and promote all of CT's arts, culture and tourism assets.

Connecticut's General Assembly Regular Session convenes February 7th and adjourns on May 8th, 2024. We look forward to educating new and old legislators this upcoming session by continuing to communicate our advocacy and mission to ensure that Tourism in our State is funded at an appropriate level and can continue to compete with the other New England States for visitation to help realize the full economic benefit of Tourism. I ask all of you to help with this effort and ensure our collective voice is heard.

We start 2024 with an ongoing highly successful campaign from the State Office of Tourism that continues to drive traffic to a newly expanded CTvisit website, one of the Nation's most inclusive and comprehensive tourism sites. The year-round campaign features seasonal imagery updates, reaches more geographies, including an expanded drive market, key fly-in markets and important international markets.

I'm also happy to report that the State will be back on the road in 2024 attending important trade/sales shows for both the international and domestic markets. These invigorated sales efforts will help attract Global business, for groups, meetings, conventions, leisure travelers and will feature new marketing and trade show materials. I am also happy that the State is bringing back the Connecticut Tourism Conference. The date for this exciting and insightful event will be on Wednesday, March, 27th, 2024 at the Bushnell Performing Arts Center, Hartford. Please mark your calendar and I hope to see many of you there!

Planning for the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution continues and that committee's progress can be tracked on the CT250.org website. The Coalition is looking forward to being part of this celebration and we will get updates about the tourism opportunities and progress from our Executive Director Frank Burns in the coming months.

As always, I am grateful to our Officers, Board and membership for their commitment and support as we move forward in 2024. I continue to be amazed by our exemplary support staff, Frank Burns and Christine Dagata, for their tireless efforts and ability to keep this organization focused and on track for success. I look forward to working with all of you as we provide statewide leadership in tourism advocacy. Here's to a happy and healthy 2024!

Paul Mayer



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:



Heading into the 2023 session of the state legislature, CRN President Tim Phelan conducted a series of direct conversations with legislative leaders – brief video discussions previewing issues of particular interest to CT's retail businesses during the current session.

You'll hear directly from key legislators leading their respective caucuses in exclusive interviews.

[House Speaker Matt Ritter](#)

[House Republican Leader Vin Candelora](#)

[Senate President Martin Looney](#)

- Senate Republican Leader Kevin Kelly

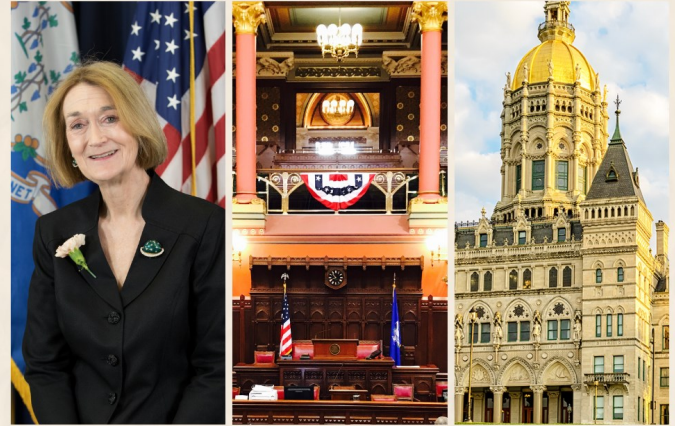
The Connecticut Retail Network thanks **Connecticut's Health Care Future**, a project of Partnership for America's Health Care Future Action, for support of the leadership interview series.



TOURISM CHAMPION:

New Laws

Effective January 1st, 2024



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Several new laws will take effect January 1st that could have an impact on you, your business, or our community. I have highlighted some of them below. An expanded list of those that will take effect on January 1, along with summaries, can be accessed [here](#).

The new year also brings the start of a new legislative session – the second year of the biennium which is known colloquially as the “short session” – which begins on February 7, 2024. Due to the truncated timeline of the short session, only bills that come directly from one of the legislative committees will make it to the full General Assembly. However, individual legislators are still able to introduce concepts, and I welcome your ideas and input on any state issue.

TAX CUTS

The state budget, [adopted in June](#), cuts the bottom two marginal income tax rates for all filers from 3% to 2% and from 5% to 4.5%. Income taxes on the first \$50,000 in taxable income will be lowered for single filers and married people filing separately, \$100,000 for joint filers, and \$80,000 for heads of household. January 1 is also the start of easing the cliff on income tax exemptions for retirement income. The new budget adds a tax deduction schedule for retirement income above the full exemption threshold.

BOTTLE BILL

The deposit cost for certain beverage containers will [increase from \\$.05 to \\$.10](#) on January 1. Initially passed during the 2022 session with a phased roll out, the cost of deposits on (generally) hard cider, plant water or plant infused drink, juice or juice drink, tea, coffee, kombucha, sports or energy drinks, and any beverages identified as one of these products with letters, words, or symbols on their labels will increase.