



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

3 Regency Drive, Suite 204, Bloomfield, CT 06002
Tel: 860-216-5858 Fax: 860-206-8954 Web: www.hbact.org

*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

2014 State Legislative Session Wrap-Up

May 8, 2014

The HBRA of CT, like the rest of the state's business community, used to measure success at the state capitol by the percentage of bad bills we could defeat. Yet, due to the Great Recession, over the past five or six years we have been able to get a number of positive changes adopted to improve the law surrounding real estate development, home building and remodeling. **The 2014 legislative session can be summed up as a do-nothing year, not much gained while defeating everything that could hurt our members.** Disappointing compared to recent years but a resounding success compared to how it used to be.

The 2014 state legislative session was officially convened on February 5 and adjourned at midnight on May 7. While only a "short session" year, state legislators work on legislation practically the entire year. So, it is critically important that the HBRA of CT and its members engage legislators year-round to best impact how they vote on our issues.

Uncharacteristically, the state legislature in 2014 took on few controversial issues. The total number of bills introduced was the lowest in many years. And, as the session wound down the volume of amendments filed was also significantly reduced. The biggest debates revolved around state budget adjustments, raising the minimum wage, codifying a person's right to die, APRN's ability to practice independently from physicians, the administration of nursing homes, and a new state-run retirement program for businesses that do not offer retirement plans to their employees.

Usual public disagreements among democrats and republicans and a dispute between the democratic leaders of the House and Senate both worked to slow progress on legislation, leading to many bills running out of time. The session was also punctuated by the announcements of many legislators that they're not running for re-election, including several leaders, leaving many open seats and a coming domino effect for leadership and committee chairs. **With elections for all state legislators, the Governor and all Constitutional Offices this November 2014, the 2015 state legislature is sure to be a very different environment. Whether it is better or worse for business and our economy is up to the voters.**

At the beginning of each session, various committees in the legislature consider proposals, hear testimony at public hearings and decide which bills will be moved forward. **Our annual Home Building Industry Day (HBID) at the Capitol on April 9, brought ninety members and guests to Hartford to focus on three bills that survived the committee process. We had earlier testified pro and con on many proposals – see www.hbact.org/2014session.**

The HBRA of CT's two top HBID priorities, pursuing a property tax exemption for homes under construction and eliminating public hearings on subdivision applications, were successfully passed out of the Planning & Development Committee, despite the difficult politics surrounding both bills. But politics caught up and neither bill survived in the end. **Our subdivision hearing bill died when environmental groups lit everyone's hair on fire because they do not understand subdivision law. And, despite a strong 19-0 vote out of committee, Governor Malloy killed our property tax exemption bill, falling back to his municipal roots to save every last property tax dollar. He used the power of his office to tell democratic leaders in the House, who wanted to support our bill, to not bring out the bill.**

Our third HBID priority, to defeat a proposal by Senate Democrat leader, Don Williams, to require all home improvement contractors to obtain and wear photo ID badges at all times, was first amended by the Senate to our liking, and later died in the House without a vote.

Congratulations go out to Bob Wiedenmann, Jr. who chairs our GA Committee and to members, Ken Boynton (the HBRAC's Board Chairman and President), George LaCava (Past President) and Joe

"Building CT's Economy, Communities and Better Lives Through Advocacy and Knowledge that Solves our Member's Problems."

Caposella, Esq. for coming to Hartford and testifying in support of our priorities. Thank you also to the many members who came to the capitol on our HBID or who reached out to their legislators during the session, to our many HBID sponsors who give us the ability to hold the event, and to our members who serve on the HBRA CT's Government Affairs Committee who help develop our policy positions.

Most importantly, members should welcome the opportunity to get involved and get to know their state legislators. They WILL make better decisions when they get to know YOU. Each HBRA member has a state Representative who serves in the 151-member State House, and a state Senator who serves in the 36-member State Senate. **Get involved in politics, too.** Support the candidates you think will best represent your interests in Hartford – through money or your time, or both. Simply ask your candidate how you can help. Just using your van or pickup truck to deliver lawn signs for half a day will be greatly appreciated. And then vote and get your family, work colleagues and friends to vote.

Good policy starts with politics, and politics is much about relationships, which starts with you.

Please do not hesitate to contact Bill Ethier, CEO for the HBRA of CT at bethier@hbact.org or 860-216-5858 with any questions or comments about our advocacy work.