Turning Connecticut around and fixing our budget problems requires creating jobs and spurring economic growth. While much of the country has recovered from the Great Recession, Connecticut has not — thanks to decades of bad decisions from career politicians on both sides of the aisle.

My proposed property tax relief will save families across Connecticut up to $1500 annually and the average beneficiary $700 each year. But we need to do much more to grow our economy so that working families are able to build economic opportunity and financial security. I spent my career creating jobs and I know what businesses and employees need. I built a business from scratch, grew it here in Connecticut, took on big industry giants, and beat them at their own game. I know firsthand how state government can help businesses start up and succeed – and how it can get in the way. Whether entrepreneurs have the next big idea or a family wants to open a new neighborhood restaurant, our state government too often litters the path to success with needless fees, an endless maze of paperwork, and burdensome regulations that don’t protect public health and safety.

Connecticut can build a world-class economy by retaining and attracting talented entrepreneurs who will launch and expand new businesses in our state. New businesses – from high-growth start-ups to small mom-and-pop stores on main street – account for nearly all the net new jobs created. I will create an environment where startups and small businesses can thrive. I’ve done it myself and I know what it takes.

There’s no good reason for Connecticut’s startup rate to lag below the national average. We have top-notch universities, incredibly talented workers, proximity to Boston and New York, and leading industry clusters in insurance, biotech, financial technology, and defense. We can unleash the next wave of innovation right here in Connecticut with the right leadership and the right choices in Hartford.
My jobs plan begins by upending business as usual in the capital, cutting business taxes that inhibit growth, eliminating needless and outdated regulations, streamlining permitting, and investing in our strength: our people. I’ll turn our cities back into the economic growth engines they once were, making Connecticut a destination for jobs, investment, and entrepreneurs. We’ll let businesses thrive by getting out of their way. We’ll create good jobs with good wages that keep up with costs faced by the middle class. We’ll level the playing field so women and minorities have the same opportunities at economic success as everyone else. And we’ll train students and workers to ensure they have the skills they need to compete for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

A revitalized business climate will ensure Connecticut has the resources necessary to support our priorities as a state: investing in excellent public schools, caring for our most vulnerable communities, and sharing broadly in economic prosperity.

That’s why I’ve created a five-part plan to reinvigorate our economy and grow jobs across Connecticut.

My plan includes:

1. Cutting Taxes and Reducing Regulations
2. Increasing Job Training & Workforce Development
3. Ensuring a Fair Economy For All
4. Investing in Connecticut’s Strengths
5. Sparking an Urban Renaissance
CUTTING TAXES AND REDUCING REGULATIONS

Small business owners need relief so they can put their hard-earned dollars back into growing their companies and contributing to a prosperous economy. As governor, I’ll make it easier to start up or grow a business in Connecticut by cutting taxes that make it harder to run a business and reducing regulations on small companies. I know how hard it is to get a new venture off the ground because I’ve done it. I’ll launch a one-stop shop in state government so that small businesses can get licensing and permitting handled quickly and easily without getting a run-around from different agencies. And I will work to ensure Connecticut has access to global markets in ways that benefit our workers.

I know what businesses need to thrive: access to skilled labor, affordable capital, and regulatory certainty. I will create a fair and honest state budget balanced without gimmicks, launch a top-to-bottom regulatory review that eliminates burdensome mandates, and invest in training and infrastructure. That’s the kind of certainty and sustainable long-term planning that business leaders need to be able to rely on.

I will:

• Eliminate the business entity tax that serves as a big “EXIT” sign for small businesses and startups here in Connecticut.
• Exempt businesses with less than $10,000 in taxable personal property from the business personal property tax — freeing nearly half of Connecticut businesses from an onerous filing requirements that generate very little revenue.
• Cut Connecticut’s highest-in-the-nation capital stock tax, making Connecticut businesses more competitive with regional and national competitors.
• Provide incentives for firms that will build or strengthen industry clusters, that are linked to the hiring or training of new workers, and that invest in research and development or in physical capital.
• Hold companies that receive public support accountable, order a top-to-bottom review of all current tax and business incentives, audit both the agency that administers them and the performance of companies that receive them, and eliminate giveaways that amount to corporate welfare.
• Champion the 5,700 Connecticut companies that depend on access to overseas markets to export their products, despite the Trump Administration’s work to seal our economy off from the world.

Well-designed tax and business incentives will attract jobs to our state, but they need to be closely scrutinized and linked to measurable outcomes so that we can avoid the corporate welfare that has proliferated in recent years. Connecticut’s tax dollars must be spent wisely, so I will collect data on the impact of all tax incentives and work closely with the Office of the Comptroller and others to analyze the data and adjust our programs in real time.

Smart business incentives need to be a part of our economic development strategy, but the best thing we can do to revitalize Connecticut’s business climate is to simplify the regulatory, licensing, permitting, zoning, and tax collection processes. We shouldn’t work hard to attract firms to Connecticut only to drown them in paperwork and red tape.
I will also:

• Launch a one-stop shop for businesses that will simplify and streamline their interactions with state and local government.

Finally, we need a governor who knows how to leverage all of our assets and try every day to bring new companies to Connecticut. The best day I’ve had in Connecticut in years was when we brought Infosys, a global IT leader, to Hartford. It didn’t happen by chance — it happened because I convened a group of business leaders including leaders from Travelers, Aetna, Hartford HealthCare, and Stanley Black and Decker, to show the range of Connecticut’s economic ecosystem and to convince Infosys to build their new training and innovation hub right here in Hartford.

Infosys leaders were blown away by this show of solidarity and support, and realized Connecticut’s vast potential. Our business leaders got together for our shared prosperity. Now it’s time for state government to recognize that potential, and multiply it.

That’s why, as governor I will:

• Create a Business Recruitment Board led by the governor and business leaders from a range of Connecticut industries — along with leaders in the state’s higher education, arts and culture, and real estate sectors — to aggressively pursue bringing businesses and jobs to Connecticut.

Together, we’ll demonstrate that Connecticut is the right place to do business, with a thriving and connected business community and a state government ready to help.
INCREASING JOB TRAINING & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

During my time in the private sector, I collaborated with the Yale School of Management to produce the CT Workforce Assessment, a study about the strengths and weaknesses of Connecticut’s workforce. As part of the assessment, we met with Connecticut’s largest employers from the state’s key industries: manufacturing, insurance and finance, healthcare and bioscience, green technology, tourism and digital media. In our interviews with thought leaders – academics, labor leaders, and CEOs – we asked about future skill needs in their industries, strategies to address current and future gaps, and the role of the government, business, and labor in moving our state forward. It’s clear that retaining employers and creating jobs in today’s technological revolution requires job training and workforce development programs designed around the present and future needs of Connecticut’s growth industries.

Connecticut must give its students curriculums designed to prepare them for a modern economy—and the state must give its employers access to the best-educated and best-trained workforce in the world. My plan invests in the entire talent pipeline. That pipeline begins in our public schools, where I will work with towns as a champion of integrating STEAM education into every grade’s curriculum. It continues as students move through our excellent state college and university system—and as students and adults preparing for a new career pursue still more nimble alternatives to that system, like apprenticeships, coding bootcamps, or a program at New Haven’s new Holberton School of Software Engineering.

I will:

• Outfit school buses with wifi so students facing long rides can reclaim hours of lost study time.

• Equip our schools with modern hardware and software – from block-based coding platforms for young children through advanced Microsoft and Adobe product suites for our high schools and community colleges – and our teachers with the training they need to make meaningful use of that technology. Connecticut lags behind the nation in the percentage of 8th graders who use computers to augment their studies.

• Invest in and expand the Connecticut Technical High School System.

• Engage the private sector in curriculum design so that our schools teach professional skills relevant to the modern economy, as we currently do with Pratt & Whitney and Goodwin College and with IBM and Norwalk’s P-TECH high school.

• Direct UConn and our state colleges and universities to implement reforms, like those surveyed in a recent report by McKinsey and Melinda Gates’ Pivotal Ventures, that promote women and minority students’ participation in computing programs and the sciences.

• Allow existing state financial aid programs to benefit students who pursue public and non-profit private training programs that have proven results but have not yet been officially accredited, and encourage our public institutions to accept those alternative learning programs as graduation credit or as qualifying their alumni for admission to graduate and professional programs.

• Increase the number of apprenticeable trades and break down silos between the education, labor, and business communities to dramatically expand apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs beyond the manufacturing sector.
• Evaluate the quality of training programs based on longitudinal data available from the income tax and unemployment insurance records, steer students to enroll in successful programs, and close down programs that underperform.

• Introduce a global entrepreneur-in-residence program that makes it easier for talented immigrants graduating from our colleges and universities to stay in Connecticut and contribute to our economy.

• Study the possibility of a new STEAM university in Connecticut, as suggested by the Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth. New York City has done it. Connecticut can do it too.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

When Annie and I made the decision to start our family, Connecticut was where everyone wanted to be. It had the right mix of cities and suburbs, was close to Boston and New York, had great schools and vibrant neighborhoods — but most importantly, Connecticut was full of opportunity.

But too many people don’t see Connecticut as a land of opportunity these days. As governor, I’ll make sure that everyone has a chance to contribute their talents in Connecticut, and that no one is left out or left behind. Revitalizing Connecticut’s economy can and must be done in a way that makes prosperity and opportunity available to all.

As a business leader, I know that supporting workers is a crucial part of creating an innovative, successful workplace — and it’s also the right thing to do. A fair economy with opportunity for all is one that pays a living wage, supports women and people of color in the workplace, and provides everyone with a second chance. Connecticut won’t be at its strongest until everyone in our state is able to reach their full potential.

Between rapidly changing technology and a federal government that has gutted workplace protections, Connecticut has the responsibility to stand up for working people and the opportunity to attract young workers from across America to our state. With bold, progressive leadership, we can create economic growth that empowers all people.

I will:

• Raise the minimum wage to $15 to bring working families out of poverty and stimulate economic growth.

• Establish a meaningful and responsibly financed paid family and medical leave system that also protects caregivers’ right to return to work. That system will look to bipartisan models that are already working in other states, so that no one in Connecticut has to choose between paying their bills and spending the first days their child or the last days with their parent.

• Prioritize state contracts with and access to credit for minority and women-owned businesses, and set disaggregated targets for a range of diverse business owners to ensure everyone in Connecticut is able to get ahead.

• Enforce legislation and encourage company policies that close the wage gap between men and women, which is costing women and our economy $15 billion. Neither women nor minorities should be paid less for equal work.
• Support labor’s push for a fair wage, safe and dignified working conditions, and a path to a secure retirement — things that all American workers have a right to. I will also protect workers from the effects of the Supreme Court’s radical Janus decision by permitting unions to refuse to represent non-members in certain grievance cases and by guaranteeing unions an opportunity to explain the benefits of membership to new hires.

• Ensure residents who have earned their second chance are able to get the job they need to support themselves by partnering with labor unions and our colleges and universities, strengthening Connecticut’s “Ban the Box” legislation by preventing many employers from asking job applicants about their criminal histories before extending a conditional offer, and providing prospective employees with a private right of action against companies that violate their rights.

• Ensure employees receive meaningful training on workplace sexual misconduct, prohibit retaliation against people who bring complaints, and extend Connecticut’s statutes of limitations and reporting deadlines for sexual assaults.

• Support strengthened enforcement and penalties against wage theft. While most employers make commitments in good faith, I will target business owners who consistently violate labor standards. That is especially important in the gig economy where employers purposely misclassify employees as “contractors” to avoid paying higher wages and benefits.

• Reinstate protections that ensure working people get paid what they are owed for overtime despite the Trump Administration and Republican efforts to strip those rights away from working families.

• Oppose contractual restrictions that inhibit a person’s freedom to obtain safe, well-paid jobs through unreasonable use of job-lock and arbitration clauses. Workers have the right to seek improved conditions and career opportunities.
INVESTING IN CONNECTICUT’S STRENGTHS

It’s no secret that our state lacks a coherent strategy for creating new economic opportunity. It’s time to stop providing tactical incentives to individual companies. Instead, we need to start making strategic investments in the sectors that will power Connecticut’s future. By striking a middle ground between one-off corporate giveaways and one-size-fits-all policies, we can build an ecosystem to support each region’s traditional and growing strengths.

One of those strengths is tech companies, an ever-expanding sector of the American economy. Information technology and software engineering powers everything from insurance and biotech to advanced manufacturing and finance. The internet industries’ contribution to America’s GDP has doubled in the last six years and continues to grow five times faster than the national average while creating millions of jobs. With smart investments, Connecticut can become a home for many of those jobs and the next Research Triangle or Route 128 corridor.

I will:

- Reform non-compete agreements to protect proprietary data and investments while freeing talent to join other companies or start their own.
- Convene investors, non-profits, CEOs, and innovators to ensure we are doing everything possible to further the advantages in our state’s unique regions.
- Work with companies, universities, and local governments to expand the number of accelerators, incubators, coworking spaces, and tech bootcamps across Connecticut.
- Incentivize startup firms to locate in regional hubs, particularly where jobs have been lost. Specifically, firms will receive tax credits when they locate in repurposed land or buildings that are currently empty and in opportunity zones.
- Continue support for Connecticut Innovations, the state’s successful VC fund, so that talented entrepreneurs with big ideas can access capital and stay in the state. I will also encourage Connecticut Innovations and the private-sector partners it mobilizes to pay particular attention to scaleup companies that have a proven business model and are looking to grow.

Another of our growing strengths is the green economy. Our transition to a sustainable future will create thousands of new jobs in clean energy and efficiency. We know this because across our country, the states with the least carbon-intensive economies, like Washington state and Massachusetts, have had some of the highest economic growth rates. We have already seen good-paying jobs created in the fuel cell, solar installation, and home weatherization industries. Smart investment and smart, consistent policies in the green energy sector will not only create jobs but also provide a sustainable future for Connecticut.

I will:

- Commit Connecticut to a carbon-neutral future by 2050
- Strengthen the renewable portfolio standard to include more Class I clean energy sources, and invest in the modern grid and other infrastructure projects required to efficiently deliver that energy to consumers
- Send a clear signal that renewable energy industries like wind and solar should invest in Con-
Connecticut by streamlining permitting processes, setting long-term renewable energy policy, and pledging to veto budgets that raid Connecticut’s clean energy funds.

Connecticut also needs a governor who recognizes tourism and the arts is an economic engine that drives job growth and provides a critical source of revenue. Raising Connecticut’s profile and ensuring its wonderful destinations are vibrant for future generations is critical to expanding a sector that supports one in every 19 jobs in the state. A big part of that is the arts, which are invaluable not only to the state’s growth but also to who we are as a society. Connecticut is home to world-class museums, theaters, and concert halls that support the education of our children and draw tens of thousands of out-of-state visitors and we need to view them as profit drivers, not cost centers.

I will:

- Market Connecticut as a destination to our neighbors.
- Connect attractions to our public transit system and publicize those connections so that Connecticut residents without cars, as well as millions of tourists from our neighboring states, can enjoy our parks and other destinations.
- Protect Long Island Sound and preserve Connecticut’s historic treasures through initiatives like the Historic Structures Rehabilitation, the Historic Homes Tax Credit Programs, and the Community Investment Act.
- Create a Cultural Facilities Fund that supports construction projects at cultural facilities and is highly effective at leveraging private dollars. Across the border in Massachusetts, CFF projects have hired 25,513 architects, designers, engineers and construction workers, attracted 101 million tourists since 2007, and created 2,168 new full-time permanent jobs.
- Make our arts and cultural institutions more accessible by expanding the Blue Star Museums program and reducing entry fees for families on SNAP.
SPARKING AN URBAN RENAISSANCE

The key to Connecticut’s economic growth is supporting dynamic cities that attract new residents and businesses to the state. Our state is home to vibrant and affordable urban centers with a multitude of businesses and academic institutions. Those centers were once industrial towns and are now redefining themselves into knowledge hubs. But for decades, their potential was ignored — with little promotion or state investment in infrastructure. That ends now.

One of the most critical parts of turning around the financial and economic fortunes of our state will be to rejuvenate our cities and make them more attractive, accessible, competitive, and resilient. Today’s college graduates are the most urban generation in the history of our country, and many of our children leave our state because they can’t find neighborhoods where they want to live or work. Further, in the 21st-century knowledge economy, strong vibrant urban centers are vital to attracting and keeping businesses. GE didn’t leave Connecticut for an offshore tax haven or a Sun Belt state with minimal public services. They left for Boston, a growing city in a relatively high-tax state that has benefited from decades of purposeful public investment in transportation infrastructure and economic development. Describing the reasons for that move, GE’s CFO said that the “financial stuff was the second priority” — the company left Connecticut because it “wanted to be in a place that was vibrant and entrepreneurial.”

As governor, revitalizing Connecticut’s cities will be the centerpiece of my economic development agenda. Connecticut’s urban centers used to be hubs of global innovation, sending Connecticut-made products around the world. Today, they have tens of thousands fewer people than a few decades ago. Decades of underinvestment and a lack of an economic development strategy have left our cities behind while other post-industrial urban areas around the country have reinvented themselves for the 21st century economy and reaped the benefits. We can do the same here in Connecticut with the right strategy and commitment.

I will:

- Expand public transportation networks connecting housing to growing urban downtowns, downtowns to green and coastal spaces in neighboring communities, and everyone in Connecticut to airports and to regional hubs in our neighboring states.
- Deliver targeted property tax relief so that long-time city residents can afford to stay in their homes and neighborhoods.
- Bolster development in Connecticut’s 72 newly designated Opportunity Zones and provide smart incentives for Connecticut capital to invest in Connecticut jobs in our cities.
- Support the expansion of UConn’s city campuses and encourage the development of innovation clusters in proximity to those campuses to encourage students’ access to jobs and the growth of business development related to academic research.
- Ensure all of our urban centers benefit from a regional development agency, similar to the Capital Regional Development Agency in Hartford. The CRDA serves as a last-dollar lender to developers who make important improvements to the city’s urban fabric.
- Encourage state support for projects that improve livability. We will seek to ensure all projects preserve iconic neighborhoods, support the local culture, and expand parks so all children have access to clean and green recreational opportunities.