

SCHOOL + STATE
FINANCE PROJECT

www.schoolstatefinance.org

THE ECONOMY, STATE FINANCE, AND YOU

Contact Us

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To learn more about the
School and State Finance Project, visit us at:

www.schoolstatefinance.org

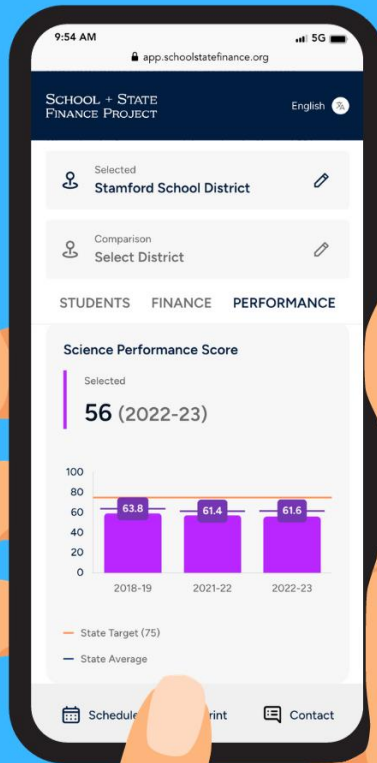
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EdExplorer



 app.schoolstatefinance.org



 **student performance**

 **school finance**

 **demographics**

developed by

**SCHOOL + STATE
FINANCE PROJECT**

About Us



Statewide
organization
founded in 2015



Nonprofit,
nonpartisan policy
organization



Trusted resource that
works **collaboratively**
with policymakers,
school district
officials, community
leaders, and all
individuals



Develops data-
driven solutions to
ensure **ALL public
school** students
receive **equitable
education funding**
that supports their
learning needs

Our Priorities



Students



Schools



Communities

Our Impact on Students, Schools, & Communities

Throughout our history, we have worked to ensure all Connecticut students receive equitable education funding that supports their learning needs. **Organizationally**, we have:

- **Secured** an additional **\$526 million** in need-based funding for Connecticut's public school students.
- Directly **engaged** nearly **15,000 community members** on education funding.
- **Led the reform** — and full funding — of Connecticut's main education funding formula.

Our **Community Engagement team** has supported and partnered with community members to **pass legislation**:

- Requiring **financial literacy** for high school students
- Establishing a **Multilingual Learner Parent Bill of Rights**
- Revising Connecticut's **teacher certification** processes

Why are we talking about the economy?

We are talking about the economy and state finance because...

- Both the economy and state finance affect you every day!
- Both state taxes (sales, income, etc.) and local taxes (property taxes) are part of the economy.
- The economy impacts education, workforce development, and jobs.
- The cost of housing and groceries change with the economy.
- So many have had questions, and we want you to be able to add your voice to the conversation — in short, we want to empower you!

The economy is about...

People



People choose to spend or save money
due to the scarcity of resources

Businesses



Businesses buy and produce goods and services. A growing economy may enable businesses to hire additional workers, make large capital purchases, borrow money, and/or purchase more services. The inverse is also true.

Communities



Communities are impacted by the economic decisions made by the people and businesses residing there

**Ultimately, the economy
is about...**

Choices

Every choice we make, at home or at work, impacts the economy.

- Money being made, and by who, in what industries?
- Money being spent, and how or on what?
- What are people selling?

Examples:

- Are you putting money into savings? How much?
- Are you investing in retirement?
- Are you in the market for a car? New or used?
- Should a business expand and hire more people?

Let's start at the beginning

The Economy as an Ecosystem

- A complex network
- An interconnected system
- Includes:
 - Living organisms
 - Their environment
 - Usually refers to a particular space or location



Connecticut's Early Ecosystem

Early colonizers found a wealth of natural resources in Connecticut

- Moderate climate
- Great forests and woodlands
- Easy access to waterways
- All of the resources of the sea

The natural resources of this environment were used in a constrained way, primarily through subsistence farming, and Connecticut focused on labor and the conversion of natural resources to usable goods.

Connecticut Town Nicknames

Connecticut's cities had nicknames based on their manufacturing specialty.

- The Copper City
 - Thread City
 - Clock City
 - Brass City
 - Hat City
 - Hardware City
 - Silk City
 - Silver City
- Ansonia
Willimantic
Bristol
Waterbury
Danbury
New Britain
Manchester
Meriden

**That is old news.
What about today?**

Connecticut's Current Ecosystem

- Diverse people
- A service, rather than manufacturing, economy
- 169 unique communities
- Preservation of natural resources
- Skilled & educated labor force

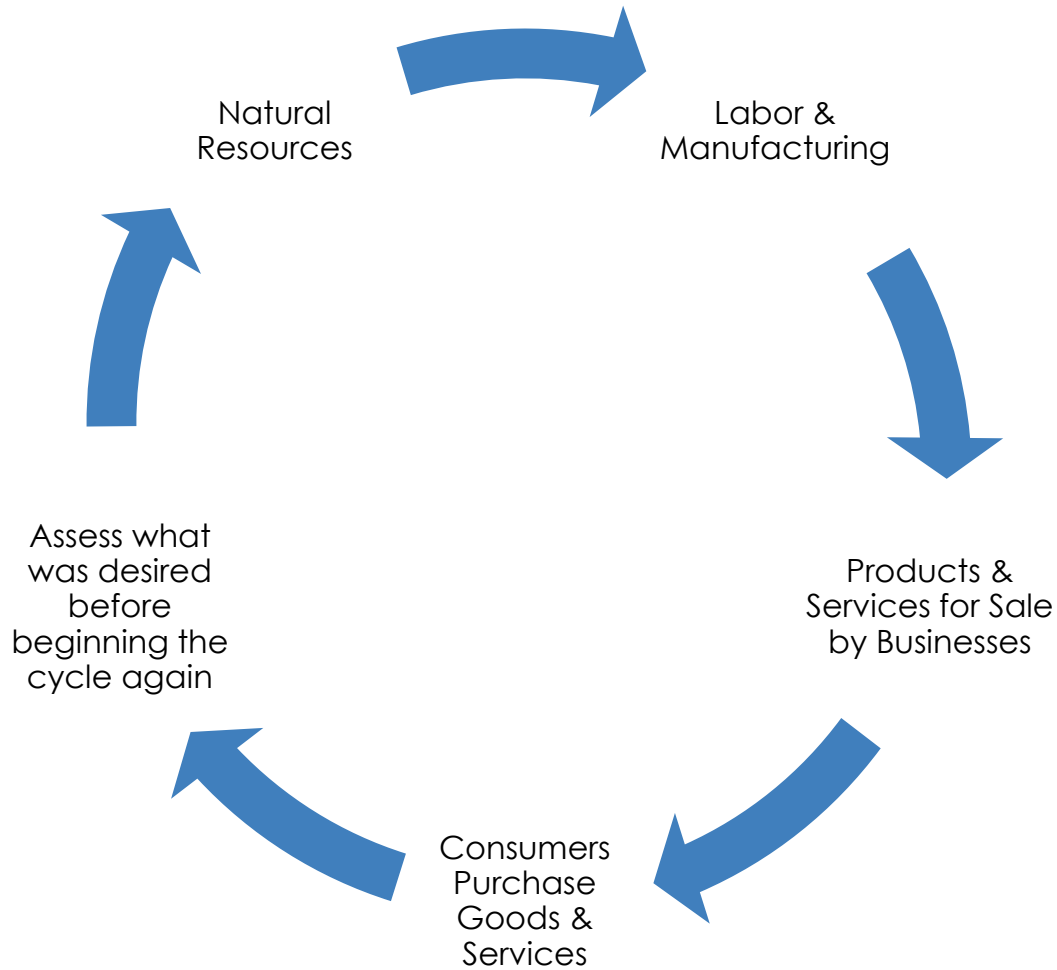


You've heard of some these terms

Term	Definition
Goods	Physical products that can be bought or sold
Services	Non-physical or intangible products; typically related to skills (such as hairdressing or finance)
Supply	The amount of goods and services available
Demand	The amount of a good or service that people are willing and able to buy
Producer	An individual, firm, or government that <u>makes</u> goods or services
Consumer	An individual, firm, or government that <u>purchases</u> goods and services.

Source: The Economist. (n.d.). Economics A-Z Terms. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/economics-a-to-z>.

The Economic Ecosystem Cycle



IS IT JUST THAT EASY? RESOURCES AND LABOR?

HOW IT ALL COMES TOGETHER

We have to measure it!

- Economists use GDP – Gross Domestic Product to measure the economy.
- We use GDP to measure economic **output**.
- GDP speaks to how productive we are, and how active consumers are.

GDP <u>Does</u> Include...	GDP <u>Does NOT</u> Include...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All goods and services that businesses sell (both in the United States and internationally)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unpaid services, like volunteering, and other unpaid work, such as parenting and family elder care• Unreported barter or trades

Source: The Economist. (n.d.). Economics A-Z Terms. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/economics-a-to-z>.

Why are we measuring?

When we measure and monitor the GDP, it helps:

- **Policymakers:** who can look at the GDP to determine where we are in the business cycle, and what fiscal policies are needed
- **Business owners:** who look at GDP in part to make decisions about hiring and investing in their business.

In Connecticut, we can look at Gross State Product (GSP) to guide economic policy decisions such as:

- Public spending
- Bonding debt
- Tax policy

Inflation and Deflation

Inflation – When demand is greater than supply, cost goes up.

- Once this happens, consumers expect ongoing price increases, so they buy more immediately, before prices go up. This increases demand even more.
- Another cause is an increase in the money supply.
- When the money supply increases, money becomes a little less valuable, and it takes more to buy goods and services, so prices go up.

Deflation happens when prices fall.

- This can be due to a decrease in the money supply, or something as simple as a decline in consumer confidence.
- Deflation is much harder to turn around than inflation.



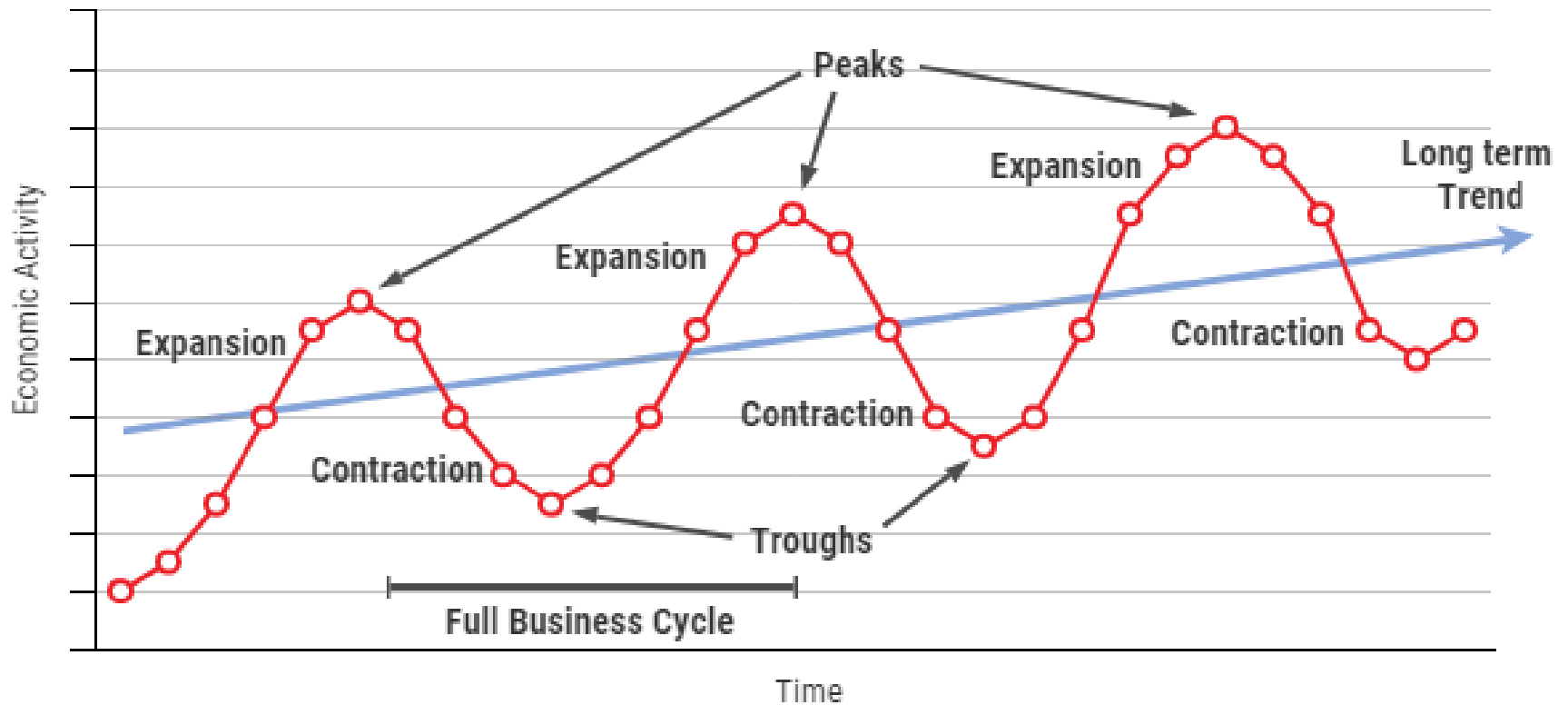
Growth and the Business Cycle

The Business Cycle is not a regular cycle. Expansions and contractions occur at irregular intervals.

Period	What Happens?
Expansion	Increase in employment and the production of goods and services.
Peak	Growth reaches a maximum level as prices hit their highest level.
Contraction	Unemployment rises, production slows, sales decrease due to drop in demand, and income decreases. Negative economic growth leads to recessions.
Trough	The period of time that marks the end of a contraction and leads the economy back into expansion.

Source: Stupak, J.M. (2019). *Introduction to U.S. Economy: The Business Cycle and Growth* (CRS Report No. IF10411). Retrieved from Congressional Research Service website at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/IF10411.pdf>.

Phases of the Business Cycle



HOW DO WE TRY TO CONTROL THE ECONOMY?

WHAT CHOICES CAN WE MAKE?

The policies that stabilize the economy

- **Fiscal** – The use of government spending and taxes to influence the economy.
- **Monetary** – The Federal Reserve influences the availability and cost of credit in the economy (U.S. only).
- **Trade** – The regulations and agreements that control imports and exports with foreign countries.

What is fiscal policy?

- These are the budget choices the government makes about how to spend money.
- This is money that comes from your taxes.
- The choices on how we spend this money can:
 - Stimulate economic growth
 - Guide or manage the path of the economy
 - Depress the economy
- Only businesses can create economic growth.
 - Why?

Source: Weil, D.N. (n.d.). Fiscal Policy. *The Library of Economics and Liberty*. Retrieved from <https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/FiscalPolicy.html>.

What is monetary policy?

- The U.S. Federal Reserve Banks control the nation's monetary policy
- The way they do this includes:
 - Controlling the money supply
 - Determining the use of credit through interest rates
- The primary goal of monetary policy is to control inflation.
- The secondary goal of monetary policy is to stimulate the economy.

Source: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. (2019, September 4). Monetary Policy. Retrieved from <https://www.federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy.htm>.

What is trade policy?

- Trade occurs between countries on an international level
- U.S. states trade and do business with each other and foreign countries
- **Tariffs** – Taxes or duties paid on specific imports in international trade. The business importing the product pays the tariff, which gets passed along through the supply chain. Ultimately, the consumer pays the tariff through increased retail pricing.
- **Trade Agreements** – These agreements with other countries generally have the goal of improving the opportunities for Americans, and improving the economy.

Source: Irwin, D.A. (2001, November 26). A Brief History of International Trade Policy. *The Library of Economics and Liberty*. Retrieved from <https://www.econlib.org/library/Columns/Irwintrade.html>.

SO, WHAT DOES THIS
ALL MEAN FOR US IN
CONNECTICUT?

Connecticut's Jobs

- In October of 2024, approximately 86% of Connecticut's labor force worked in service providing industries like transportation, information, finance, health, education, business, and government.
- In October of 2024, approximately 14% of Connecticut's labor force worked in goods producing industries like manufacturing, construction, or mining.
- Connecticut's total employment is approximately 1.7 million workers.

Source: State of Connecticut, Department of Labor, Office of Research. (2024). Industry Sectors Employment (CES) – State of Connecticut. Retrieved from <https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/SecEmp.asp>.

Manufacturing is Connecticut's largest goods producing industry sector

Industry Supersector	Estimated October 2024 Employment	Percent of Total
Construction, Mining, Natural Resources	62,500	28.3%
Manufacturing	158,000	71.7%
Total Goods Producing	220,500	100%

Source: State of Connecticut, Department of Labor, Office of Research. (2024). Industry Sectors Employment (CES) – State of Connecticut. Retrieved from <https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/SecEmp.asp>

Education and Health Services, along with Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, are Connecticut's largest service producing industry sectors

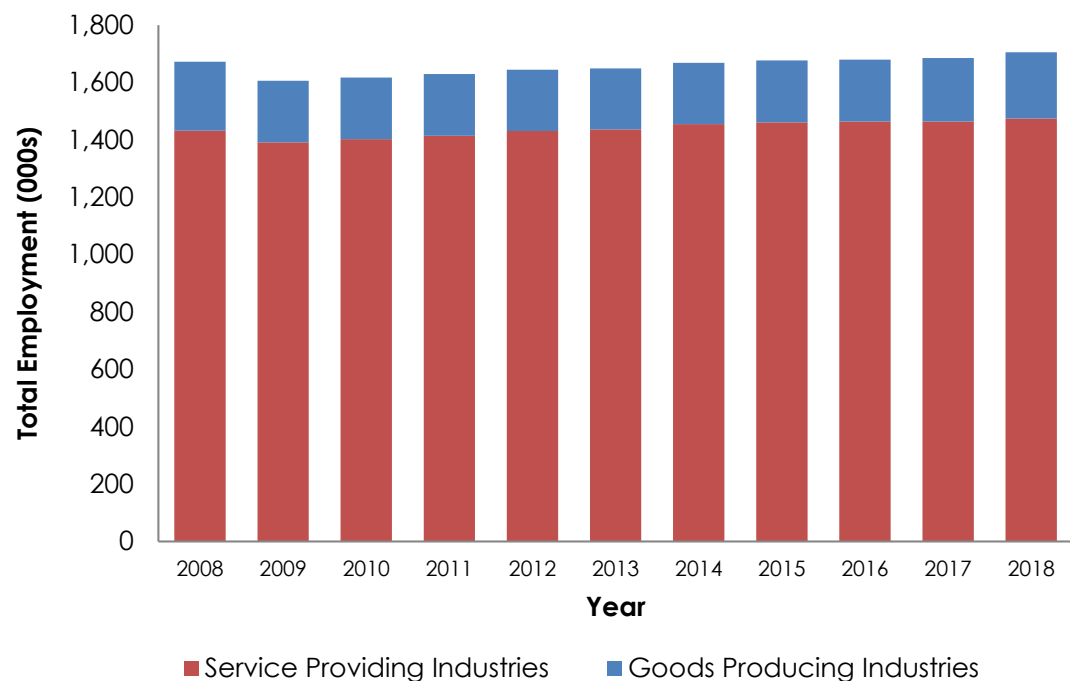
Industry Supersector	Estimated October 2024 Employment	Percent of Total
Educational and Health Services	368,200	24.72%
Financial Activities	119,200	8.0%
Government (Non-Military)	233,700	15.7%
Information	30,000	2.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	156,700	10.52%
Other Services	64,600	4.33%
Professional and Business Services	220,000	14.8%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	296,100	19.9%
Total Service Providing	1,488,500	100%

Source: State of Connecticut, Department of Labor, Office of Research. (2024). Industry Sectors Employment (CES) – State of Connecticut. Retrieved from <https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/SecEmp.asp>.

Connecticut's labor market has been steady over the past decade

- Connecticut has approximately the same number of non-farm employees in 2024 as the state did in 2014.
- Since 2014, the number of residents employed in service producing industries has slightly increased.
- Since 2014, the number of residents employed in goods producing industries has slightly decreased.

Connecticut's Non-Farm Employment by Industry Type over Time (000s)



Source: State of Connecticut, Department of Labor, Office of Research. (2019). Industry Sectors Employment (CES) – State of Connecticut. Retrieved from <https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/SecEmp.asp>.

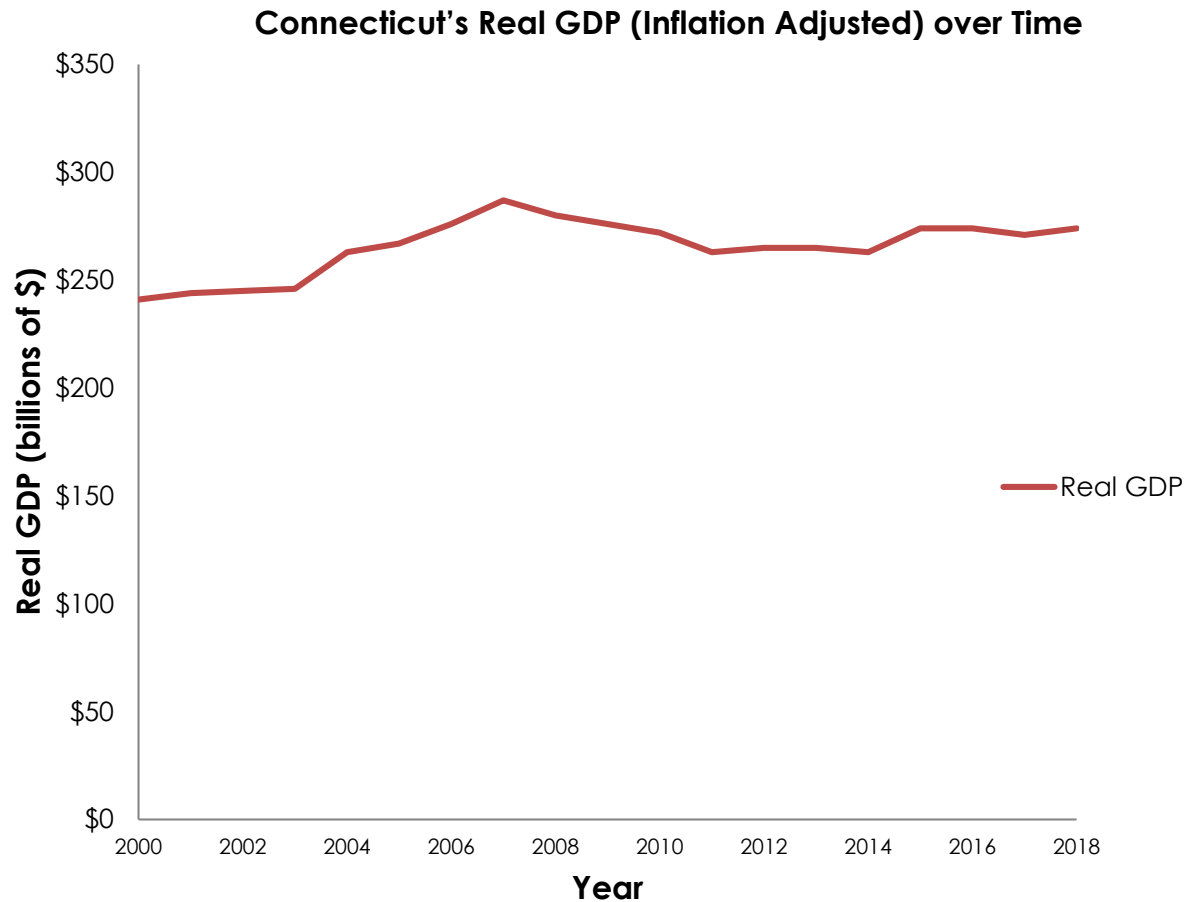
Connecticut's Economic Growth

- Connecticut's GDP growth ranked 44th in the nation in 2018, but the state's total GDP was the 23rd highest in the nation at approximately \$274 billion.
- Connecticut's GDP remains relatively stagnant, and shows very slow economic growth.
- Connecticut's unemployment rate in 2018 ranked 31st in the nation at 4.1%, and higher than the national rate of 3.9%.
- Despite poor growth and high unemployment, Connecticut remains a relatively affluent state.
- Connecticut's median household income in 2017 was an estimated \$73,781, approximately \$16,000 higher than the national median household income.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2019, May 1). *Gross Domestic Product by State: Fourth Quarter and Annual 2018* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.bea.gov/news/2019/gross-domestic-product-state-fourth-quarter-and-annual-2018>.

Connecticut's Real GDP has remained stagnant

- From 2000 to 2008, Connecticut's GDP increased by approximately 16%.
- From 2008 to 2018, Connecticut's GDP decreased by approximately 2%.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2019, May 1). *Gross Domestic Product by State: Fourth Quarter and Annual 2018* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.bea.gov/news/2019/gross-domestic-product-state-fourth-quarter-and-annual-2018>.

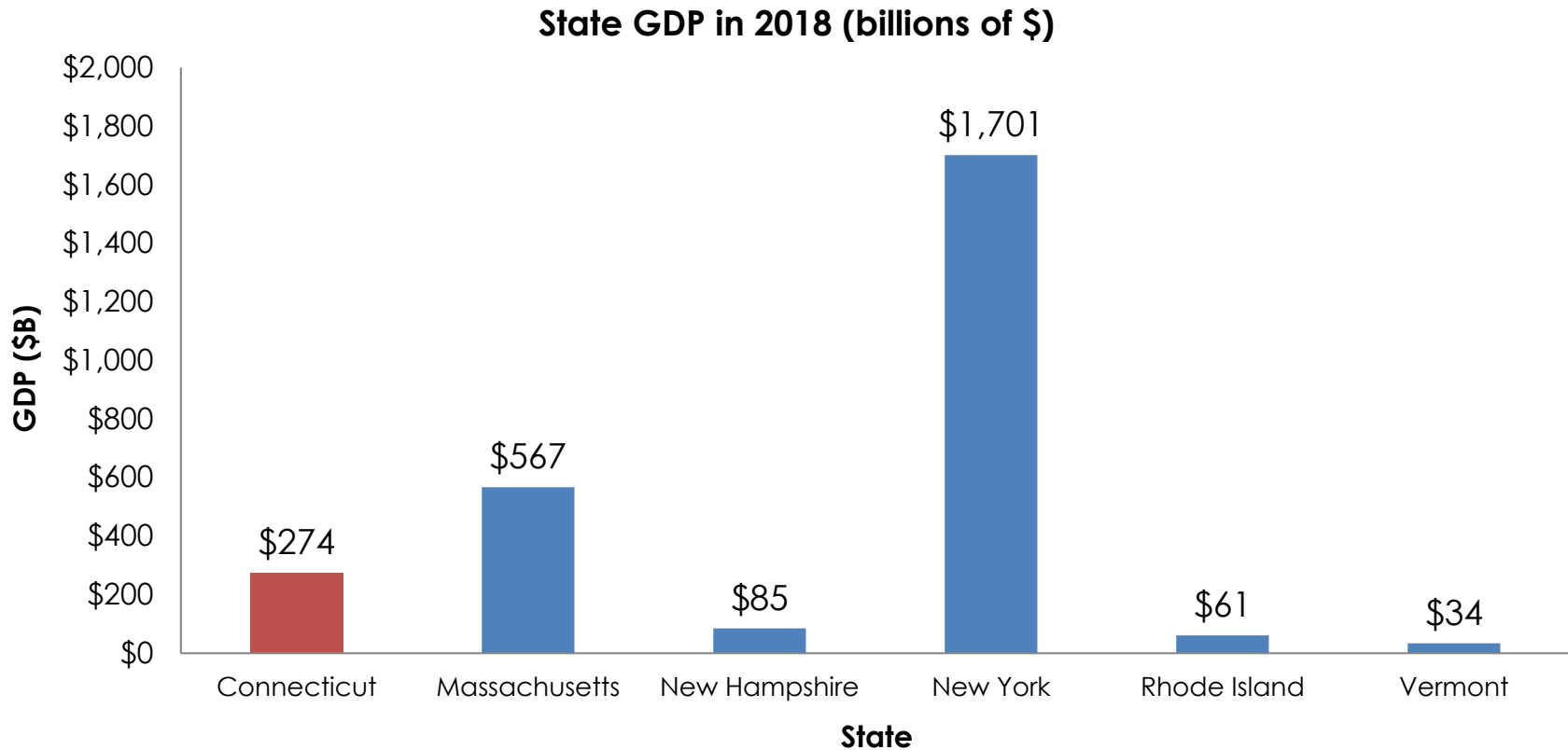
What does this mean to me?

In a state economy with more rapid job growth and a stronger, more consistent, or robust GDP growth you will find:

- Higher consumer confidence – people buying from local businesses
- Policymakers able to make strategic, forward-guiding decisions rather than decisions responding to weak growth
- Business investments – more jobs, competitive pay

HOW DO WE STACK UP TO OUR NEIGHBORS?

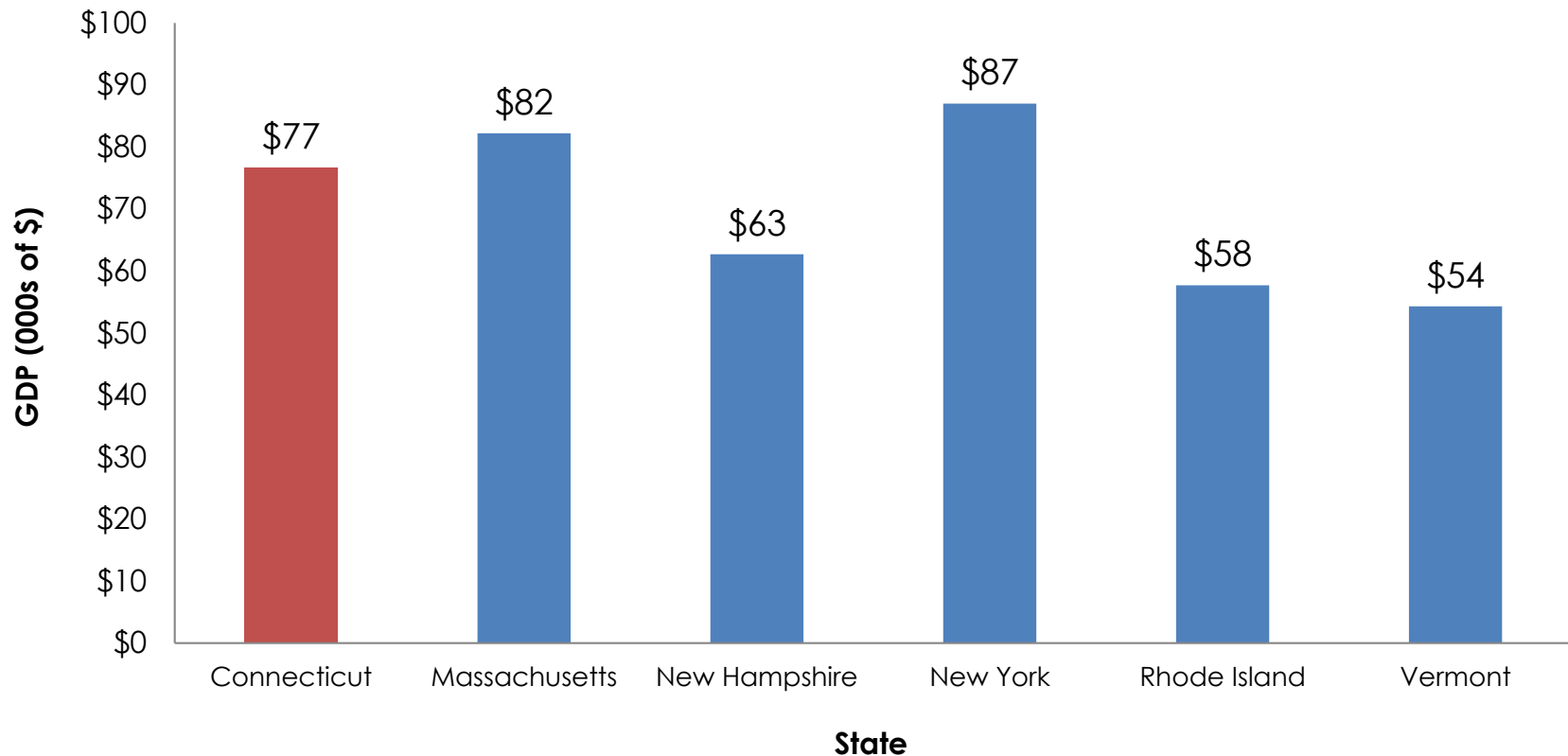
Connecticut's GDP exceeds all New England states except Massachusetts



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2019, May 1). *Gross Domestic Product by State: Fourth Quarter and Annual 2018* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.bea.gov/news/2019/gross-domestic-product-state-fourth-quarter-and-annual-2018>.

Connecticut's GDP per capita is the second highest in New England

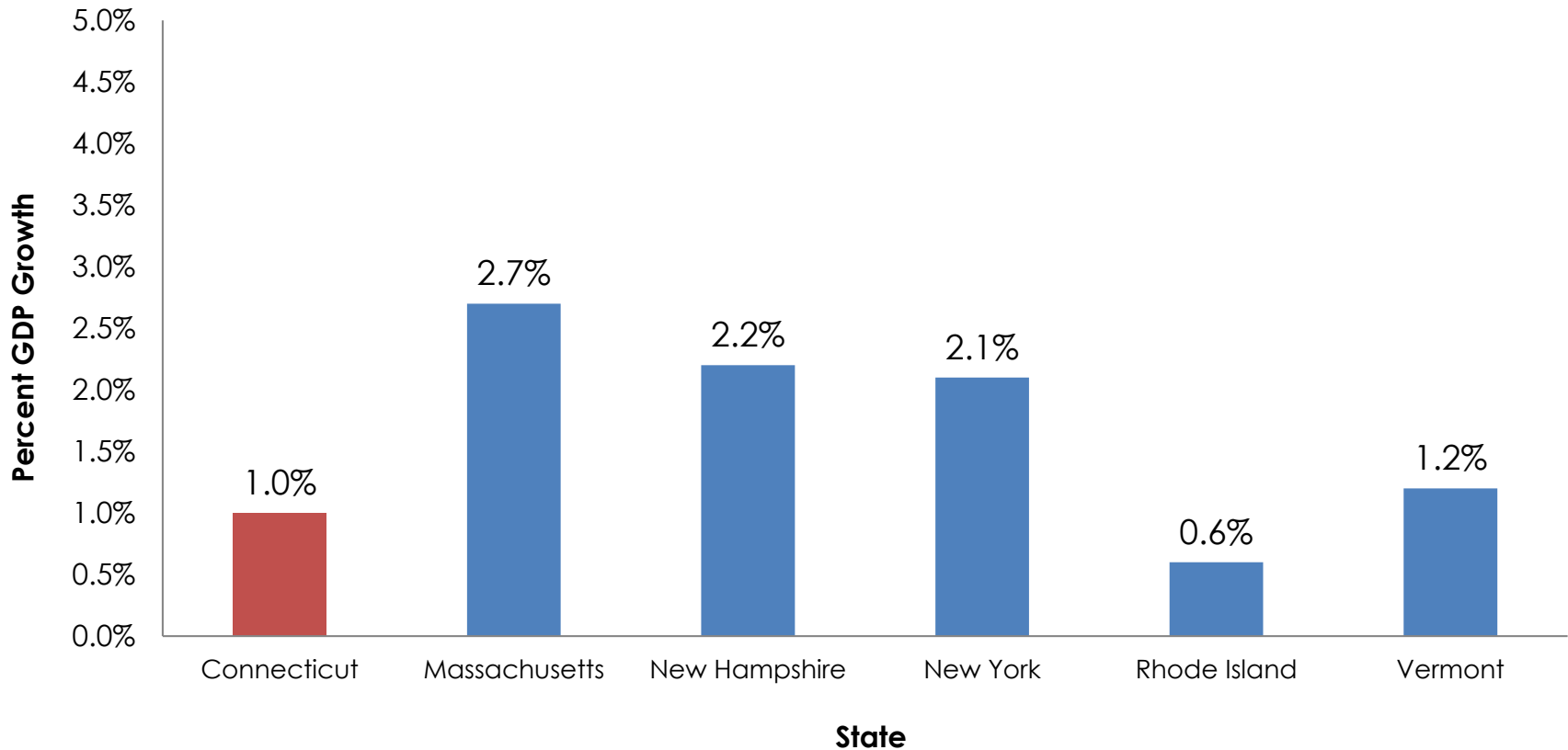
State GDP per capita in 2018 (000s of \$)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2019, May 1). *Gross Domestic Product by State: Fourth Quarter and Annual 2018* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.bea.gov/news/2019/gross-domestic-product-state-fourth-quarter-and-annual-2018>.

GDP Growth in Connecticut remains at the low end of New England states

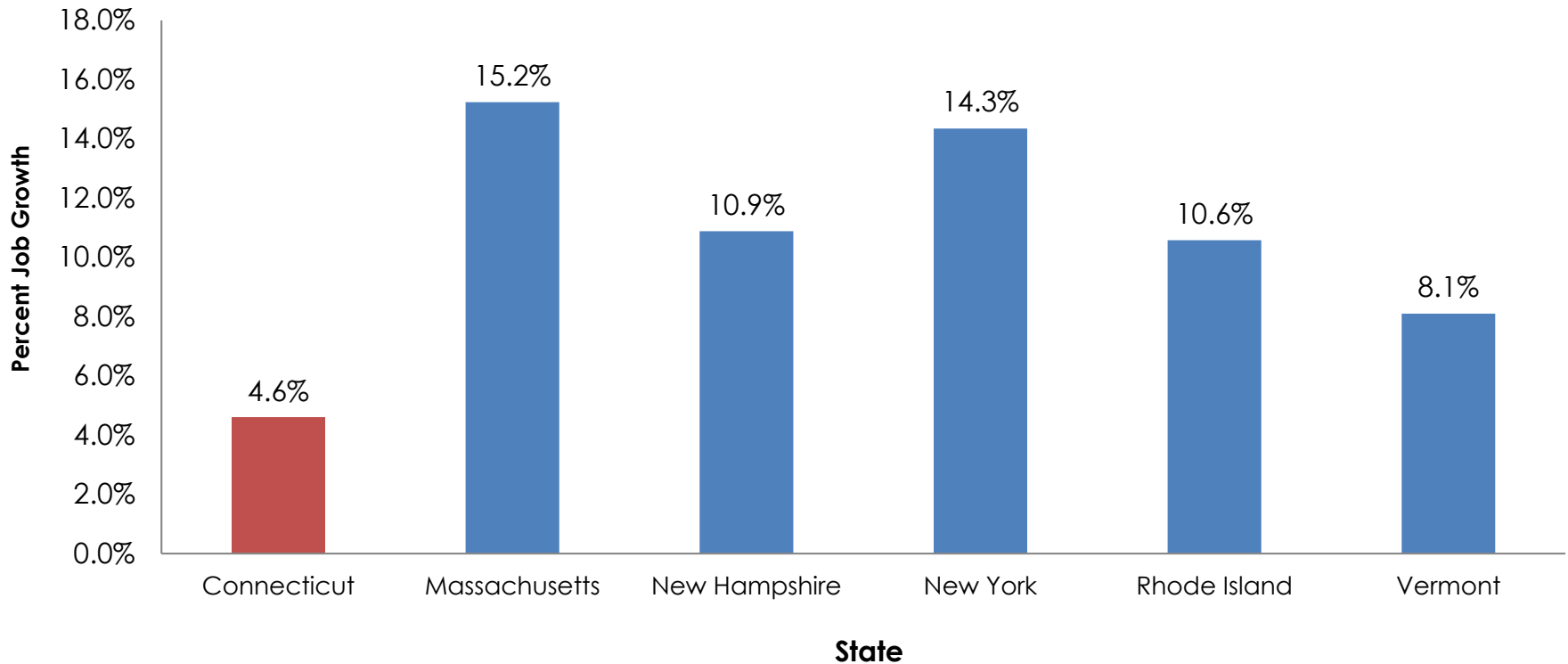
State GDP 2018 Growth Rates (Year over year)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2019, May 1). *Gross Domestic Product by State: Fourth Quarter and Annual 2018* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.bea.gov/news/2019/gross-domestic-product-state-fourth-quarter-and-annual-2018>.

Job growth in Connecticut remains low compared to neighboring states

Percent Change in Employees since the Great Recession
(Total Nonfarm Payrolls)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). All Employees: Total Nonfarm for Selected States. Available from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis at <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>.

GROWTH IS GOOD,
RIGHT?

Not always. Economic growth can conflict with...

- **Environmental protection** – Natural resources are a key part of the economy, and they are finite.
- **Economic sustainability** – It is not possible for growth to continue indefinitely.
- **International stability** – Internationally, the dollar is used as a global currency measure.

Evidence of the Conflict

- Pollution, depletion of resources, and other negative ecosystem impacts are the costs of economic growth.
- These negative impacts are observed through the loss of ocean fisheries and pollinators, deforestation, concentrations of toxic pollution, and climate change.
- These impacts are felt by individual countries and the international community as a whole.

**Uneconomic growth
exists as well**

Uneconomic growth

This occurs when we strive to grow the economy at a cost higher than the benefits realized.

Type of Growth	What Happens?
Jobless Growth	The economy grows but employment does not.
Ruthless Growth	Growth only benefits the wealthy.
Voiceless Growth	Economic growth is not partnered with democracy or empowerment.
Rootless Growth	Economic growth minimizes cultural identity.
Futureless Growth	The decisions made today squander the resources of the next generation.

Source: Center for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy. (n.d.). Downsides of Growth. Retrieved from <https://steadystate.org/discover/downsides-of-economic-growth/>.

ECONOMIC POLICY IN CONNECTICUT

We are talking about economic policy in Connecticut because...

- It is about the taxes you pay. Examples:
 - Income
 - Sales
 - Property
- It is about what we as a state choose to invest in. Examples:
 - Roads
 - Education
- Your voice helps to determine spending and policy priorities.

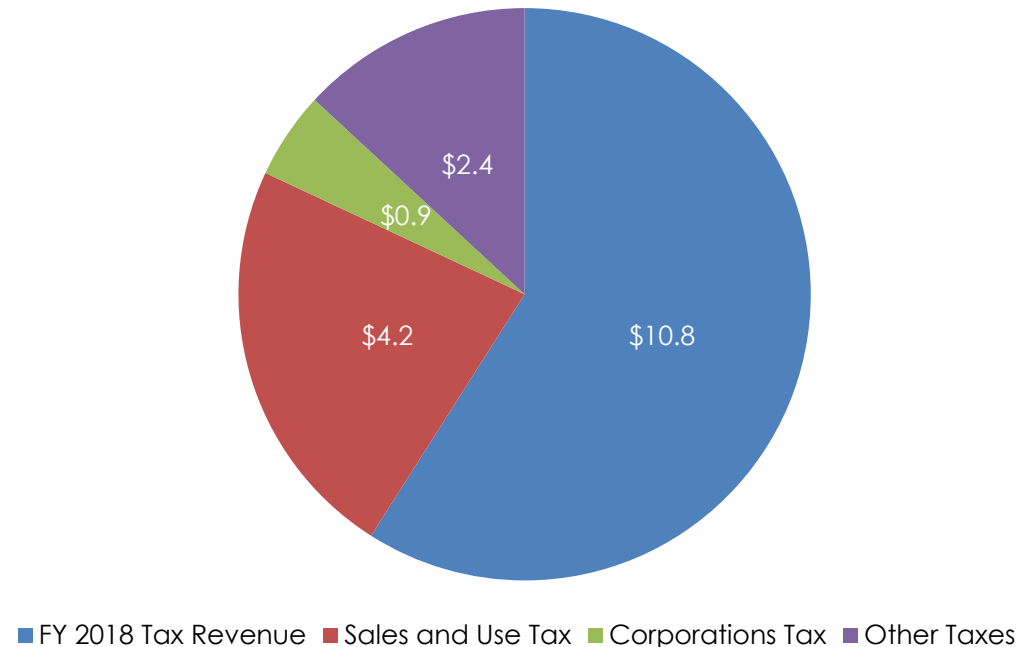
**Before the State spends
money, it must raise revenue**

Revenue – Taxes

(Fiscal Policy)

- **Income Tax** – The state's largest source of revenue. In fiscal year 2018, the state income tax yielded nearly \$10.8 billion (59%) of the State's total gross tax revenues.
- **Sales and Use Tax** – In fiscal year 2018, the sales and use tax generated approximately \$4.2 billion (23%) of total gross tax revenues.
- More than 80% of General Fund revenue comes from these 2 revenue streams.
- **Corporations Business Tax** – In fiscal year 2018 it yielded approximately \$921 million (5%) of total gross tax revenues.
- Together these 3 revenue sources accounted for approximately \$15.9 billion (86.7%) of Connecticut's \$18.3 billion in gross tax revenues for fiscal year 2018.

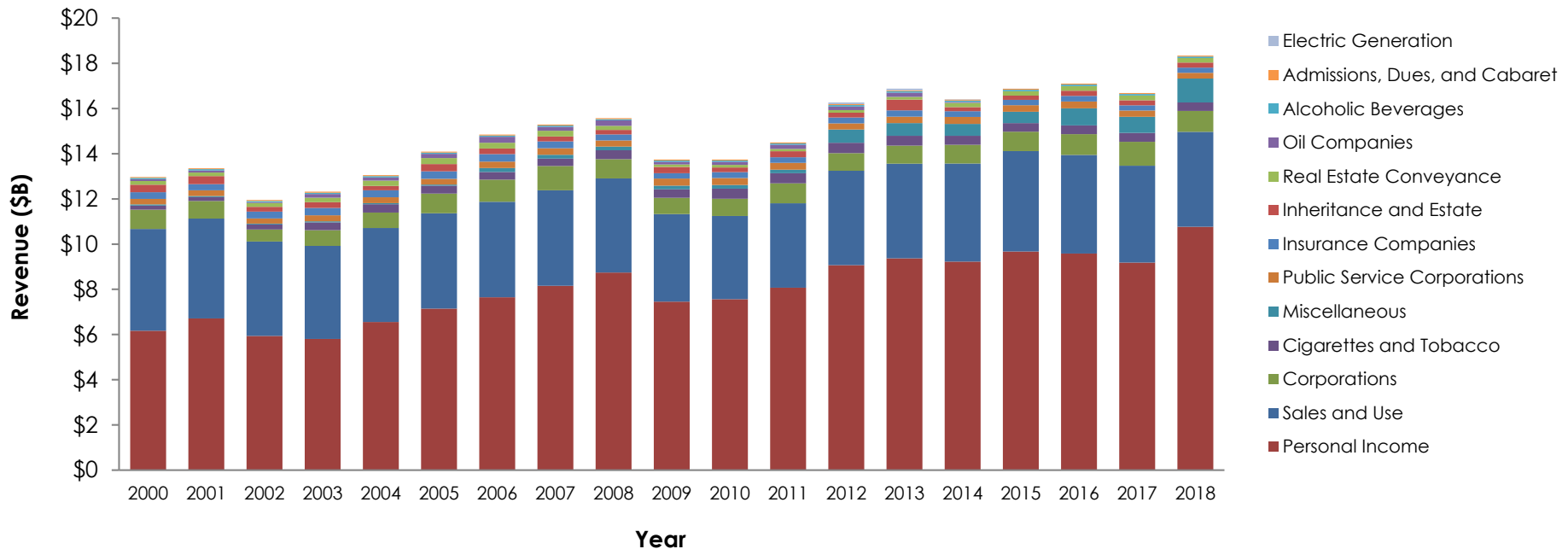
Connecticut's Fiscal Year 2018 Tax Revenue
(Billions of \$)



Source: Lembo, K. (2018). *Annual Report of the State Comptroller, FY 2018*. Hartford, CT: State of Connecticut, Office of the State Comptroller. Retrieved from <https://www.osc.ct.gov/reports/index.html>.

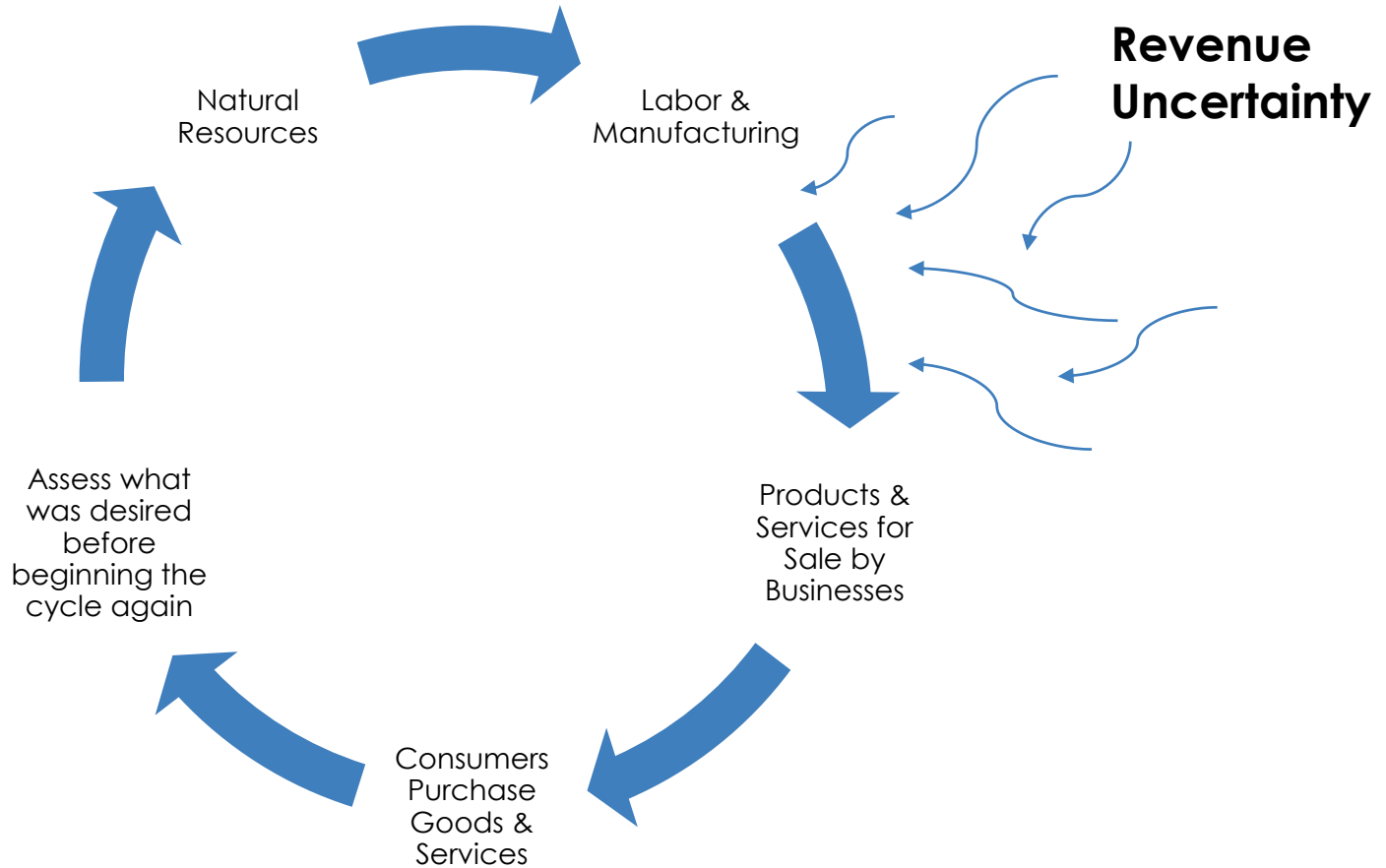
Revenue is not the same every year

**General Fund Gross Tax Revenue by Source
(in 2018-adjusted dollars, excluding refunds)**



The budget process requires predictions about the economy, including how stable it will be, what wages will do, stability of prices in goods and services, the relative stability of the U.S. economy, and unemployment levels.

Revenue uncertainty impacts the economic ecosystem cycle



Once it's estimated how much money will be raised, there needs to be a plan for how to use it

Choices

We have choices about how predicted revenue gets spent.

Spending can be categorized as either:

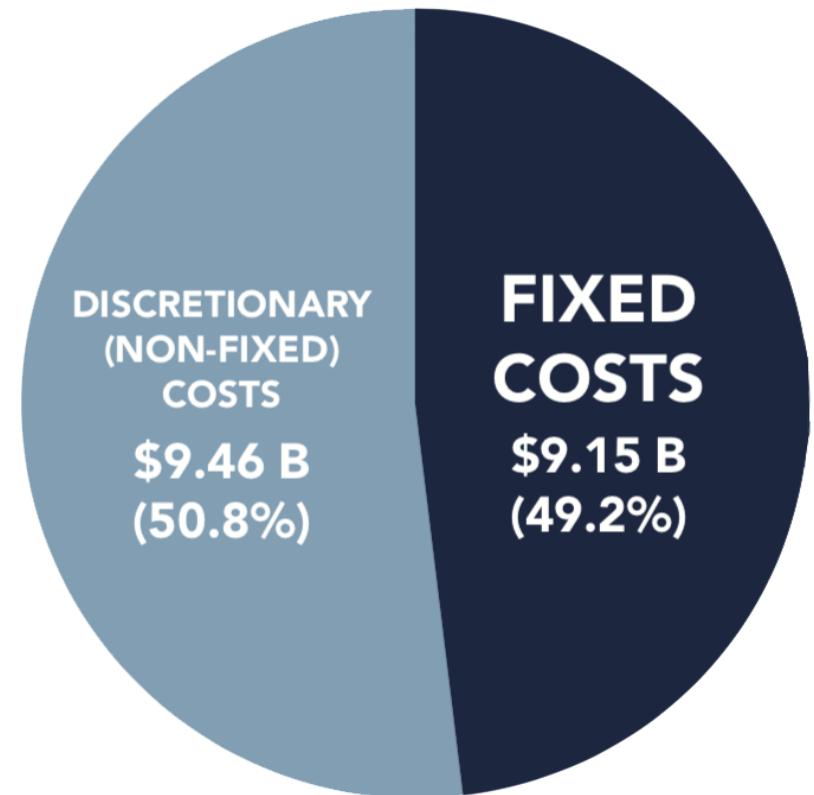
Fixed costs – Money the State is obligated to pay based on previous financial agreements. This is money the State has promised or borrowed and, in general, owes.

Discretionary spending – This is money not tied to a specific agreement or obligation. It is money the legislature has full control over in each budget cycle, and typically funds the ongoing work of the State and its agencies.

There are two aspects of spending to discuss: Fixed and non-fixed, or “discretionary” spending

- In fiscal year 2018, the State of Connecticut’s total General Fund expenditures were approximately \$18.6 billion.
- Roughly half, or \$9.17 billion, of General Fund expenditures were categorized as “fixed” costs.
- Spending on fixed costs does not provide an immediate benefit to the economy like spending on education and infrastructure.

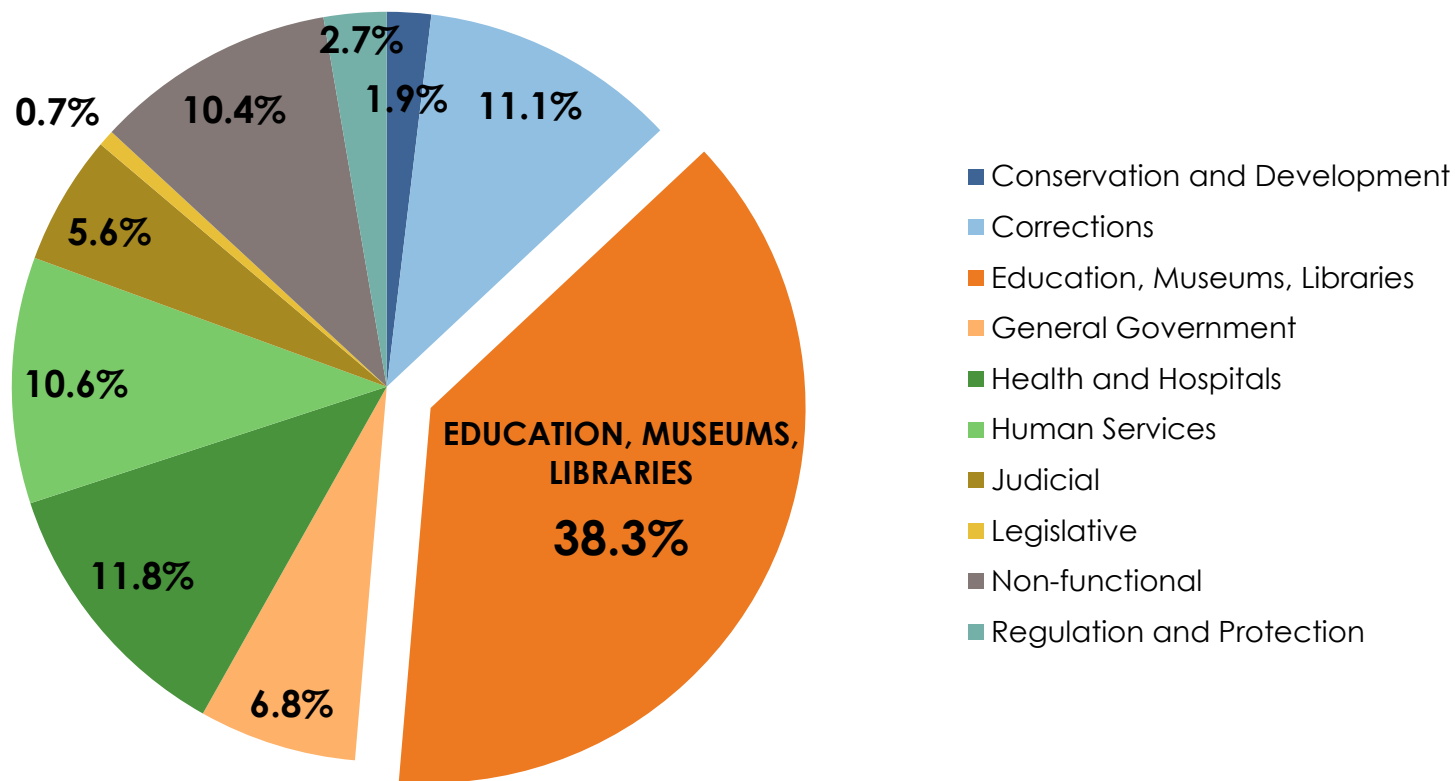
General Fund Expenditures by Service, FY 2018



Non-fixed, or “discretionary” spending

Education funding makes up, by far, the largest portion of Connecticut's non-fixed costs (does NOT include pensions or capital expenses)

Non-fixed General Fund Expenditures by Service, FY 2018



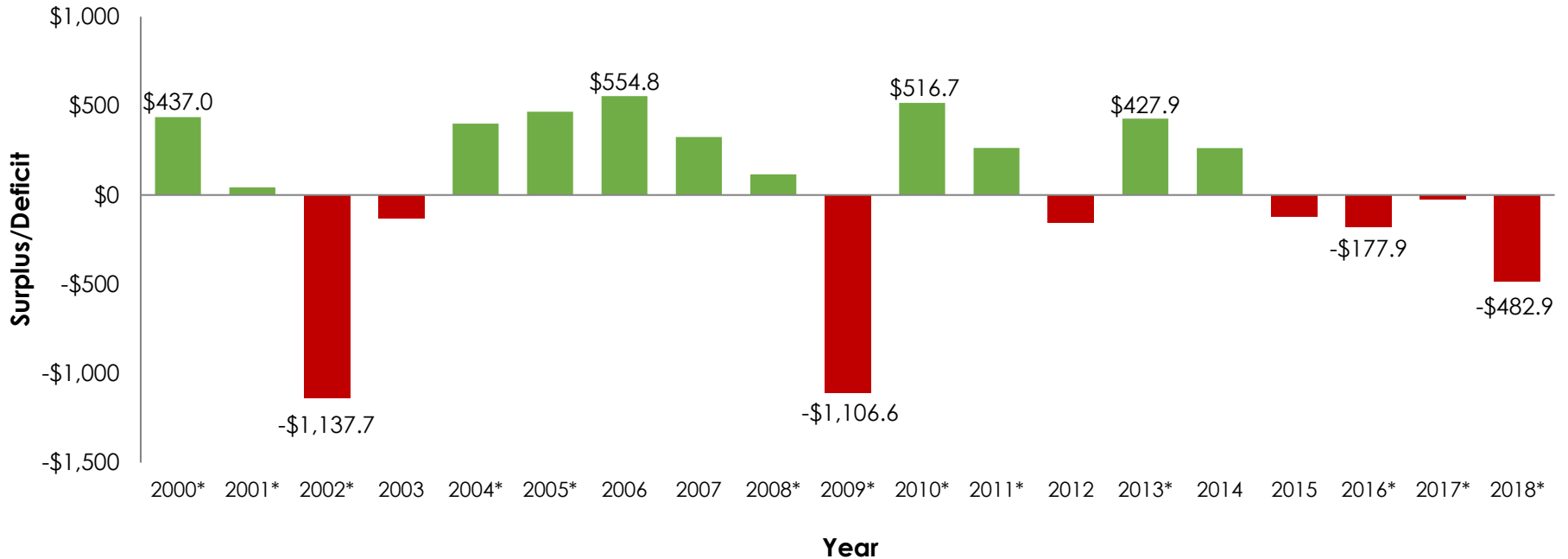
Surplus vs. Deficit

- **Surplus** – Government revenues exceed its spending.
- **Deficit** – Government spending exceeds its revenues.
- Certain kinds of fiscal policy impact the government's budget.
 - **Expansionary policy** – Tax cuts or government spending beyond its budgeted constraints. This reduces surpluses or increases deficits, but can increase economic growth.
 - **Contractionary policy** – Reducing spending or increasing taxes removes money from the economy. This increases surpluses or reduces deficits.

Source: Weil, D.N. (n.d.). Fiscal Policy. *The Library of Economics and Liberty*. Retrieved from <https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/FiscalPolicy.html>.

Connecticut Surpluses and Deficits

**General Fund Deficits and Surpluses Over Time
(in 2018-adjusted dollars)**



*Fiscal years with asterisks indicate at least one piece of deficit mitigation legislation was passed by the Connecticut General Assembly, and signed by the governor, during that fiscal year in an attempt to address the budget deficit for that fiscal year.

It is important to note that the deficits and surpluses shown above are not the actual annual differences between Connecticut's General Fund revenues and expenditures. Rather, the numbers displayed above are the deficit/surplus numbers reported by the Connecticut State Comptroller. Each fiscal year, the State of Connecticut typically makes adjustments (such as one-time fund transfers or deposits to the State's Budget Reserve Fund) to the resulting difference between General Fund revenues and expenditures. The annual reported deficits/surpluses account for these adjustments, therefore making a fiscal year's deficit/surplus different than simply the difference between the fiscal year's revenues and expenditures.

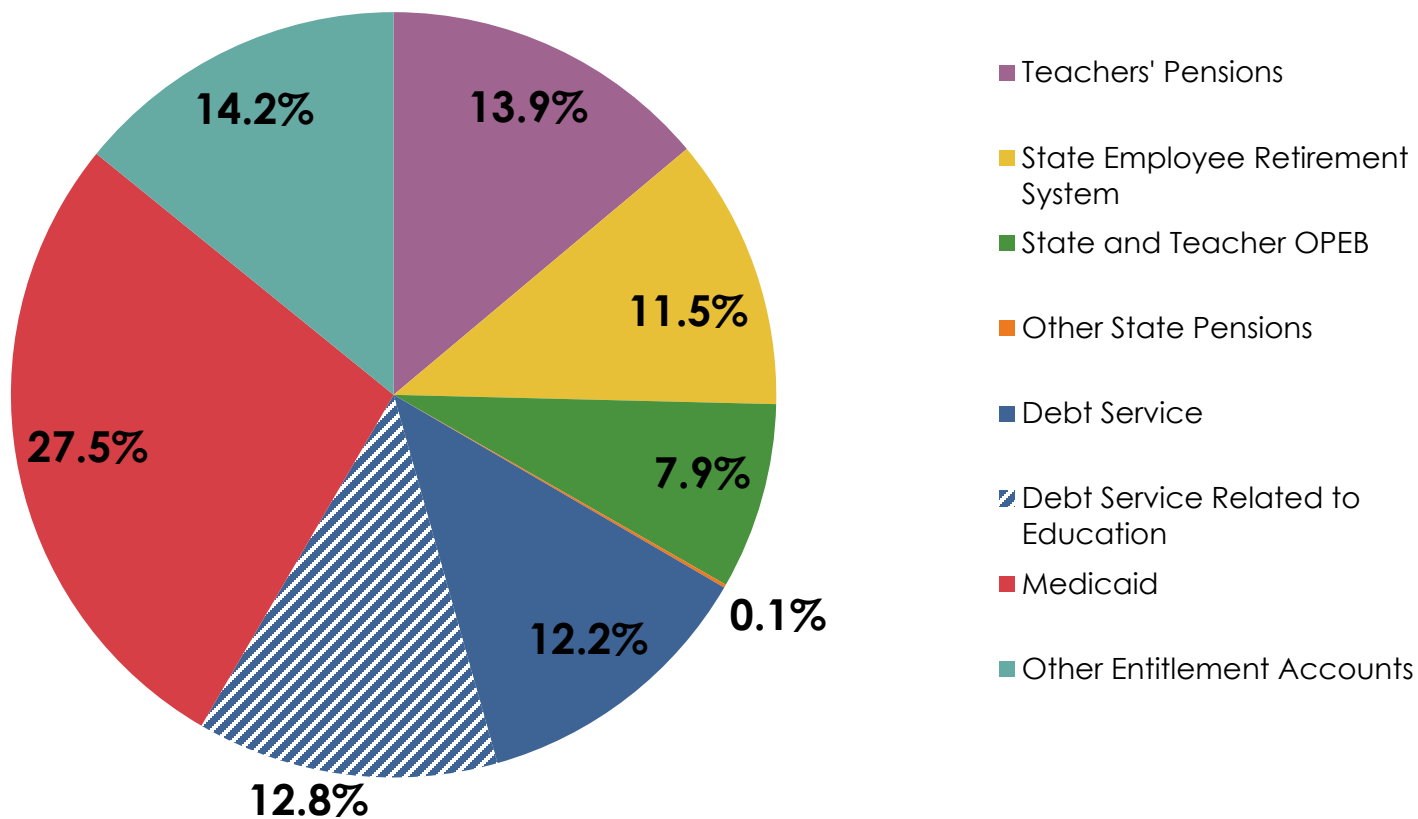
Fixed Costs

Choices

- **Fixed costs** – Money the State is obligated to pay based on previous financial agreements. This is money the State has promised or borrowed and, in general, owes.
- Fixed costs are not simply the result of choices made now but choices made over time. These costs may represent decades of economic choices.
- Fixed costs represent long-term debt.
- Fixed costs also represent economic investment.

Education-related expenditures, such as teacher pensions and bonding for school construction, make up about 25% of the state's fixed costs

Fixed Cost Categories and Percentages, FY 2018



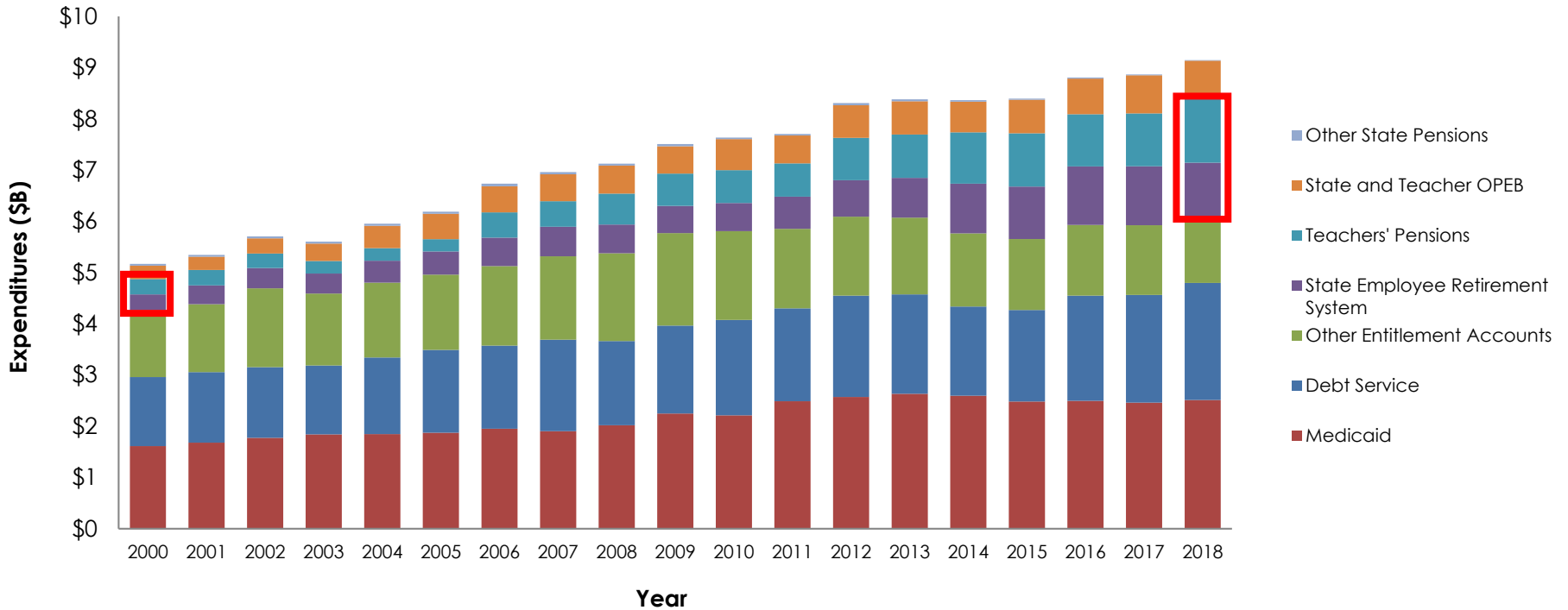
Fixed Cost: Pensions

- Connecticut's State Employees Retirement System (SERS) and Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) accounted for approximately \$2.3 billion in General Fund spending in fiscal year 2018.
- These costs are projected to increase due to years of state underfunding, overly optimistic assumed rates of return, and poor actuarial experience.
- This reduces the amount of money in the budget that is available to be spent on other initiatives or programs.
- This removes additional money from the state economy, and places it into a long-term investment.

Source: Nappier, D.L. (2018). *Annual Report of the Treasurer, FY 2018*. Hartford, CT: State of Connecticut, Office of the State Treasurer. Retrieved from <https://www.otf.ct.gov/PDFs/2018AnnualReport.pdf>.

Pension costs continue to grow

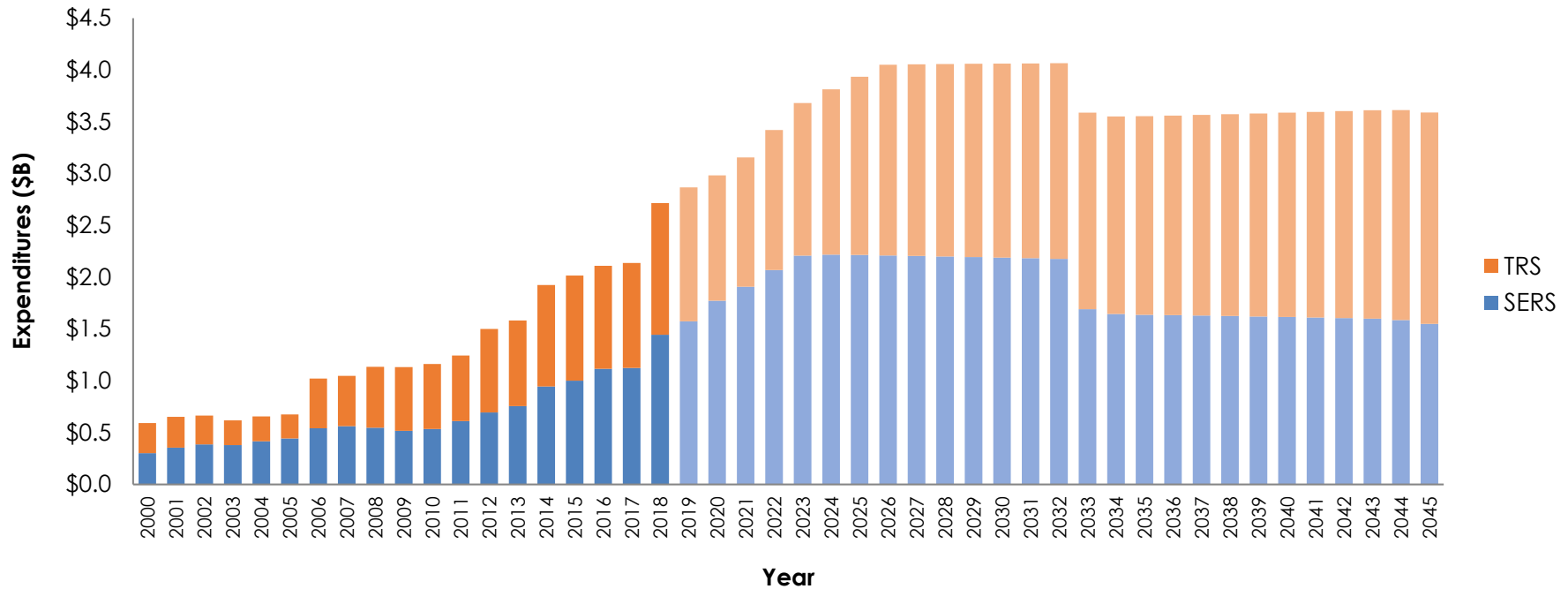
Growth of Fixed Costs (in 2018-adjusted dollars)



In FY 2014, the Office of Policy and Management began the practice of "net-budgeting" of Medicaid by eliminating matching federal Medicaid funds from the General Fund. In order to achieve an apples-to-apples comparison, only state Medicaid expenditures have been included in the above visualization and all federal matching Medicaid funds have been removed. Connecticut's total fixed costs have been calculated based on line-item details from the General Assembly's Office of Fiscal Analysis' Fiscal Accountability Report, FY 19-FY 22.

These costs are projected to continue to grow

Projected State Contributions to SERS and TRS



In FY 2014, the Office of Policy and Management began the practice of "net-budgeting" of Medicaid by eliminating matching federal Medicaid funds from the General Fund. In order to achieve an apples-to-apples comparison, only state Medicaid expenditures have been included in the above visualization and all federal matching Medicaid funds have been removed. Connecticut's total fixed costs have been calculated based on line-item details from the General Assembly's Office of Fiscal Analysis' Fiscal Accountability Report, FY 19-FY 22.

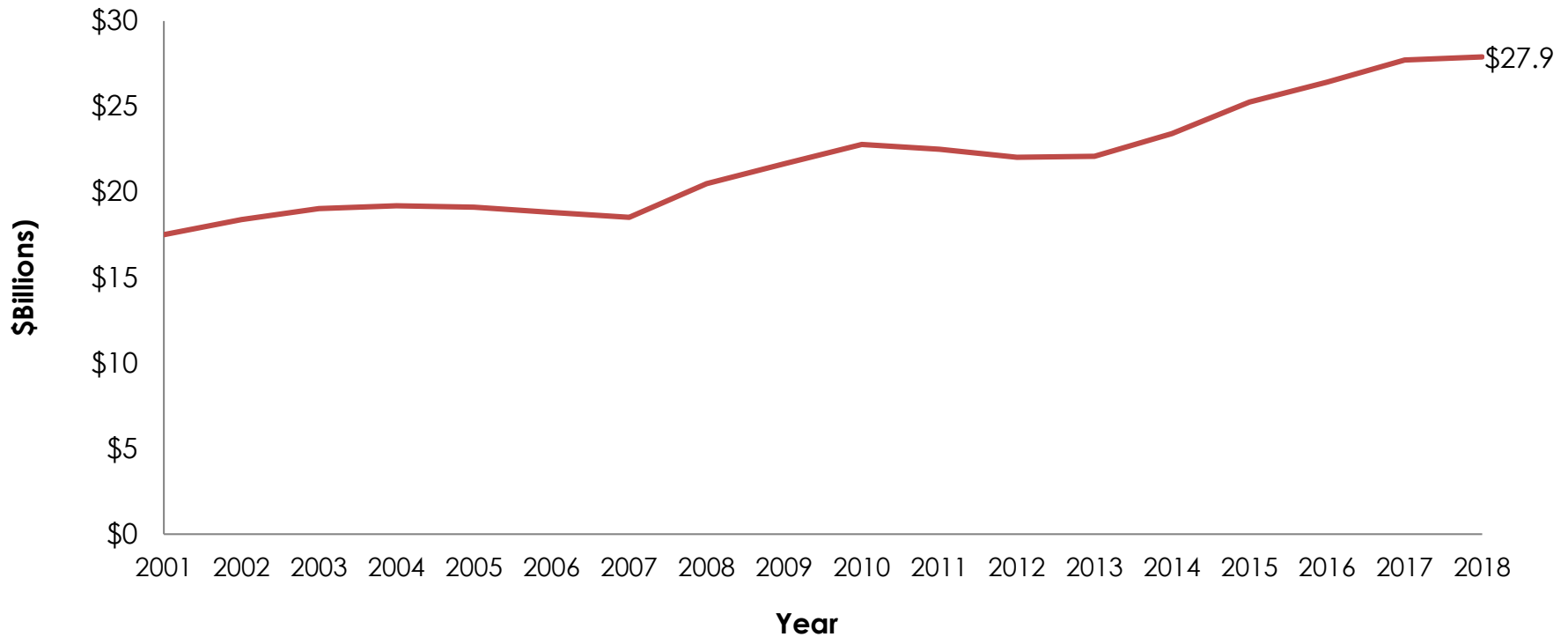
Fixed Cost: Bonding

- The State of Connecticut, similar to all states, raises money to fund certain projects through bonds.
- Bonds are a form of debt that are sold to investors, and the State is obligated to pay back the principle and interest on the bond.
- In fiscal year 2018, Connecticut's new bond allocations totaled approximately \$2.94 billion and spending on debt service to pay back previous bonds was approximately \$2.88 billion.
- Bonded projects often provide economic benefit.
- In fiscal year 2018, nearly 41% of new bond allocations funded infrastructure projects.

Source: Lembo, K. (2018). *Annual Report of the State Comptroller, FY 2018*. Hartford, CT: State of Connecticut, Office of the State Comptroller. Retrieved from <https://www.osc.ct.gov/reports/index.html>.

How much bonded debt does Connecticut have?

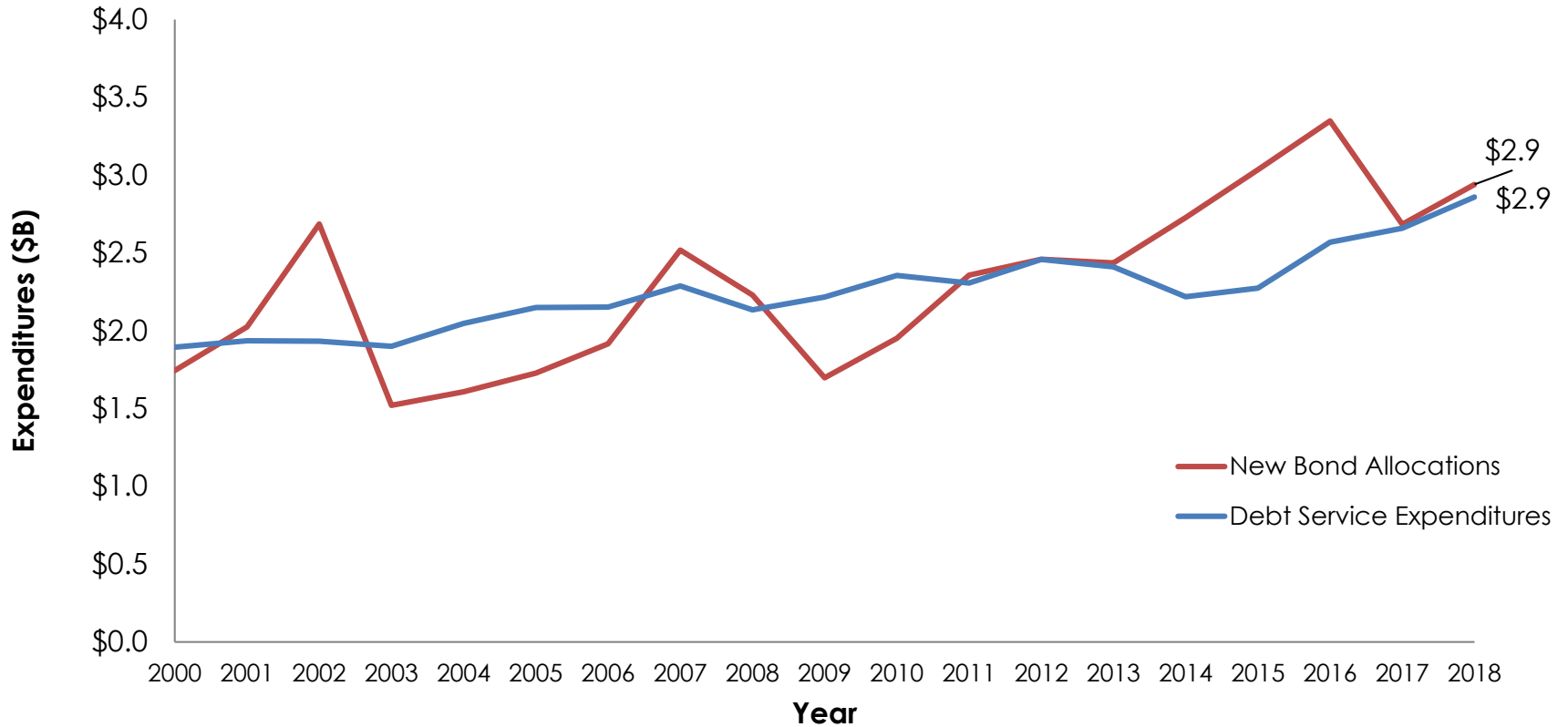
Bonded Debt (in 2018-adjusted dollars)



Sources: Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports from the Office of the State Comptroller from fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2018. Available from <https://www.osc.ct.gov/reports/indexarchive2.html> and <https://www.osc.ct.gov/reports/indexarchive.html>.

What about a “debt diet”?

Total New Bond Allocations vs. Debt Service Expenditures
(in 2018-adjusted dollars)



WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO CREATE A STATE BUDGET?

Connecticut has a two-year budget cycle

- Year one of the budget cycle develops a full two-year budget
- Year two of the budget cycle allows for adjustments to be made to the original budget



Image Source: State of Connecticut, Office of the State Comptroller. (n.d.). State Budget. *OpenConnecticut*. Retrieved from <http://www.osc.ct.gov/openCT/statebudget.html>.

Key Players

- The Governor (the Executive Branch)
 - Develops the first budget with the Office of Policy and Management (the governor's budget office)
- Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
 - Focuses primarily on money coming in
 - Adjusts the governor's revenue plan or crafts its own entirely
- Appropriations Committee
 - Focuses primarily on money being spent
 - Adjusts the governor's spending plan or crafts its own entirely

The role of legislative committees

- Committees, such as the Education Committee, work on legislation related to the subject matter they are named for.
- While a committee can pass a proposed bill, it does not become a law until the full legislature has voted on it.
- Proposed bills with an associated cost must be incorporated into the Appropriations Committee's budget

Your role in the budget process

Working with your legislators

- Your legislators may not be members of one of the two budget committees, or may not be a member of a committee covering your issue area of interest (ex. education).
 - That's ok! Always let your legislators know your thoughts related to proposed legislation, or even things you would like them to address.
 - Let them know you plan on testifying. A lot of times this gives you an opportunity to connect with your legislator in person.
- Testifying, in person or in writing, allows for more legislators to see your opinion.

Testify at the appropriate committee

- Always make sure that your comments are relevant to the proposed bill or subject matter at hand.
- The Appropriations Committee holds public hearings that are broad but always about the budget. You may default to speaking about policy (for instance, how important program X is to you), but remember to talk about the cost of the program too.
- Always submit testimony in writing, even if you are going to be there in person.

Your action steps

What you can do

- Stay up-to-date
 - Follow the budget process
 - Follow the bills you are passionate about
- Make a commitment to testify, in person or in writing, at least once this session.
- Introduce yourself, your priorities, and your commitment to testify, to your legislators (both your representative and senator).

Find Your Five

- Create a small group – who do you usually talk to about all things school and state finance?
- Make civic participation a group and individual sport
 - Rotate who attends subcommittee meetings
 - Attend board of education and town council meetings as a group
 - Each person can focus on a single topic

How can we help?

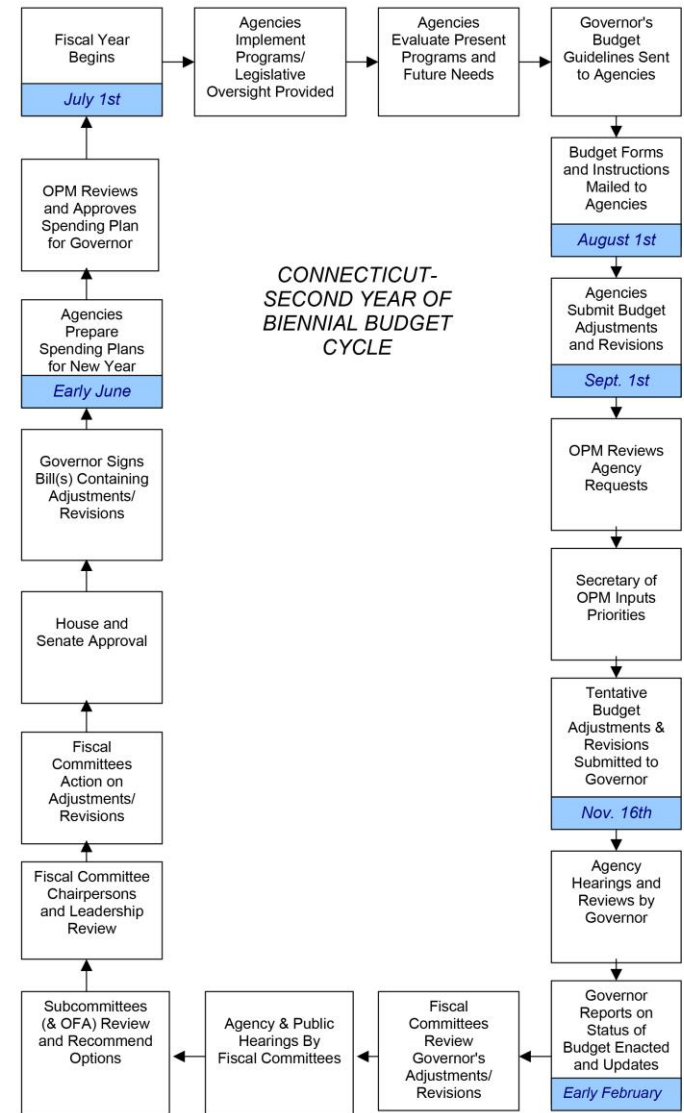
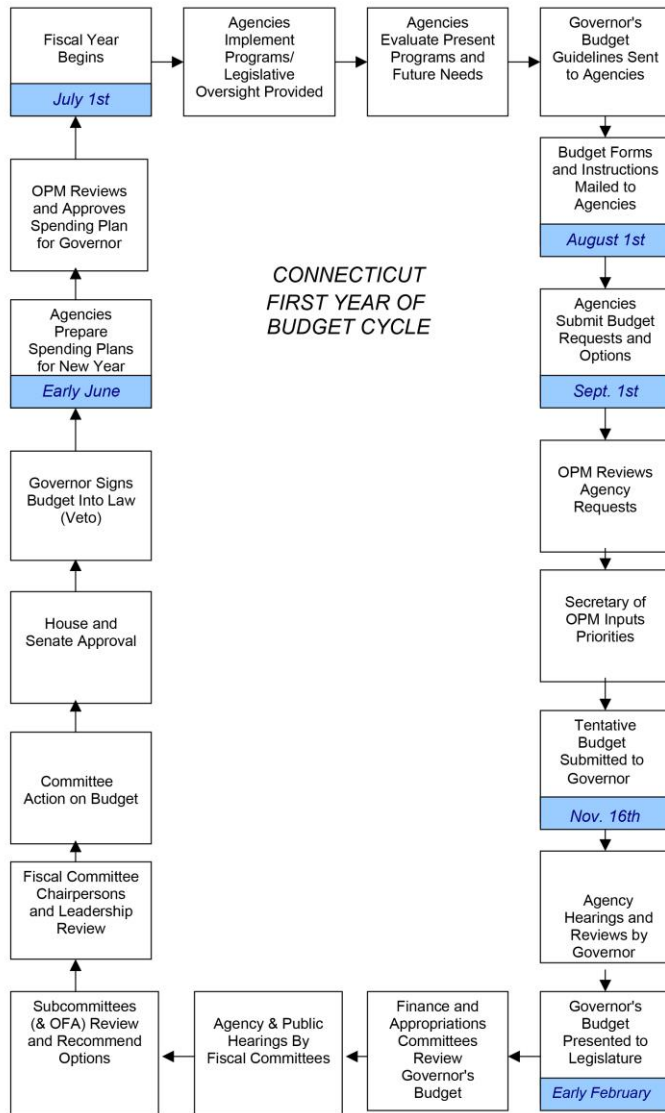
APPENDIX

Gas prices as an example of changes in the economy

What impacts the price of a gallon of gas?

Factor	Impact
Crude Oil	Gasoline is made from crude oil and changes in the price of crude oil substantially impact the price of gas.
Changes in Supply/Demand	Increases in demand increase price, and increases in supply decrease price.
Taxes	Connecticut taxes the retail sale of gas at 25 cents a gallon, which increases the price.
Location	The cost of wages, rent, insurance, and utilities impact the price of gas differently in different areas.
Climate and Weather	People tend to travel more in the summer, increasing demand. Severe weather events can reduce the supply of gas or crude oil.

Source: Bennett, Jeanette. (2015). *Behind the Signs: Factors that Affect Gasoline Prices*. Retrieved from: <https://www.stlouisfed.org/publications/inside-the-vault/spring-2015/behind-the-signs>



Sources: Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Fiscal Analysis. (2008). *The State Budget Process - First Year of the Connecticut Biennial Budget Cycle*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from [https://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/documents/year/pres/2008PRES-20081201_The%20State%20Budget%20Process%20-%20First%20\(1st\)%20Year%20of%20the%20Connecticut%20Biennial%20Budget%20Cycle.pdf](https://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/documents/year/pres/2008PRES-20081201_The%20State%20Budget%20Process%20-%20First%20(1st)%20Year%20of%20the%20Connecticut%20Biennial%20Budget%20Cycle.pdf).
 Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Fiscal Analysis. (2008). *The State Budget Process - Second Year of the Connecticut Biennial Budget Cycle*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from [https://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/documents/year/pres/2008PRES-20081201_The%20State%20Budget%20Process%20-%20Second%20\(2nd\)%20Year%20of%20the%20Connecticut%20Biennial%20Budget%20Cycle.pdf](https://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/documents/year/pres/2008PRES-20081201_The%20State%20Budget%20Process%20-%20Second%20(2nd)%20Year%20of%20the%20Connecticut%20Biennial%20Budget%20Cycle.pdf).

Budget Reserve Fund (aka The Rainy Day Fund)

- Connecticut's Budget Reserve Fund (BRF) is used to provide a cushion against budget shortfalls.
 - At the end of fiscal year 2019, the BRF contained an estimated \$2.3 billion, which is the largest the Fund has ever been.
 - This balance accounts for 12% of Connecticut's total annual net appropriations. The Office of the State Comptroller recommends a fund balance of 15% of annual net appropriations.
- The BRF covers any deficit at the end of a fiscal year, and can be used to finance a projected decline in revenues of 1% or more in the current or next fiscal year within a biennium.
- Money in the BRF, or funds that would otherwise be deposited into the BRF, may (or at times, must) be used when the balance of the BRF reaches certain limits.
- The BRF can receive money from three different sources:
 - **Budget Surplus:** Leftover funds that are not appropriated, transferred, or carried over into the next fiscal year
 - **Required Surplus:** Connecticut's "revenue cap" requires a percentage of anticipated revenues to be budgeted as surplus into the BRF rather than appropriated
 - **Revenue Volatility Adjustment:** Certain state income tax and pass-through entity tax revenues above a specific level (adjusted annually for personal income growth)

Source: Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Fiscal Analysis. (2019). *Budget Reserve Fund (BRF) Quick Facts*. Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved from [https://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/Documents/year/SMF/2020SMF-20190809_Budget%20Reserve%20Fund%20%E2%80%93%20Quick%20Facts%20\(August%202019\).pdf](https://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/Documents/year/SMF/2020SMF-20190809_Budget%20Reserve%20Fund%20%E2%80%93%20Quick%20Facts%20(August%202019).pdf).

Volatility Cap

- The volatility cap limits the General Assembly's ability to spend specific income tax revenue that exceeds a certain threshold, and diverts these funds into the state's Budget Reserve Fund (BRF).
- The volatility cap requires:
 - All revenue in excess of \$3.15 billion from estimated and final personal income tax revenue and revenue from Connecticut's pass-through entity tax, in each fiscal year, to be transferred by the state treasurer to the BRF.
 - The \$3.15 billion is adjusted annually by the compound annual growth rate over the preceding five calendar years.
 - The General Assembly may amend the \$3.15 billion threshold by a vote of at least 3/5 of the members of each chamber, in case of changes to state or federal tax law, or due to significant adjustments to economic growth or tax collections.

Source: Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 47, § 4-30a.

Spending Cap

- Connecticut's constitutional spending cap bars the legislature from increasing general budget expenditures in an amount that exceeds the increase in personal income revenue or inflation, whichever is greater, unless the governor declares a state of emergency and 3/5 of each house of the General Assembly approves the additional expenditure.
- The General Assembly is also limited from increasing appropriations beyond a certain percentage of consensus revenue estimates.
 - This cap begins at 99.5% in FY 2020 and decreases 0.25% each year until it reaches 98% in FY 2026, where it will remain for each fiscal year after. The General Assembly may exceed this cap in certain instances.

Sources: Pinho, R., & McCluskey, C. (2016). *Spending Cap Definitions* (2016-R-0137). Hartford, CT: Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Legislative Research. Retrieved from <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2016/rpt/pdf/2016-R-0137.pdf>. Conn. Gen. Statutes ch. 16, § 2-33(a).

Bonding Restrictions

- Connecticut's bonding process contains several restrictions.
- The General Assembly can authorize bonding up to 1.6 times the net General Fund tax revenue for the fiscal year of the authorization. This total calculation is called the aggregate indebtedness.
- If the authorized debt exceeds 90% of this aggregate indebtedness limit, the governor must review each bond act and recommend repealing authorizations to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee.
- The Committee must review the recommendations of the governor and propose legislation deemed necessary with respect to the projects recommended by the governor.

Bond Lock

- Bond covenants for bonds issued between May 15, 2018 and June 30, 2020 must include a pledge to bondholders that the State will comply with its volatility cap, statutory spending cap, and bond caps.
- From May 15, 2018 to June 30, 2023, Connecticut's state treasurer is required, for general obligation and credit revenue bonds issued during the above timeframe, to pledge to bondholders that the State will not enact any laws that alter the State's obligation to comply with the volatility cap, statutory spending cap, and bond cap until the bonds are fully paid off, or unless conditions are met.
 - This pledge must apply for 5 years from the bond's first issuance date but does not apply to refunding bonds issued to pay the original bonds that included the pledge.

Additional Resources

- **Extra Credit – Budget (WNPR and the Connecticut Mirror)**
 - https://ctextracredit.org/episodes_category/budget/
- **State of Connecticut Budgeting (Office of Fiscal Analysis)**
 - <http://ctschoolfinance.org/resources/uploads/files/State-of-Connecticut-Budget-Process-Presentation.pdf>
- **The Connecticut Economic Digest (Connecticut Department of Labor and Department of Economic and Community Development)**
 - <http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/ctdigest.asp#issues>
- **FY 2020 – FY 2021 Biennium Economic Report of the Governor (Office of Policy and Management)**
 - https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/Budget/2020_2021_Biennial_Budget/Economic-Report-of-the-Governor-FY-2020---FY-2021.pdf?la=en
- **Do-it-Yourself Revenue Calculator (Office of the State Comptroller)**
 - <https://www.osc.ct.gov/openCT/calculator.html>
- **Connecticut State Budget Books (Office of Fiscal Analysis)**
 - <https://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/add-bb.asp>

Glossary

- **Discretionary Spending** – Any line item that is not classified as a fixed cost, as defined by Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management and the General Assembly's Office of Fiscal Analysis, is considered to be discretionary spending. The General Assembly can modify appropriations to these line items, raising or reducing them as deemed necessary.
- **Expenditures** – Expenditures are the money the State spends on government services, programs, and other functions. When the General Assembly passes a budget, it appropriates, or devotes money, to certain expenses. Each of these expenses is assigned a line item number.
- **Fixed Costs** – Fixed costs are an increasing portion of the Connecticut state budget, and are expenditures the State is obligated to make. According to Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management and the General Assembly's Office of Fiscal Analysis, fixed costs include the State's contributions to its state employee and teacher pension systems, debt service payments on the State's prior years' bond allocations, Medicaid, and other post-employment benefits (OPEB) for retired state employees. Fixed costs are found throughout the budget and are assigned to different agencies and functions.
- **General Fund** – The largest piece of the state budget is the General Fund, which contains money used for expenditures authorized by the state budget and not otherwise restricted by state statute. The General Fund finances the bulk of the state government's operations.
- **Inflation-Adjusted Dollars** – Also called real dollars, inflation-adjusted dollars have been changed to match the purchasing power of dollars in the current year.
- **Line Item** – A line item is an element in a budget denoting funding or appropriations for a specific program, initiative, or service. Connecticut's state budget is composed of a series of line items grouped by government agency and function. These line items are also classified as fixed or non-fixed.
- **Revenues** – Revenue is the income or money the State receives from taxes, fees, and other sources.