



**PEDRO E. SEGARRA**  
MAYOR

**Text for Mayor Pedro E Segarra**  
**State of the City**  
**March 11, 2013**

Thank you Council President Wooden, Majority Leader Aponte, Minority Leader Deutsch, distinguished members of the Court of Common Council, guests, friends and family.

Thank you for your commitment to making Hartford a better place to live, work and visit.

This is my third State of the City. Today I will focus on MOVING FORWARD - even in the most difficult of times. It's the premise behind my remarks today and the words that I want you to internalize are progress, forward, momentum and success.

Now, of course, I'm not going to sugar coat what we all know to be true. Our City's, our State's and Nation's fiscal situation is no secret. Difficult decisions will be made because we, like most, need to continue to do more with less.

I cannot influence the nation's economy, I can't control the market, but I can and will continue to lobby for Hartford and

work with our local legislative delegation, our congressional delegation and our Governor to make sure our City remains a priority.

I will continue to do everything within my power to move us forward with courage, creativity and determination. It's times like these where leaders are made, and as your Chief Executive, I will make the decisions I feel are best for the City of Hartford, now and in the years ahead.

I owe it to the City that opened its arms to me, gave me opportunity, and we owe it to our children and families who trust us with their future. And let me say this; I have been through difficult times in my life. I am no stranger to adversity. When confronted with the pressure of harsh reality, I do not panic nor do I walk away. I stay composed and creative and I will do the same now.

Before I detail some noteworthy highlights of the past year, and present successes, let me address the true state of things and set the financial record straight. We can't ignore deficits, but we can't obsess about them either. My first year it was \$30MM, last year it was \$50MM and this year our projections show a deficit as high as \$70MM. Every year we provide a 5-year projection, and it has always showed a dramatic delta between revenues and expenditures. For example, if you look at the FY 08-09 adopted budget, it shows that our expected spending number in FY 13-14, for which we are now preparing for, was \$800+MM and that the difference between expenditures and

revenues was to be \$234MM. Clearly this is not the case. We have closed each and every gap since I have been Mayor and we will do the same again next year and in future years. My past record clearly demonstrates that we are ready to accept this – and future – challenges. We have:

- Balanced the budget. And have actually turned deficits into surpluses. THIS YEAR WILL BE NO DIFFERENT!
- In addition to turning deficits into surpluses, we have significantly improved the health of our internal services accounts such as: workers compensation, medical claims, and post-employment benefits. We've saved millions on insurance and medical benefits.
- Worked with our tax collector Marc Nelson, we have attained the highest tax collection rate thereby reducing the sale of tax liens and LIMITING THE POTENTIAL OF FOLKS TO LOSE THEIR HOMES!
- Curtained dramatic mill rate increases that occurred between 2000 and 2010, when I took office.
- And I'm happy to report that as of this afternoon, both Moody's and Standard & Poor's have reaffirmed our bond ratings and "stable outlook" for the next fiscal year. Hartford has maintained its bond rating despite the most challenging economic times.
- Further, our pension fund is one of the top 10% in the nation. And working with our Treasurer, Adam Cloud, the goal is to reduce the burden on our tax payers by making strategic investment decisions.

So again, I repeat, it's not going to be easy, it's not going to be without sacrifice and no one is going to get everything that they desire. But Our City Will Move forward. And truthfully there are cities that have worse conditions with far less potential for growth than ours.

First, I want to reassure you of some of my administration's unwavering priorities- things that will not shift regardless of our financial challenges.

- I will submit a budget that is respectful to the needs of our community but in tune with our economic reality.
- I will submit a budget that does not sacrifice public safety.
- My commitment to education reform will not change or be reduced.
- My commitment to nurturing entrepreneurs, and getting our young people trained for the workforce will not lessen. Especially the commitment I made to the summer youth employment program.
- My commitment to restoring our parks, to revitalizing Hartford, and creating a business friendly atmosphere will not change.
- I will submit a budget that increases my commitment to improving the infrastructure of the city to the level that our residents - rightfully so - are demanding.
- And through these infrastructure projects, I have and will submit more proposals that create jobs for our residents right here in Hartford.

So, what can you expect to see for the coming year in Connecticut's Capital City? You'll notice around you that there are photos of recent significant development projects. It represents some projects that have commenced and that you will see more of as we progress this year.

Just to highlight a few...

Sports, entertainment, arts and culture, attracts tourism. That is key to development in our city and encouraging grand list growth. We are currently working with the Capital Region Development Authority or CRDA and our corporate partners to develop new opportunities. The first one was announced recently; the American Hockey League - the CT Whale - will remain in Hartford at the XL Center where it belongs. We also have to thank our new partner, Global Spectrum, for helping to make this a reality.

We have increased vibrancy in Hartford. Last year, in 2012, over 2 million people came to our City. Those numbers reflect XL Center, Comcast Theater, Convention Center and City of Hartford events. Events like Winterfest, which brought over 100,000 visitors. EnvisionFest, over 10,000 in one day. Both will be back this year.

Front Street is now OPEN. You've all seen it. Capital Grille, the restaurant, has broken ground. Infinity Hall is up next. A new restaurant has opened at the historic Coltsville. We've heard

from Chef Harry that he has hired 7 new staff - all Hartford residents and is averaging \$3,500 sales per week.

UCONN West Hartford is coming to the center of our City. Something I have lobbied for relentlessly. That means more feet on the street, more young people with ideas and drive exploring all that we have to offer.

By then there will be 1,000 new residential units in Downtown Hartford and our Intermodal Triangle - Hartford's transportation overhaul - will have broken ground.

In our neighborhoods, we're working with the Housing Authority to rebuild 1,000 housing units between Nelton Court, Westbrook Village and Bowles Park.

We're concentrating streetscape plans this year on Albany Avenue, Farmington Avenue and Wethersfield Avenue. We're working with state officials and the Urban Land Institute to convert Albany Avenue into the destination it should be.

These capital improvement projects impact our City in two critical ways: (1) they improve our infrastructure and (2) they create jobs in our City. I have charged my administration, including DPW and Procurement, to include training programs for Hartford residents in any new infrastructure contract. I want to hire from within as much as possible.

Bottom line: if there's a reason it's not happening let's address and get it done.

An active community is a healthy community. And our children deserve the same kind of athletic spaces they see in neighboring towns. So I'm announcing today that we're partnering with the Cal Ripkin, Sr. Foundation to create two 150,000 square foot athletic fields for our kids to use.

We're trying to help carve a path to upward mobility for our families that are trying to do the right thing. As you know, a lot of our residents are trying to be self-sufficient but may just be struggling with underemployment or effects of a country that is in economic recovery.

Last month, we launched HARTFORD PROMISE, which guarantees \$5,000 per year or up to \$20,000 towards college for every Hartford Public School graduate with a B average or better.

Through our Livable and Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative, we will provide grants of up to \$15,000 for low income or elderly who want to renovate the exterior of their properties. We know capital is hard to come by and we want to do what we can to support our honorable citizens.

The Livable and Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative will continue to focus on combating blight, installing big bellies

trash receptacles, addressing major litter and dumping areas and working on overall beautification throughout our City.

And it is time we launch a Citywide, City-driven anti-litter program. We'll collaborate with community stakeholders, businesses and residents to rid our city of trash and litter once and for all.

Opportunities Hartford, an initiative I created that leverages existing resources to increase jobs, income and education, will move ahead with employer incentive programs and summer youth employment among other programs.

And finally, and although I say this with some hesitation, I still have to mention it because it is not a coincidence but a consequence.

This is the FIRST time in decades that we have been homicide free since the start of the year. And we're in March.

Let that sink in for just a moment.

This issue of public safety has always been front and center for me. And that will never change. I know this statistic won't exist forever but I can say with certainty that YOUR CAPITAL CITY is safer now than it has been in 30 years.

That is where we're headed.



A safe city, a thriving city, a city with a growing economy filled with opportunities for young people, families, entrepreneurs, the business community are essential principles to development. And no matter what our fiscal challenges those are principles I am not willing to compromise on.

So how are we going to deal with the challenges we face - large deficits, decreased revenue, high unemployment?

We'll continue to create jobs by investing in our infrastructure. We'll educate our children and train them for the competitive workforce that awaits them. We'll focus on attracting businesses that will create employment and put more feet on the street. We'll develop artists, entrepreneurs and inspire them to stay here and create and innovate.

Let me close by saying:

Simply because things get difficult doesn't mean we abandon our principles. Simply because we don't get everything we want, doesn't mean we walk away from the negotiation. That's not effective leadership or effective management.

We may not always agree on the method but one thing we must agree on is that going backwards is not an option; not having a balanced budget is not an option and; a vibrant city with opportunity is where we are headed.

If you don't share in that commitment perhaps this dialogue is not meant for you.

Hartford gave me opportunities that changed the trajectory of my life. It was here in Hartford where I was given access to an education, a career and a better future. It is my objective to provide those same opportunities to everyone who calls the Capital City home.

Thank you. God Bless Connecticut, God Bless Hartford. Let's Move Forward.