



March 9th 2015

**S.B. 946 AN ACT CONCERNING REVENUE ITEMS TO IMPLEMENT THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET - I oppose.**

My name is Brooke Cheney and I own a small, organic, pick your own blueberry farm in Harwinton, The Cheney Family Farm. Farming for my husband and I is a part time job, but we have many friends who do it full time. We use the Connecticut Grown program to promote our business. We believe to grow awareness and build income for state farms, the pledge they have to spend 10% of your regular food budget to buy local program helps raise awareness. I know I share it with my customers each season and is what made me think to join our local community supported agriculture program.

When the Governor released his budget and called for sweeping some of the unspent funds derived from the Community Investment Account and diverting all future CIA funds from January 2016 through 2017 to the general fund I strongly oppose this measure.

I have lived in CT most of my life. I recall when Connecticut Lotto started in 1983, my grandmother played every week. I remember hearing that the proceeds were to go towards education, as a 13 year old I thought that was pretty cool. Looking at the 2015 CT Lottery site for fiscal year 2014, education only receives 16.8% from the money given to the General Fund.

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**DISTRIBUTION OF LOTTERY PROCEEDS IN FISCAL YEAR 2014**

**General Fund Supported Services    % of Proceeds**

**Department of Education                    16.8%            \$53,692,000**

**Based on fiscal year 2014 General Fund appropriations by the Legislature per the Connecticut State Budget FY14 & FY15 Biennium.**

[http://www.ctlottery.org/Content/where\\_the\\_money\\_goes.aspx](http://www.ctlottery.org/Content/where_the_money_goes.aspx)

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I believe that the budget problem will not be solved by throwing more money at it. My personal experience has shown that more money does not fix an over spending problem all it does is make it worse. Having specific streams of income earmarked for specific purposes is a more likely way to fix the budget. I continue to see various places, not just the CIA, where funds keep being pushed into the general fund vs staying where they were meant to be. We have no surplus anywhere in the state budget, simply places that actually have a cushion. Redistributing those funds does not fix the spending problem that we have.

The State of Connecticut has many redundant programs and services that overlap. Looking into them and consolidating them would actually serve the people of Connecticut by streamlining how they can use the services available and be a much more useful way to fix the budget problems.

Taking money away from agriculture that creates jobs and increases tourism is a bad idea. In the wake of the most current Gallup poll\* that shows we are at an all time low in job creation, this is not the time to harvest the funds that are helping Connecticut. I ask that you deny the request to have CIA funds moved to the general fund for January 2016 to January 2017.

You are always welcome to come pick some blueberries in the summer!

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Brooke Cheney  
144 Mansfield Road  
Harwinton CT 06791  
8606059034  
[cheneyfamilyfarm@gmail.com](mailto:cheneyfamilyfarm@gmail.com)  
[cheneyfamilyfarm.com](http://cheneyfamilyfarm.com)

\*This was reported on by WTNH by Alex Vitale, published: February 12, 2015, 4:57 pm on the web site. <http://wtnh.com/2015/02/12/new-gallup-poll-ranks-connecticut-dead-last-in-job-creation/>