

2026 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS



Gov. Ned Lamont gives his State of the State address Wednesday during opening day of the 2026 legislative session in Hartford.

Photos by Jim Michaud/Hearst Connecticut Media

‘Times that try men’s souls’

Lamont pitches tax rebate, criticizes ICE, invoking words from Revolutionary times in speech

By Ken Dixon  
STAFF WRITER

HARTFORD — Highlighting this year’s 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Gov. Ned Lamont on Wednesday summoned up a Revolutionary patriot, warned Immigrations and Customs Enforcement to leave Connecticut residents alone and promised that there are hundreds of millions of dollars available to deal with further federal cuts in aid.

His election-year budget proposal put forward as the legislative session opened includes free breakfasts for all public school kids, \$200 rebates for 1.6 million people and a slight increase in spending in the second year of the \$55.8 billion biennial budget that starts on July 1. He proposed eliminating annual licensing fees that range from \$65 to \$375 per year, to save teachers, nurses and trades people such as plumbers \$16 million a year. Overall the budget would increase spending by three-tenths of a percent.

In a 37-minute State of the State speech and budget overview, Lamont quoted Thomas Paine, whose “Common Sense” inspired the English colonists to rise up for freedom from being ruled across an

*Speech continues on A4*

INSIDE

Dan Haar says governor’s tax rebate plan a good idea but pays comfortable families too much. **A2**

Lamont proposes \$200 rebates to help residents offset high energy costs. **A7**



Above left: House Democratic Majority Leader Jason Rojas, D-East Hartford, left, and state Rep. Jeff Currey, D-East Hartford. Above right: House Republican Minority Leader Vincent Candelora speaks on the first day of the legislative session.



Lamont to push for free school breakfasts, K-12 funding review

By Natasha Sokoloff  
STAFF WRITER

Free school breakfasts for all Connecticut students and more resources for schools are among Gov. Ned Lamont’s goals for the upcoming legislative session.

Lamont outlined his key priorities to the state legislature on the first day of the 13-week General Assembly session on Wednesday.

In addition to conversations around affordability, responding to federal changes and other top issues expected to come up during the session, Lamont also said in his opening speech that he plans to push for universal school breakfasts, as well as establish a new panel to review K-12 education and funding strategy in the state.

“Connecticut has one of the best school

systems in the country, but that is not true of all of our schools,” he said.

Free school breakfasts

School meals have been a hot topic on both the state and national level, especially with federal changes around income guidelines on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid, which are expected to reduce the number of children who automatically qualify for free and reduced-price school meals.

In Connecticut, proposals for universal school meals failed to move forward in the 2025 legislative session, but Lamont said he hopes to change that this session.

“We tried last year; Let’s try it again this year: our budget provides for free school breakfasts for all of our students; everybody

*Session continues on A4*

Officials detail process to report damage done by snowplows

By Nathaniel Rosenberg  
STAFF WRITER

“I was sobbing for a good hour and a half,” Gabriella Cassone said last week. “We’re still very, very upset about it.”

That’s how Cassone, the co-owner of Middletown’s Bareskin Beauty Bar, was feeling after a state plow drove a pile of snow through her front window, spilling snow into the spa and causing between \$30,000 and \$40,000 in damage. A Department of Transportation spokesperson said the agency was investigating the incident, which was captured on video.

With thousands of snowplows out in force across the

state last week — approximately 650 vehicles were deployed by the DOT on Jan. 25 alone, with many more used by cities and towns — there have been multiple high-profile collisions involving plows, including an East Lyme snowplow crash last week that officials said caused “life-threatening” injuries.

And while plows have gotten less frequent on the state’s roads as snow has abated, snow clearance operations remain ongoing, and piles of snow are ever-present on the side of many roads and sidewalks across the state.

Here’s what state and municipal officials say to do if your car or other property is damaged by a plow.

The first question consumers facing plow damage should try to determine is what kind of plow hit their property, Mary Quinn, a spokesperson for the Connecticut Insurance Department, said.

If the damage was caused by a private plow company, Quinn says the consumer should contact the plow operator and submit a claim to the operator’s insurance.

If the plow is a state plow, consumers can submit a complaint to the DOT. The agency provides guidance on how to mail in notice of a complaint on its website. If a resident’s property was damaged by a municipal plow, Quinn says

*Damage continues on A4*



Courtesy of Gabriella Cassone

Bareskin Beauty bar in Middletown suffered between \$30,000 and \$40,000 worth of damage, the co-owner said, after a state plow truck pushed snow into her store on Jan. 25 and broke the window.

Movie theater to get zoning approvals, allowed to continue operating

By Robert Marchant  
STAFF WRITER

GREENWICH — A new movie theater opened at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Old Greenwich last summer, making it the only dedicated movie theater in the community after following the closing of the Bow Tie cinema in 2020.

The theater acquired all the necessary building permits for the 40-seat cinema, known as the Townsend Cinema, but questions arose among town officials about the zoning regulations that might apply to the operation and others that might follow in its path. The current town zoning code does not specify anything about hotels operating movie theaters, a novel kind of entertainment offering that has only recently arisen at a handful of hotels across the country. The current operation at the Hyatt is not in compliance with the town zoning code, the town’s planning department has determined.

The Planning & Zoning Commission decided that site-plan approval was required from the hotel administration for the cinema, and the commission is also looking to clarify the status of movies in hotels with a text change to the zoning code.

“After the cinema opened, we ran into an issue of zoning interpretation, related to the public access to the space, and ticket purchases,” said Chris Fisher, an attorney representing the hotel, at a recent meeting of the commission.

Commissioners said the cinema did not present a problem, but they wanted compliance with the zoning code.

“There’s no real objection, we just want it to be legit,” said Commission Chairwoman Margarita Alban.

The text change will apply to other hotels in town that might want to add film space, not just the Hyatt, she noted. “We want it all to be clean and neat, because we’re thinking about other hotels,” Alban said.

The previous use of the hotel space was a conference room where audio-visual presentations were given to attendees.

While the cinema is technically in violation of the Greenwich zoning code, the commission said that the theater could continue operating, given that the hotel administration was cooperating and taking the necessary steps to come into com-

*Theater continues on A4*