
Fw: (EXTERNAL MESSAGE)A Victory for Checks and Balances, the Local Impacts of Chaotic Tariffs on Small Businesses, and more from the week

From Lisa Thomas <lthomas@coventry-ct.gov>

Date Wed 2/25/2026 8:00 AM

To James Drumm <jdrumm@coventry-ct.gov>; Alex Taylor <ataylor@coventry-ct.gov>

Please attach under correspondence on the March 2 Town Council agenda.

Lisa Thomas

Chairwoman, Coventry Town Council

Chair, Capitol Region Council Of Governments Legislative Committee

Member, CT State Comptroller's Healthcare Cabinet

Member, CT Education Mandates Review Advisory Council

860.930.7303

PLEASE NOTE: my new email is LThomas@coventry-ct.gov

From: Congressman Joe Courtney <CT02JC.Outreach@mail.house.gov>

Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 5:03 PM

To: Lisa Thomas <lthomas@coventry-ct.gov>

Subject: (EXTERNAL MESSAGE)A Victory for Checks and Balances, the Local Impacts of Chaotic Tariffs on Small Businesses, and more from the week

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Dear Lisa,

It's Joe Courtney. After a packed week in eastern Connecticut, I'm here with an update on urgently needed relief for small businesses, bringing federal funding home to support local projects, and lots more. As always, thanks for starting your weekend here with me.

**A Victory for Constitutional Checks & Balances:
Trump Tariffs Struck Down**

This morning, the Supreme Court struck down President Trump's illegal tariff policies in a 6-3 ruling. The landmark case is a victory for our constitutional system of checks and balances. As the Court clearly states, President Trump never had the authority to impose sweeping tariffs. Tariffs are a tax paid for by Americans, and under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress alone is vested with authority to impose taxes.

Supreme Court Strikes Down Trump's Sweeping Tariffs in 6-3 Decision



In October, I joined a bipartisan amicus brief with over 200 Members of the House and Senate in strong support of this Supreme Court lawsuit against Trump's so-called 'Liberation Day' tariffs, which have driven the cost of living higher.

With Congress' constitutional authority now affirmed by a conservative

Supreme Court, including two Trump-appointed judges, it is time for a bipartisan majority to step up to deliver urgently needed PRICE relief to Americans, on everything from housing and new cars and trucks to groceries.

The Local Impacts of Trump Tariffs on Small Businesses

For the past year, American consumers and businesses have been paying more because of President Trump's unconstitutional tariffs. On Wednesday, I visited small business bike shop Bicycles East in Glastonbury. Co-owner Deb Dauphinais shared that the President's chaotic tariff policies hit every part of the bike supply chain, leading to unpredictable cost hikes for her small business and increasing prices for consumers. Businesses eat as much of the cost hike as they can, but consumer prices on bikes have still increased by 10-20%.



Pictured: Bicycles East Co-Owner Deb Dauphinais

Exacerbating the affordability crisis for owning a small business, because President Trump blocked attempts to extend Affordable Care Act tax credits, at the start of 2026, Deb and her husband's health insurance premiums were set to increase from \$539.15/month to \$2,700/month. Due to this unaffordable increase in costs, Deb and her

husband no longer have health insurance.

It's past time for Congress to step up and deliver relief for small businesses. We must end the President's unconstitutional, destructive economic policies and lower health care costs by extending Affordable Care Act tax credits.



Eastern CT's Manufacturing Pipeline branches out to the “Quiet Corner” to Meet Demand for Skilled Workers

The Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board's (EWIB's) Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) is expanding its classes across the Second District to meet all-time high demand for hiring at the Groton shipyard. On Thursday, I joined an MPI class taught by Bill McManus at Quinebaug Valley Community College's Danielson campus with EWIB President Mike Nogelo and Director of the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center at CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley Stephen LaPointe.





I worked with EWIB to launch the MPI with a federal grant from the US Department of Labor back in 2016. The program recently surpassed a total of 5,000 graduates placed into jobs, and with the Groton Shipyard ramping up hiring to historic levels in 2026, the MPI is planning to graduate over 700 workers in the first half of 2026 alone. Opening up the pipeline north of the Groton Shipyard is an exciting new opportunity for that region.

Alongside the Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative bringing manufacturing skills training opportunities to comprehensive high schools in addition to tech schools, our region is well positioned with the MPI to meet the call for a new generation of eastern Connecticut manufacturers.

Renovating Wheeler Library

Following Congressional passage of over \$13 million for 15 Community Projects in Connecticut's Second District, this week, I made visits to catch up with the towns who I worked alongside to secure the funding.

On Tuesday, I visited the historic Wheeler Library in North Stonington, a pillar of the community. As a Community Project, I worked with the

library's board of trustees to secure \$1,000,000 in federal funding to support long overdue renovations to the amazing historic building. These renovations will improve accessibility and resiliency so the people of North Stonington can take full advantage of all the resources the library has to offer.



Pictured: Diane Deedy, Library Director; Emily Noyes, Asst. Director and Children's Librarian; Kim Signor, Programming Director; Special Guests: Amy Kennedy, Former Library Director; Kat Edwards, Fundraising & Grant Writing; Bob Carlson, First Selectman of North Stonington; Board of Trustees: Kate Parenteau, President of the Board; Heath Dugas, Ellen Spring, Mike Westgate, Jon Edwards, Jen Strunk

Thanks to Library Director Diane Deedy, current and former library staff, the library Board of Trustees, and First Selectman Bob Carlson for hosting me to catch up on the project and for their commitment to maintaining a critical public resource for North Stonington.

New Career Training and Small Business Support in Thompson

On Thursday, I visited 65 Main Street in Thompson, a blighted property that is being redeveloped with the help of \$732,007 in new Community Project federal funding that we secured in the FY26 budget.

The space is being redeveloped into a high school culinary education career training center and a municipally-supported small business support center with a focus on the agriculture sector.



Pictured: Nick Donohue, First Selectman, Town of Thompson; Tyra Penn-Gesek, Director of Planning & Development, Town of Thompson; Brian Loffredo, Member of the Economic Development Commission, Town of Thompson; Carl Asikainen, Executive Director, TEEG; Jocelyn Weir, Executive Director and Environmental Programs Manager, CT RC&D; Elle-Jordyn Sherman, Executive Director, Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce; Michelle Miller, Project Manager, Silver Petrucelli + Associates; Kevin Grindle, Associate, Barton & Loguidice

Thanks to Thompson First Selectman Nick Donohue and Thompson Director of Planning and Development Tyra Penn Gesek for hosting a big crowd to mark this new round of funding for the project.

Enhancing the New Public Docks in Norwich

On Wednesday, we celebrated \$600,000 in new federal funding on its way to the City of Norwich to support enhancements to the public docks and Howard T. Brown Memorial Park.

Howard Brown Park's public docks recently surpassed their 30-year expected life span. The City of Norwich successfully obtained funding

from the Connecticut Port Authority for dock replacement, and this new federal Community Project funding will go toward enhanced pedestrian access and safety at the waterfront, in addition to enhanced kayak, canoe, and paddleboarding access.



Pictured: Norwich Mayor Swarnjit Singh; Kevin Brown, Executive Director of NCD; Michael O'Connor, Executive Director of CT Port Authority; Sheila Hayes; Jeffrey Brinning; Brian Long, Director of Public Works; Tucker Jr. H. Braddock, Norwich Harbor Commission; Robert Phoenix, Norwich Harbor Commission.

Thanks to Norwich Mayor Swarnjit Singh and President of the Norwich Community Development Corporation Kevin Brown for their continued work with the Connecticut Port Authority to see this project through.

Transforming Pawcatuck's "Circus Lot" into a Community Park

On Tuesday, I met with Stonington town officials to discuss new federal funding on its way to support the transformation of the unused Circus Lot in Pawcatuck into an accessible community park.

Over the last two years, I worked with the talented town hall staff to secure \$850,000 in federal Community Project funding for the Circus Lot

project. That funding was passed by Congress and signed into law earlier this month.



Pictured: First Selectman Bill Middleton; Grants Administrator for the Town of Stonington, Molly Evak; Stonington Public Works Foreman, Nate Miceli

The “Circus Lot” is an underused and overgrown property that sits on the federally designated Wild and Scenic Pawcatuck River.

As a part of the redevelopment project, this new federal funding will support providing accessible green open space and public water access. First Selectman Bill Middleton, Grants Administrator Molly Evak, and the public works crew are ready to make this exciting plan come to life.

Supporting Public Safety in Ledyard

On Wednesday, I met with the Ledyard Police Department & Emergency Services Department to catch up on \$229,000 in federal Community Project funding for the Town of Ledyard to upgrade the Ledyard PD’s dispatch and records management system.



John Rich, Ledyard Police Chief; Steve Holyfield, Administrator of Emergency Services;
Fred Allyn III, Mayor for the Town of Ledyard; Nate Miceli, Stonington Public Works
Foreman

Bringing home support for community safety is a top priority for my office and I. For the Ledyard PD, modernizing their computer aided dispatch and record management systems will boost their work to keep people safe.

A New Children's Reading Room at the Canterbury Public Library

Back in 2022, I worked with the Town of Canterbury to secure \$480,000 in FY23 Community Project funding for the Canterbury Public Library to create a new Children's Reading Room, which was completed in August of last year. Thanks to Library Director Beth Delaney, First Selectman Chris Lippke, and Town Administrator Jordan Lumpkins for their commitment to providing young children with a dedicated place of their own to learn.



Pictured: Director Beth Delaney, Canterbury Public Library; First Selectman Chris Lippke

Thank you for taking some time to read my update. If my office can be of any assistance, do not hesitate to call us at (860) 886-0139.

Sincerely,

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



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