

*Darienite*

*News for Darien*

<https://darienite.com>

---

## **CT Legislature — Not Doing Their Lawmaking Job, But Beware When They Do: Cameron on Transportation**

**Author :** David Gurliacci

**Categories :** [Opinion](#), [Transportation](#)

**Tagged as :** [Cameron on Transportation](#), [Cameron on Transportation 2020](#), [Jim Cameron's Transportation Column](#), [Jim Cameron's Transportation Column 2020](#)

**Date :** July 13, 2020

Where the heck has the Connecticut legislature been for the past few months? With so many pressing issues, why haven't they met?

Oh, they'll tell you it's because of safety that they couldn't convene. But we know better. Plenty of state legislatures — even [the U.S. House of Representatives](#) — have carried on the people's business virtually or well-masked while our pols went AWOL.

No, Connecticut's lawmakers finished the budget and just scurried home, leaving the running of the state to Governor Lamont by executive order. Now they're jealous of his success.

Ned Lamont is no Andrew Cuomo, but most Nutmeggers think he's done a pretty good job as his [poll ratings](#) have never been higher: 78% of respondents in a recent Quinnipiac University poll said he was doing a good job handling the pandemic.

So now our legislators are saying they've been left out? Seasoned members of the House tell me their leadership "ceded governing" to Lamont while others told me, "I'm anxious to come back. I shake hands for a living." Well, not anymore.

Not that legislators haven't been busy. Doubtless your state rep and senator have been filling your social media feed with pictures of them passing out face masks, gathering donations for food drives and dining al fresco to help local business.

And your mailbox is doubtless stuffed with their long, anguished e-letters about "living in extraordinary times" and "adapting to the new normal." They talk about helping constituents navigating the state's bureaucracy, which is their job.

All that's super. But what about fulfilling their real responsibility... making laws?

Having quarantined, done their volunteer photo-ops and social media updates, now, finally, they're ready to get back to their work.

### **Beware the 'Implementer'**

Sometime this month our lawmakers will return to Hartford for a quick session but one fraught with danger... not to their health, but to the public good. They're going to meet, debate and vote on the "Implementer."

You see, after a bill becomes law, legislators must "implement" it to make it go into effect. Easy stuff — if that's all they do.

But instead, The Implementer may become a giant Christmas tree, laden with special bills, good and bad, taken in one up-or-down, all-or-nothing vote. Some of these "emergency certified" bills have had hearings, but most have not. Why slow up the lawmaking process by actually engaging the public?

Worse yet, in this hyper-speed lawmaking process, many lawmakers aren't even given time to read, let alone understand, what they are voting on. Leaders just deliver a 500-page document that they then must vote on in 48 hours.

Think of all the topics these lawmakers played hooky on for the past three months: sports betting, vaccine mandates, absentee ballot reform, police accountability and, yes, transportation investment.

Lawmakers didn't have the guts to vote on tolls. So why rush through these crucial issue now instead of waiting 'til the next session?

## *Darienite*

### *News for Darien*

*<https://darienite.com>*

---

Should our elected representatives vote on these issues in just 48 hours without putting these “[ill-conceived, poorly drafted, and hastily reviewed](#)” bills (as one Republican called them) through the usual committee review, public hearing and debate process? I think not.

Even if we agree on the need for some of these measures, shouldn't they all be reviewed and voted on separately, not force-fed as an all-or-nothing “dog's breakfast” (as one veteran described it to me)?

However well intentioned, the end does not justify the means.

  

---

*Jim Cameron has been a Darien resident for more than 25 years. He is the founder of the [Commuter Action Group](#), sits on the [Merritt Parkway Conservancy](#) board and also serves on the Darien RTM and as program director for Darien TV79. The opinions expressed in this column, republished with permission of Hearst CT Media, are only his own. You can reach him at [CommuterActionGroup@gmail.com](mailto:CommuterActionGroup@gmail.com).*