

State treasurer talks economy in visit to Westport

By Lynandro Simmons Updated 3:55 pm EDT, Monday, July 29, 2019



Photo: Lynandro Simmons/Hearst Connecticut Media



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State Treasurer Shawn Wooden speaks at the resisters meeting at Tavern on Main. Taken July 29, 2019 in Westport, CT.

WESTPORT — State Treasurer Shawn Wooden focused on finances during a visit to a ReSisters meeting in Westport on Monday, emphasizing the importance of tackling teachers' pensions, tolls and the economy.

“Since I’ve been in office some of the top priorities for me has been stabilizing our state’s finances,” Wooden said to the political action group.

A growing work force is important to attract businesses to Connecticut, Wooden said, and though the state has many college-educated workers, it’s important they’re prepared for the jobs of the future.

“They say a rising tide lifts all boats, and I want to lift all boats,” Wooden said. “A support of paid family and medical leave, a support of a minimum wage increase ... those are all measures in my view to make sure that rising tide we’re working towards is lifting everyone.”

While being mindful of the economy, he noted that maximizing a plan for the state’s infrastructure was an important issue to highlight.

“We desperately need to invest in our infrastructure,” he said. “It’s only a question of how?”

For Wooden, there were three options: tolls, the state borrowing more money, or some form of public-private partnership.

“The politics are getting in the way right now of the optimal policy and approach,” Wooden said.

Joined by state Sen. Will Haskell and First Selectman Jim Marpe, Wooden later got a peek at Westport’s local economy during a tour of area businesses led by resident Sal Liccione, who also organized the treasurer’s visit. One of the many stores he visited was Bespoke Designs, which has been in business for nearly three years.

Owner Shari Lebowitz said the location of her Sconset Square store, which has been growing rapidly since opening, provides a hub for visitors to downtown Westport.

“We’re already at the end of our second quarter this year almost and three quarters to our last year’s numbers,” she said.

David Waldman, president of David Adam Realty, said while old stores have closed, new tenants have continued to pour into town.

“Westport has a resilience and has continued to thrive,” he said.

Wooden, who also visited [Fleet Feet](#) and [Bungalow](#), said it was exciting to see growing businesses in town.

“I think it’s a sign of vibrancy and it’s a positive sign of a community growing,” he said. “I’m a big believer you have to grow your way to prosperity. To see new businesses, that’s a promising sign for Westport. We need more of this throughout the state.”

dj.simmons@hearstmediact.com