A recent report from CNBC triggered good vibrations among some in the state’s policymaking ecosystem, with the television network telling the world that Connecticut moved up eight places in its *Top States for Business* ranking.

By the network’s analysis, Connecticut sits at 31 in 2023. That’s right—we’re now firmly out of the red zone on the color-coded map detailing the best locales for businesses, on the edge of transitioning from orange to warm and fuzzy yellow.

It will take some work, however, to surpass our neighbor to the north, Massachusetts, which rests at an enviable perch of 15.

Peel back the label of “CT jumps 8 spots” headlines and you’ll find a mixed bag of scores in categories that persistently trouble us here in the Land of Steady Habits. This won’t surprise anyone—sitting at 43, Connecticut remains in the bottom 10 when it comes to the cost of doing business. Our economy checks in at 42, and the state’s cost of living, although improved in the CNBC survey, is a frustratingly high 34.

Scores of particular concern? Workforce at 21, and 13 in education—both figures represent drops in venerable Nutmeg State hallmarks.

On a positive note, Connecticut made gains in the “life, health, and inclusion” category—a sort of quality-of-life index, where we rank 10 in 2023 compared to last year’s 17. Our “tech and innovation” score improved by 12 places, leaving us nestled between Illinois and Michigan at 13 on the results table.

As I’ve mentioned in this space before, the plethora these “best of/worst of” reports issued by a scattershot of organizations, sometimes from parts unknown, can create a cloudy picture of where any state truly stands, let alone ours.

However, our consistent poor placement in categories related to regulatory environment and cost of doing business provide residents—and ideally legislators—with evidence that justifies discussion about changing the legislature’s approach in those policy subjects.

To his credit, Governor Lamont struck a realistic tone when asked about the survey last week, signaling that “our work is not done.”

Still, his tempered optimism downplayed how hard those yards will be.

After all, we’re in a state where leaders of our legislature’s Labor Committee take sport in offering insidious policy proposals affecting employers big and small.

We need not just more affordability-focused measures for residents, but also real tax relief for businesses that is, quite simply, long overdue.  Without those, that leap from orange to yellow—just one numerical place away—will be tough to make.

 **Rep. Vincent Candelora**

**House Republican Leader
86th District
North Branford, Durham, East Haven, Guilford**