



TESTIMONY

of the

CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES

to the

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

March 8, 2010

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to testify before you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

Raised Senate Bill 365 "An Act Concerning The Posting of Public Agency Minutes and Legal Notices on the Internet Web Site of a Municipality."

CCM appreciates the effort in Section 1 to clarify some of the language (lines 3 through 14). However **we encourage a straight postponement** of the requirements through till 2012 rather than creating a layer of bureaucracy by requiring the filing of notices and votes by legislative bodies. Giving municipalities ample time to meet the mandate created by PA 08-03 of the June Special Session will ensure that the most efficient and effective process can be implemented.

The M.O.R.E. Commission is recommending a complete repeal of this mandate.

CCM fully supports Section 2 of this bill, which would provide municipalities – *who are in compliance with PA 08-03 of the June Special Session* – the option of posting their mandated legal notices on their websites in lieu of placing costly ads in newspapers. This proposal is included in ***CCM's 2010 State Legislative Priorities***.

There has been much publicity in full page ads (which is very costly prime space) by newspapers about local governments wanting to "hide" what they are doing and keep members of the public "in the dark". **This is absurd and completely false.** In addition, opponents of this change argue that not everyone has internet access. But not everyone subscribes to a newspaper either.

- ***The Internet is accessible to everyone.*** All local libraries are equipped with computers at no cost to the users. Newspapers must be purchased to be read.
- ***Internet sites can be accessed from anywhere in the world at any time.*** Newspapers must be purchased in the region they serve.
- If a municipality already has a fully functional website with the capability of meeting the requirements of PA 08-03 of the June Special Session, then ***placing such ads can be done at minimal costs – whereas placing these ads in newspapers costs in excess of \$2 million statewide every year.***

- ***Public notices placed on Internet sites can remain there indefinitely***, making the information available for a greater amount of time. Notices placed in newspapers are only there for the allotted time paid for.

There was a time when notices were not required to be posted in the newspapers and local residents knew they could obtain the information from their local agencies. Then, when the newspaper mandate was put into place, residents learned to find their information in their local papers. Some residents are indeed interested in legal notices – and they know to search in the classified section at the back of the newspaper. They will just as easily learn to find the notices on-line.

CCM urges the committee to **amend this bill** to provide a straight postponement of PA 08-03 from the June Special Session.

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If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, Senior Legislative Associate of
via email kweaver@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 498-3026.