



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 15, 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 provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

Raised House Bill 5490 "An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement".

This bill is an attempt to address the predicament local governments finding themselves in trying to meet the minimum budget requirements (MBR) while funding and enrollment may be changing. While this proposal is a step in the right direction, it does not go far enough to provide the relief local governments need.

The Minimum Budget Requirement, *Section 30 of Public Act 09-6 of the September Special Session*, states:

For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2010, and June 30, 2011, the budgeted appropriation for education shall be no less than the budgeted appropriation for education for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, minus any reductions made pursuant to section 19 of public act 09-1 of the June 19 special session.

This mandate means that, no matter what efficiencies can be found in board of education budgets, they cannot be reduced. In an era when every other state and local agency are having their budgets closely examined one entity – boards of education – are beyond scrutiny and beyond savings. Connecticut is facing an enormous budget hole if FY12. Exempting any part of government from being reviewed for efficiencies is a luxury that property taxpayers cannot afford.

The Minimum Budget Requirement must be eliminated for FY 10-11 to allow municipalities to find savings for their property taxpayers. Every community in Connecticut spends more on K-12 public education than they receive from the State.

An alternative, during these perilous economic times, would be to require that municipalities continue to spend more on education than they receive from the State.

In addition, as was already done for this year (PA 09-1, June 19 Special Session, Section 19), municipalities should again be allowed to amend approved budgets to account for federal ARRA funds being paid directly to boards of education. Otherwise some boards will receive 114% of what is allocated by the town because they must finalize their own budgets before knowing what state grant distributions will be and how much they will receive.

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If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM
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