

**COMMENTS CONCERNING RAISED BILL NO. 5537
AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING FOR MEMBERS OF COMMON
INTEREST COMMUNITIES**

By Alan D. Seilhammer

Summary.

This bill proposes to “encourage” common interest community association board members, officers and any managing agent to attend “when available” basic education courses regarding the operations of communities.

As a concept, this is certainly a good idea. However, as a practical matter, how would such a law be enforced?

The Community Associations Institute – CT Chapter has existed for over 30 years. Our key purpose is to provide educational opportunities for our members. Throughout the year, we offer at least two full-day basic education classes for board members. In addition, we have classes on key issues such as: insurance/risk management; rules and regulations; disaster planning; legal issues and more. In fact, our annual trade show on March 18 will offer 5 different educational sessions – all focused on the operation of community associations.

Reaching out to community association board members is a responsibility we take very seriously. Using the Secretary of State’s CONCORD system, we are constantly updating our database to capture contact information for association boards. We advertise our courses through periodic mailings, on our website and through our magazine: *Common Interest*. These mailings are sent to over 3,500 board members in our state. In addition to our local offerings, members can receive training from our National organization and even purchase training discs and videos.

I submit that the opportunities for training and education are readily available. However, it is my belief that the more critical issue which this bill may be attempting to address is general board responsibility. It is always been our position that association members must be well-informed. Also, it is important to recognize that association living is not for everyone. It is up to the association owners to ensure that a competent board is elected to represent their interests. We cannot, nor should the State of Connecticut, be responsible for policing associations to guarantee that board members are fully educated. We strongly believe that an educated board is more likely to use caution and better research in their deliberations.

In summary, promoting education is always a laudable goal. CAI-CT offers opportunities for such education.