

*For the Record*

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**TESTIMONY OF  
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE  
MARCH 16, 2007**

I appreciate the opportunity to support the concept of House Bill 5298, An Act Concerning the Identity of Whistleblowers and Extending the Whistleblower Protections to Municipal Whistleblowers.

This legislation authorizes the State Auditors and the Attorney General to investigate fraud and waste in municipal government, and provides the same protection for municipal government whistleblowers as state whistleblowers. The legislation also bars disclosure of a whistleblower's identity even if the whistleblower consents or if the State Auditors or the Attorney General determines such disclosure is unavoidable. Finally, the legislation extends the presumption that disciplinary action against a whistleblower was retaliation if such action takes place within three years from the date of the whistleblower complaint.

As I know personally from my investigations, whistleblowers are the single most significant source of information about corrupt officials and wasteful state spending. By providing evidence of corrupt practices and upsetting the status quo, many of these whistleblowers risk financial hardship, retaliation by employers and ostracism by co-workers.

My office receives numerous complaints about fraud or waste in municipal government. Current whistleblower law is limited to complaints about fraud or waste in state government. The State Auditors and my office lack authority under the whistleblower law to investigate these complaints. If state grant funds are involved, my office reviews the municipal use of those funds to ensure that it complies with the grant agreement.

I support extending the whistleblower law to municipal government operations. Such extension would provide an independent review of complaints of waste or corruption. Without substantial additional resources my office and the State Auditors could not address or investigate such complaints in the 169 towns in Connecticut.

I support broadening retaliation presumption from 1 year to 3 years. Such providing greater assurances that an employer will not retaliate for disclosure of waste or fraud. The presumption should not unduly restrict appropriate discipline because it merely establishes a presumption rather than a broad prohibition against any employer action.

Thank you.