



**OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN  
TOWN OF BOZRAH**

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**Raised House Bill 7000 An Act Concerning Municipal Ethics and Municipal  
Lobbying**

**Committee Bill 6016 An Act Requiring the Office of State Ethics to Handle  
Municipal Ethics Complaints**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso and members of the committee I am here today to voice my concern over Raised Bill 7000 and Committee Bill 6016 both Acts concerning municipal ethics.

First nobody at the local level is opposed to ethics, in fact I am sure nobody in government is opposed to an open and ethical government. What I am opposed to is the knee jerk reaction by state government to a few isolated incidents of criminal acts by some local officials. It is my understanding that the communities that those officials served have very strict codes of ethics. That being said, those codes did nothing to deter those individuals from performing criminal acts. Acts which in all cases they are now serving jail time for.

Communities of varying sizes have a wide variety of needs when it comes to ethics. In small towns like Bozrah (2,400 people) there are no secrets, most of my constituents know when I get up, what I had for lunch and where I am at any given time. Sometimes a little too much knowledge.

In small communities I am sure a large a cookie cutter approach to ethics will have large and lasting ramifications. Take land use commissions for instance: an individual who feels aggrieved by a decision may choose to use financial disclosure information to the detriment of a commission member who happens to be successful. Just because that individual can. Those positions require long hours and no benefits other than that of serving ones community. I am positive volunteer positions would become even more difficult to fill.

The legislation of ethics will only lessen the pool of qualified candidates interested in serving. We serve because we want to not for the power not for the money not for the glory and most certainly not for the money.

Legislation will allow gadflies with too much free time on their hands to make the life of local elected officials more difficult and in turn the official will ask themselves why in the world am I doing this?

Communities should and will adopt their own code of ethics and are in 99.9% of the cases as ethical as any level of government. In fact perhaps more because of the direct day to day contact with their constituency.

CCM and Cost have worked with this committee in the past and will continue to do so in order to make some type of compromise in the area of municipal ethics. Please do not take the one size fits all approach to ethics, an approach that will have long term lasting effects on local governments for the worse not the better. Allow communities to create ethics and disclosure requirements that fit their unique needs and desires of their residents.

Keith J. Robbins  
First Selectman