



Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO COMMERCE COMMITTEE
March 6, 2008

Karen J. Senich, Executive Director
Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Historic Preservation
and Museum Division

One Constitution Plaza
Second Floor
Hartford, Connecticut
06103

860.256.2800
860.256.2763 (f)

Testimony Supporting
Senate Bill 397

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUILDING WORKS OF ART ACCOUNT
House Bill 5778

AN ACT CONCERNING TECHNICAL CHANGES TO CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON
CULTURE & TOURISM STATUTES

Testimony Regarding
Senate Bill 554

AN ACT CONCERNING CULTURAL AND TOURISM GRANTS

Senate Bill 553

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SPORTS ADVISORY BOARD

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger and distinguished members of the Commerce Committee: my name is Karen J. Senich and I am the Executive Director for the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, whose mission is to preserve and promote of all of Connecticut's cultural and tourism assets in order to enhance the quality of life an economic vitality of the state. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5778 and Senate Bill 397. I also appreciate the opportunity to testify regarding Senate Bills 553 and 554.

House Bill 5778 proposes technical changes to clarify two of the Commission's statutes and I ask your support.

Senate Bill 397 seeks to amend CGS §4b-53 to distinguish the accounts into which the Commission deposits funds from the 1% for art program. CGS §4b-53 allocates bond funds – 1% of the total estimated cost of state construction and renovation projects for the public art program administered by the Commission. At least 75% of those funds are dedicated to the works of art to be displayed within or on the grounds of the state construction project. (CGS §4b-52(b)) No more than 25% of those funds are deposited into a separate, nonlapsing account from which the Commission is mandated to collect works of art from Connecticut artists and other major works of art for public display in state buildings and to maintain said collection. (CGS §4b-53(c)) What §4b-53 does not currently do is address need to maintain, restore or repair those works of art located at the original construction project. The Commission seeks to create allocate a portion of the funds allocated in 4b-53(c) to pay for the maintenance, restoration or repair of these pieces. This will allow the Commission to properly account for

CONNECTICUT

www.cultureandtourism.org

of the funds allocated in 4b-53(c) to pay for the maintenance, restoration or repair of these pieces. This will allow the Commission to properly account for expenditures made in the program. I ask your support for this proposed amendment.

Senate Bill 554 seeks mandate the Commission to study how best to streamline its grant application process. Currently, the Commission administers over 20 grant programs. Each grant program is unique with various programs and projects funding. The Commission's *Program and Services Guide*, which I provided to this committee during the agency overview, details each program. Each program has its own application; however, common to each application are those fundamental questions necessary to ensure that the applicant is eligible, the program or project is eligible, the program, project or institution has other money committed to the endeavor and that it is financially sound and what the applicant seeks to do with the grant funds. In the cases of our capital grants, architectural drawings and plans are also required to ensure that the project for which an applicant seeks funding is appropriate for the historical building and to ensure that the project is feasible. We are currently looking at all our grant applications and guidelines to ensure a level of consistency throughout. A contract, with all the requisite attachments and certifications, is required as is a final report. The Commission currently awards over almost 1000 grants to a wide range of organizations through an open, competitive process which includes conflict-free, professional review of applications. Grantees are accountable for the public funds awarded and are required, in most cases, to provide private matching dollar for dollar.

Senate Bill 553 seeks to create a sports advisory board to advise the executive director of the Commission on the most effective ways to promote, attract and market in-state professional and amateur sports and sporting events. The Commission does not have a dedicated sports marketing department or staff member. A few of the tourism districts and convention and visitors bureaus have dedicated programs and endeavors for sports marketing. Sports marketing is specialized, different than marketing to the leisure market. Sporting events and the sports industry is a niche market within the tourism industry which should not be overlooked. In the past 5 years, 75.3 million people traveled 50 miles or more to attend an organized sporting event. (National Association of Sports Commissions)

The Commission's statewide marketing account received \$4.3 million in the current fiscal year dedicated to marketing the state in state, out of state and internationally. Connecticut ranks 40th nationally in tourism funding – that ranking includes marketing, administration and personnel funding. We strive to market the state as a whole and work with the tourism districts to further all of our efforts. Pursuant to CGS §10-396, the Commission markets the state as a tourism destination. Each marketing endeavor is very strategic to ensure the

most return on our investment. Additionally, our tourism currently has a marketing staff of seven people. An informal survey of our fellow New England states indicates that sports marketing is not necessarily the role of the state tourism office. Those offices do promote sporting events or work to support what is the role of the convention and visitors bureaus or sports commission.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today on these four bills.