



**P-4 Council**  
**CSEA/SEIU Local 2001**  
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March 3, 2008

#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Senator Donald DeFronzo, Co-Chair  
Representative Antonio Guerrero, Co-Chair  
Room 2300, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Senator Gayle Slossberg, Co-Chair  
Representative Christopher Caruso, Co-Chair  
Room 2200, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **Public Hearing on HB 5041: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, AVIATION AND PORTS AND A DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS.**

Members of the Transportation and GAE Committees:

My name is Sebastian Puglisi, and I work for the State of Connecticut as a Transportation Supervising Planner in the Department of Transportation (DOT). I am responsible for the Motor Vehicle Accident Records file, and take pride in the work I do. In addition to my 35 years with the DOT, I am a Retired Lieutenant Colonel with over 34 years of service in the Connecticut National Guard.

As a public service employee working for the State of Connecticut and a member of CSEA/SEIU Local 2001, I am presenting this testimony in **opposition** to legislation proposing to dissolve the DOT in order to create two or more new transportation agencies.

Though we share the Governor and legislature's goal of improving public transportation options and directing more resources to our members who work in rail and mass-transit, we question whether the plan to dissolve the DOT is really in the best interests of the State or its taxpayers.

Recently, the agency has formed a new Financial Services Unit to consolidate fiscal operations from all DOT Bureaus. This appears to contradict the proposal to split and re-organize the department into two or more agencies. Instead, it seems to support staying on course to reform the current department, rather than create more agencies.

I believe that the problem with DOT is not that it is too large an organization, but a mismanaged organization.

I would like to focus on two areas that I believe can have a positive impact on workplace conditions and improve the quality of the transportation services we deliver to Connecticut residents; management and the promotion system.

Leadership issues in the agency were made worse during the Roland Administration when the DOT's Commissioner enabled managers to add an additional five hours to their workweek, increasing their salary by 14 percent. In return, management too often went along with the Administration's contracting-out policy.

In this area, I have personally observed unethical practices. Because they were in charge of determining which projects to contract-out, managers would often ask supervisors to comply with their decisions. Often, when their targeted consultant did not get the project, the job was re-advertised.

The DOT's promotion system is broken. Currently, the test for merit promotions has been reduced to little more than an extended resume. In past, agency workers would take a sit down exam, which were ranked by score, and only the top five would qualify. Now written exams are forward it to DAS, and a passing score is as valuable as first or last in rank, because the exam only determines who is interviewed. Final selections are made by the interviewer – whose opinion is irrefutable – and are based on who performed the best in the interview.

Bring back the old testing system and we will have better-qualified employees providing leadership for the agency.

To summarize, I would like to paraphrase Sun Tzu from his famous Art of War:

*“An organization that has qualified leaders and trained staff still has insubordination; an organization that has unqualified leaders and trained staff will have chaos.”*

As a union steward I can state, and provide supporting examples, that the DOT is in a state of chaos.

Thank you for taking time to hear the voice of the department's front-line workforce. We look forward to further opportunities to work with your Committees in reforming the State Department of Transportation.

## **Sebastian Puglisi**

Transportation Supervising Planner, Connecticut Department of Transportation  
Steward, P-4 Council, CSEA/SEIU Local 2001