

Testimony of John W. McMahon, Chairman Board of Finance, Killingworth
Submitted to the Government Administration and Elections Committee
March 12, 2008.

I am John McMahon Chairman of the Board of Finance of the Town of Killingworth, and thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.

I am here today to speak in favor of the revision of state procurement laws to allow for the submission of electronic responses to public bids to acquire goods and services using public funds as described in **H.B. No. 5899 AN ACT CONCERNING ON-LINE PROCUREMENT BY REGIONAL AND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS.**

In my opinion such a revision could go a long way toward slowing the ever-increasing growth of the costs of funding public education in this state and would help to ameliorate the annual wrestling match between school systems and municipal governments for the limited pool of tax dollars available to them. Governor Rell has stated that creative approaches to government such as using market forces to our advantage will allow us to achieve substantial saving to our taxpayers, and our citizens expect and deserve these innovative approaches.

The proposal before you has the opportunity to impact the pocketbooks of every taxpayer in Connecticut with no cost implications, and in my opinion any reasonable plan that will reduce the hefty tax burden we all bear should be given serious consideration. We in this room all know that the best way to control the growth of taxes is to properly manage spending, and this plan definitely has the potential to control and limit spending. With apologies to the late U. S. Senator Everett Dirksen, "a million here and a million there and pretty soon you're talking real money", and that real money can potentially be saved by each of the 169 towns and cities in Connecticut. State Government can save as well by having the total amount of school construction reimbursement dollars reduced.

I would like to briefly explain just what these savings could mean to the small community of Killingworth. Our percentage portion of the Region 17 Education Budget in FY 2007/ 08 is 45% of the and because the current law prevented RSD 17 from engaging in on-line procurement the excess cost of goods and services amounted to nearly \$600,000 in the construction of our new middle school. After taking into consideration state reimbursement dollars the amount is equal to roughly one half of a mil to the Killingworth taxpayers without considering interest on bonded dollars. This amount of money may not seem like a large sum to many in this room, however let me assure you that to a small municipality like Killingworth it is a large number. It could mean the difference between purchasing a new piece of fire apparatus or not. It could mean developing long overdue athletic fields or not, upgrading our aging municipal vehicle fleet or not, continuing with needed infrastructure repairs or not, and thus negatively impacting the quality of services that our citizens expect from us as elected officials.

We municipalities constantly struggle within the limits of our antiquated property tax system. Year after year we find ourselves coming up short and having to making hard decisions regarding town services that no one really likes. This bill could help us with that struggle; perhaps with the dollars saved by revising these purchasing regulations state aid to municipalities could actually increase and help to ease the local property tax burden and help to improve the quality of life for many of our residents. I strongly urge you to act favorably upon this legislation.

Thank You