

Government Administration and Elections Committee
Room 2200 Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06160

March 9, 2008

Attn: Sen. Gayle S. Slossberg, Co-Chair
Rep. Christopher L. Caruso, Co-Chair

Re: Raised Bill No. 680

I am James D. Fogarty and reside at 373 Old New London Road in Salem, Connecticut. I have served for over twenty five years on Salem's boards and commissions, and currently am one of the Selectmen.

I address you to wholeheartedly recommend a revision of CGS Section 7-6. The last time a taxable monetary threshold for a nonresident taxpayer to vote on a budgetary item at a town meeting or referendum was in 1955! That threshold, still in the statute, is \$1000.00. In 1955, \$1000.00 could often buy an acre of land. Today, the price would be nearer to \$45,000.

Last summer, a referendum was held to decide the purchase of a ladder truck for use by one of Salem's volunteer fire companies. The matter was approved, but not by the Town's electors. On the reverse side of this page is a Letter to the Editor of The Day which was published last July. It makes manifest what can happen if the present law continues as written. All towns having temporary, seasonal taxpayers may be adversely affected.

Today, a camper left in place from year to year at a campground is valued from \$7,000 to \$15,000 on the town grand list of taxable property. While I recommend a change in Section 1 of CGS 7-6, a threshold of \$7,000.00 is much too low. Another proposed change being considered by the Legislature's Committee on Planning and Development (Raised Bill No. 442) would raise this same threshold to "not less than twenty-five thousand dollars on the last-completed grand list...". This seems much more appropriate, and I ask that you seriously consider such an amount in your proposed revision. If there is some way to have the threshold tied to a meaningful escalator this would avoid the same issue being revisited again in the future.

Thank you for your efforts to update CGS 7-6, and for your consideration of my comments.


James D. Fogarty

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