



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE ART FELTMAN
SIXTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 2103
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8585
E-MAIL: Art.Feltman@cga.ct.gov

CHAIRMAN
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 29, 2008 TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS
REGARDING
***RAISED HOUSE BILL NUMBER 5664: AAC THE FILLING OF VACANCIES FOR CERTAIN
CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS OF MUNICIPALITIES***

I am pleased to submit this testimony in support of *Raised House Bill Number 5664: AAC THE FILLING OF VACANCIES FOR CERTAIN CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS OF MUNICIPALITIES*. Unfortunately, I am traveling out of state on the date of this public hearing.

The primary charge of your committee is to ensure that government at all levels retains the respect of the governed and is free of corruption. This bill serves that purpose.

Connecticut's experience with some of its big city mayors has not always made us proud. The removal from office by felony convictions of Joseph P. Ganim, Joseph Santopietro, and others has shamed their cities and this state.

Who replaces these corrupt leaders? Sometimes, we have been fortunate that the next in line is independent of her or his predecessor and removed from scandal. But sometimes, they are tainted subordinates of convicted criminals, accomplices to abuse of the public trust. If a mayor is removed early in a term, these cronies may serve longer in office than the felon did.

A fish rots from the head. If a mayor is a criminal, chances are the inner circle shares unclean hands, as well. If a mayor is removed from office by reason of a felony, voters should have the opportunity to make a clean break from the past.

I would like to make two suggestions. On lines 1 and 2, the committee might wish to make clear that this legislation applies to all municipalities, whether or not they have their own charter. On line 5, I suggest deleting the phrase "except as otherwise provided by law."

Thank you for your consideration of this concept and my thoughts.