



**TESTIMONY**  
**OF THE**  
**CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES**  
**TO THE**  
**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

March 4, 2009

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local governments - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to testify before this joint committee on issues of concern to towns and cities.

- S.B. 674** "An Act Concerning Local Expenditures Related to the Change the Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction"  
**H.B. 6386** "An Act Delaying Implementation of Legislation Raising the Age of Juvenile Jurisdiction"  
**H.B. 6575** "An Act Concerning Revisions to Provisions Raising the Age of Juvenile Jurisdiction"  
**H.B. 6580** "An Act Concerning Juvenile Justice"

These raised bills would address the concerns of local officials with the mandated provisions of Public Act (PA) 07-4 – which requires that individuals 16- and 17-years of age be treated as juveniles (commonly referred to as "raise the age"). H.B. 6386 addresses these concerns – it is the simplest and most appropriate of the proposals before you today.

**CCM supports postponing the effective date of PA 07-4 from January 1, 2010 to January 1, 2012 to (1) provide much-needed fiscal and administrative relief to hard-pressed property taxpayers and local governments during this economic crisis, and (2) allow local and state leaders adequate time to address procedural and funding concerns and solutions through modifying legislation.**

According to police officials, implementation of this mandate could result in \$25 million in additional costs to municipalities for staffing, training and infrastructure. While there are proposals intended to mitigate these local costs – such as modifying admissibility of confessions or statements, allowing for 'promises to appear', and releases on bond – the fact remains that new, unfunded and mandated costs will still be borne by local property taxpayers and towns during the most volatile of economic times unless the State acts to postpone implementation of this mandate.

Is this really the time to allow a new unfunded mandate to take effect while towns are seriously considering laying off teachers and police officers?

The impact of the "raise the age" mandate would also negatively affect State finances – as leaders grapple with unprecedented and growing deficits. According to the Office of Legislative Research, "The Judicial

Branch estimates that it will need additional space to accommodate the raise the age legislation, which will at least double the current caseload at juvenile facilities...many juvenile facilities are currently inadequate or bordering on inadequate and will not be able to absorb the caseload and significant staff increases associated with the new law. The staffing increases include additional court support services personnel, including juvenile probation officers, as well as juvenile prosecutors and public defenders.”<sup>1</sup> The Office of Fiscal Analysis also predicts significant total costs and estimates “the entire Raise the Age program would still cost almost \$100 million a year, due to increased costs in the Judicial Department, Department of Families and Children and the Office of the Public Defender.”<sup>2</sup>

**Connecticut’s towns and cities are facing economic crises not seen in at least a generation. From East Hartford to Stamford – no hometown is immune from the recession – and local officials have already taken drastic measures to address this crisis:**

- ✦ East Hartford has laid-off eight employees, and eliminated a total of 20 positions on the town side (which is a 4% staff reduction) this fiscal year. The Board of Education has a reduction plan to shrink their workforce 4% during the next fiscal year, which translates to 45 positions.
- ✦ New Haven has laid-off 154 employees and eliminated 53 positions.
- ✦ Bridgeport has eliminated 225 positions.
- ✦ Hartford is looking at hundreds of layoffs.
- ✦ Greenwich has laid off 39 employees.

From layoffs – to accessing reserve accounts – to reducing and eliminating library, transfer station, and community center hours, and police overtime – local officials are in the trenches when it comes to making tough decisions in these difficult economic times, and scarcer resources and tougher decisions lay ahead. The other day this General Assembly cut \$28 million in promised funding for local bridges in mid-year, after many towns had obligated or expended money for such work.

**Implementation of the raise the age mandate – with this backdrop of fiscal peril, inadequate funding, and evolving and increasing needed fixes – would contradict the intent of the law by impeding local public safety in a time when resources are so very scarce.**

H.B. 6386 is a reasonable proposal to provide towns and cities and their residential and business property taxpayers temporary and immediate mandate-relief, while also enabling key stakeholders ample time to meet and, out of the pressure of a legislative session dominated by a fiscal emergency, to reach agreement on resolving critical policy concerns with the enacted legislation.

CCM urges you to **favorably report H.B. 6386.**



If you have any questions, please call Bob Labanara or Ron Thomas of CCM, at (203) 498-3000

<sup>1</sup> OLR Research Report 2008-R-0250, 4/10/08

<sup>2</sup> “Raise the Age Faces Delay” New Haven Independent, Melinda Tuhus: February 17, 2009