



Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association, Inc.

Testimony of
The Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association

Before the Legislature's Judiciary Committee
March 20, 2009
10:00 AM, Room 2C
Legislative Office Building

Re: SB 724 An Act Concerning Immunity for Certain Volunteers

Good morning. My name is Bill Engle. I am writing to you in my capacity as a member of the Connecticut Recreation and Park Association's Executive Board and Legislative Committee and to request that you amend SB 724 to include municipal volunteers.

The Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association ("CRPA") represents approximately 700 individuals who represent municipal parks and recreation commissions in almost all 169 communities in Connecticut.

CRPA knows that strong volunteerism breeds a strong community. Local communities rely on thousands of volunteers for hundreds of different projects and programs. Examples of such can be as simple as planting flowers at a town building or helping to teach a swim lesson to more complicated projects such as building a playground for the neighborhood park. Without their generous support, many programs and projects simply would not be possible.

Individuals give their time and because it makes them feel good about themselves and the cause they support. They understand that a few moments of their time make their community a little bit better. However, as much as individuals want to help, some hesitate in fear that their good intentions will be confronted with a civil suit.

The inclusion of "municipalities" will be consistent with the **Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997**. Many states have mirrored the Federal guidelines in their State Statutes. These laws were put in place in an effort to increase volunteerism.

Finally, in today's difficult economic times, when our cities and towns are being asked to do more with less, we need to encourage volunteer support to keep important programs and projects viable. The quality of life in our communities will be positively affected if you amend SB 724 to include immunity for volunteers to municipalities. Therefore, CRPA respectfully requests that you amend SB 724 to encourage individuals to give back to their communities without the fear of facing litigation.

This completes my testimony. Thank you for your consideration.

William H. Engle

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