



John Salomone  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 Cedar Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

**Assessor's Office**

S. Steven Juda  
Town Assessor

February 09, 2009

To: Senator Eric D. Coleman Chair of the Planning and Development Committee  
Senator Jonathan A. Harris Vice- Chair of the Planning and Development Committee  
Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

From: S. Steven Juda, Assessor, Town of Newington

Re: **Testimony supporting Proposed Bill No. 5547 "An Act Concerning the Revaluation Process" and Proposed Bill No. 5551 "An Act Concerning Revaluation", Public Hearing at the Legislative Office Building Room 1A.**

Good Afternoon Chairperson Senator Coleman, Vice Chairperson Senator Harris and Members of the Planning and Development Committee.

I am here today with the approval of the Newington Town Council and Newington Town Manager to ask you to support the proposals contained in H.B. 5547 and 5551 which would consider changing the methodology that Connecticut utilizes to perform revaluations. I am also asking that you support any of the additional items on the agenda before you.

## Field Inspections of Real Estate

Current Connecticut law requires that a revaluation be done every five years; a full field inspection type of revaluation must be done every 10 years with a statistical revaluation done in between physical revaluations on the 5<sup>th</sup> year.

There are many factors that influence the overall revaluation.

## Qualifications of Data Collector

- The least experienced employee of the revaluation company.
- The least educated in appraisal practice. Their work is turned over to qualified appraisers and they are not responsible for the value of real estate.
- The lowest paid employee within the revaluation company and the position with the greatest turnover.

### Absentee Homeowners

- Most revaluation contracts require an inspection level that ranges from 90 to 95% of all properties in a municipality.
- A substantial numbers of homes are never inspected on the interior. It is estimated that over 40% of homeowners are not at home during the revaluation inspection due to work.
- Once visited a second time by the company, these properties are considered to have been inspected and count towards the total number of inspections, which is misleading.
- Some homeowners do not want to let strangers into their homes and there is no statute that requires that they allow entry. In certain situations it is also unsafe for the inspector to enter the property.

### Utilize All External Data, Not Just Full Inspection

- A full physical revaluation does not need to include entry and exterior measurement of 95% of the properties.
- If the data base that exists in an Assessor's office contains good information it doesn't need to be replicated.
- The assessment data can to be verified through a combination of data mailers, new photos, use of the internet, sales verification forms, income and expense forms, and information from informed citizens and professionals.
- The market value of properties on average has increased since the 2005 revaluation and then fallen back slightly. By the time Newington does a 2010 revaluation it is possible that values would be basically unchanged.
- Perhaps the statutes could be changed to go back to less frequent revaluations. This could be accomplished by statistical methods to assure equitable treatment of all property homeowners.

### Cost of Statistical Revaluation vs. Full Inspection Revaluation

- The costs for a full field inspection revaluation increases by 80 to 100% over an update revaluation. In Newington this could be the difference between \$400,000 and \$700,000.
- There are 31 towns in Connecticut facing revaluation in 2010. If you extrapolate a savings of \$300,000 per town then the annual savings to taxpayers amounts to about \$9,000,000.