

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE TESTIMONY**

**1PM MONDAY FEB 23 – ROOM 2A**

**SUBMITTED BY**

**MICHAEL GUARCO**

**CHAIRMAN – BOARD OF FINANCE – TOWN OF GRANBY**

**MANDATE RELIEF AND OVERSIGHT**

**GOOD AFTERNOON MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE...CHAIRMEN COLEMAN AND SHARKEY. MY NAME IS MIKE GUARCO, AND I HAVE BEEN BOARD OF FINANCE CHAIRMAN FOR THE TOWN OF GRANBY FOR 20 YEARS. I ALSO AM A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE CT MUNICIPAL CONSORTIUM FOR FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY – A BROAD ALLIANCE OF SOME 207 TOWN COUNCILS AND BOARDS OF SELECTMEN, EDUCATION, AND FINANCE FROM 119 TOWNS AND CITIES STATEWIDE WHO BELIEVE THAT FAR MORE FOCUS MUST BE PUT ON RELIEVING THE MANDATE BURDEN THAT TIES OUR HANDS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.**

**I COME BEFORE YOU TO ADVOCATE FOR A NUMBER OF MANDATE RELIEF BILLS ON TODAY'S AGENDA,**

**IN PARTICULAR SB 394 AND HB 5956 AND 5869. GIVEN THE PERILOUS NATURE OF THE STATE BUDGET AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL FINANCES, RELIEF AND REFORM ARE CRITICAL TO THE STATE PLAYING A ROLE IN HELPING STABILIZE LOCAL BUDGETS IN TERMS OF RETAINING BOTH PROGRAM AND EMPLOYMENT.**

**VERY SIMPLY, THE GREATER THE REQUIREMENTS PLACED ON US AT THE LOCAL LEVEL BY THE STATE , THE COSTLIER IT IS TO OPERATE. THERE IS A DIRECT RELATIONSHIP THEN BETWEEN UNFUNDED MANDATES AND LOCAL OPERATING COSTS AND THE PROPERTY TAX BURDEN. AND BECAUSE THEY ARE MANDATES WE MUST FULFILL...AND GENERALLY COME WITH NO MONEY... WE REPEATEDLY FIND OURSELVES ELIMINATING PROGRAM WE ARE OR WOULD LIKE TO DO IN ORDER TO COVER THE COST OF WHAT WE ARE YEAR AFTER YEAR TOLD WE NOW HAVE TO DO. ACCORDING TO ACIR UNDER OPM, THERE ARE MORE THAN 1200 UNFUNDED OR UNDERFUNDED MANDATES, AND WHILE MANY COME INTO PLAY TO ENSURE UNIFORMITY, THE TOLL OF HAVING SO MANY WITHOUT MONEY TO PAY**

**FOR THEM IS PART AND PARCEL OF THE PROPERTY TAX  
CRISIS WE FACE IN CT.**

**IN NO MORE THAN 50 MONTHS, OVER 200 BOARDS AND  
BOARD CHAIRS FROM ABOUT 3/4s OF THE 169  
MUNICIPALITIES STATEWIDE HAVE JOINED IN SUPPORTING  
THE BIPARTISAN GRASSROOTS CONSORTIUM INITIATIVE.  
THIS UNDERLINES THE MESSAGE THAT MANDATE RELIEF  
AND REFORM IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO THE  
TOWNS...AND THE PEOPLE WHO PAY THE BILLS BACK  
HOME. PART OF IT COMES FROM FRUSTRATION..... AS THE  
RATE OF REJECTION OF LOCAL BUDGETS HAS QUADRUPLED  
SINCE THE MID-90s..... AND AS THOSE OF US WHO WORKED  
HARD TO PUT INTO PLACE GOOD PROGRAM FIND IT BEING  
SQUEEZED OUT OF THE LOCAL BUDGETS BIT BY BIT.....  
MAKING WAY FOR COMPENSATION WE ARE LESS ABLE TO  
MANAGE DUE TO HOW BINDING ARB WORKS (OR RATHER  
FAILS TO WORK) IN CT, AND FOR OTHER MANDATE ITEMS  
THAT BITE INTO THE BUDGET.**

**A THREE YEAR MORATORIUM ON PASSING AND**

**IMPLEMENTING NEW MANDATES.... REQUIRING A 2/3  
MAJORITY IN EACH CHAMBER FOR PASSAGE....  
DELAYING...REVIEWING...ELIMINATING AS MANY AS  
POSSIBLE ARE ALL USEFUL...SO WE ASK YOU TO SUPPORT  
THEM. BUT I WOULD ALSO ASK THAT YOU TAKE ON THE  
TASK OF LOOKING OVER THE LABOR MANDATES.....AS  
COMP IS REALLY ABOUT 80% OF A TYPICAL LOCAL BUDGET,  
AND I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THE INABILITY TO THROTTLE  
BACK THE RATE OF INCREASE OF THE COST IMPACT OF  
CONTRACTS COMBINED WITH THE UNWILLINGNESS – OR  
RATHER INABILITY – OF TAXPAYERS TO PAY MORE WILL  
ACCENTUATE THE DECLINE IN LOCAL GOVT PAYROLLS. THE  
800 LBS GORILLAS – BINDING ARB AND PREVAILING WAGE....  
NEED ATTENTION ...AS OUTDATED AS THEY ARE.**