

Testimony of Peggy Duffy, Tax Collector Town of Thomaston, Connecticut
**On Senate Bill 491 An Act Concerning Liens on Real Property Related
to Taxes, Assessments and Charges**

Before the Judiciary Committee

March 26, 2010

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Peggy Duffy and I am the Tax Collector for the town of Thomaston, Connecticut. I am writing today to express my concerns over raised Bill No 491.

The office of municipal Tax Collector is not a title searcher and it appears this bill is moving the responsibility of a thorough title search from the "searcher" to the Collector. I believe this shifts a significant amount of work to Connecticut's Municipal Tax Collectors and in light of ever tightening budgets this may overwhelm our already limited resources. Connecticut's Tax Collectors already have an enormous work load without taking on increased duties.

The requirements in SB 491 are functions that are not within our scope of practice and quiet frankly, many Tax Collectors are not trained to assume these additional responsibilities. This also seems to be asking municipal Tax Collectors to include ALL outstanding charges on a property. As the Tax Collector for the town of Thomaston I am responsible for the collection of taxes, not water or sewer usage charges. Are Tax Collectors now going to be required to research these other possible charges to include on this "lien certificate" or, if left off, these charges and liens become non-collectable?

The Tax Collector is not a title searcher. Another concern with this bill is the apparent request that a tax collector "guess" at what taxes will be due and payable. When an assessment has been levied but the budget has not passed nor a mill rate set. It is irresponsible to assume what the total due will be. Lastly and maybe most importantly, I have concerns with sections (c) & (d) which will allow for the discharge of liens not included upon the recording certificate. If a filing error has occurred municipalities should not be placed at risk of being unable to collect outstanding tax revenue. Connecticut law clearly states that taxes stay with the land, SB 491 would allow for this provision to be nullified. I firmly believe this bill will create more work for my office, add additional costs to municipalities and jeopardize the collection of needed revenue.

I encourage you to vote NO on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sincerely,
Peggy Duffy, CCMC
Tax Collector Thomaston, Connecticut