



**TESTIMONY
BART RUSSELL
CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF SMALL TOWNS (COST)
BEFORE THE
LABOR COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 18, 2010
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING**

**RE: HB-5059, AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL ASSESSOR
APPOINTMENTS**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *opposes* **HB-5059**, which unduly restricts municipalities from terminating a municipal assessor except for “good cause”. This undermines the ability of towns to replace municipal assessors who may not be performing to the satisfaction of the town.

Establishing “good cause” in employment termination cases is very difficult and subject to much interpretation by the courts. Towns attempting to replace a municipal assessor would very likely be faced with thousands of dollars in litigation costs to defend their decision. This language will make it extremely difficult and costly to remove an employee who is not performing up to the standards/requirements of the town in which they serve.

This provision also sets a disturbing precedent by undermining Connecticut’s employment-at-will doctrine, which appropriately balances the needs of employees and employers. Under the at-will doctrine, employees may quit at any time, regardless of the consequences to the employer, and similarly, an employer can terminate an employee at any time for any legal reason. There are, however, a wide range of legal protections that protect employees from being terminated for unfair reasons. The employment-at-will doctrine is therefore a reasonable and balanced framework that serves our towns and municipal employees well.

We therefore urge your opposition to the bill.