

February 18, 2010

Re: POSITIVE SUPPORT OF HB #5059 AAC APPOINTMENT of MUNICIPAL ASSESSORS

Representative Ryan, Senator Prague & Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee

Good Afternoon,

I speak to you today in support of HB #5059 An Act Concerning the Appointment of Municipal Assessors.

I come before you today to share my real life story.

Fourteen years ago, I began my career as a deputy assessor in the assessment profession. Five years later, I was hired as an assessor. During my first six years as assessor, I worked under two different First Selectman both of which had nothing but praise for my ability, knowledge, work ethic, accomplishments and my demeanor with taxpayers.

When one of these CEO's resigned before their term expired, a new First Selectman was chosen to fill out their term. From the first few weeks on the job, this person severely pressured me to reduce and delete assessments for friends and relatives. I respectfully declined.

I was pressured more severely, and I continued to respectfully decline and quoted the state statutes. I acted ethically and can hold my head up high for I know I did the right thing. I protected the taxpayers of my town and made sure their assessments were based on fairness and equity and not "who you know".

My thanks for holding the line and doing the right thing? In November of 2007, after completing the unfinished term of their predecessor, this person was elected as the First Selectman. Days later, they walked into my office and told me to "get out" and that "I'm not re-appointing you".

I lost my job with no warning. I later lost my house and had to relocate to live with friends. My entire life was altered.

It should be noted that this had absolutely nothing to do with my job performance and the town willingly admits that. They claim they choose to exercise their right not to re-appoint me. I am a Certified Connecticut Municipal Assessor and also am certified by the state of Connecticut to perform revaluation functions. I loved my job.

Although I am duly qualified, I have been unable to get hired as an assessor since 2007. This is likely because someone either assumes I have done something wrong, or the town has failed to provide a quality reference. Either way, my colleagues see the ramifications when you don't "play ball".

The entire state is constantly calling for "property tax reform". Ensuring that the local property tax is calculated based on fairness and equity and not "who you know" is the first step in property tax reform. I have been the bigger person and kept this quite; I have never spoken of it publicly until today and I do so in hope that your committee can support and push for the passage of HB 5059.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Carlone, CCMA II