

State of Connecticut

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Testimony of State Comptroller Nancy Wyman Before The Labor & Public Employees Committee February 25, 2010

Good afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Ryan, Senator Guglielmo, Representative Noujaim, and distinguished members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee. For the record, I am State Comptroller Nancy Wyman and I thank you for the opportunity to offer my continued support for *Raised House Bill 5202 "An Act Concerning Telecommuting Options For State Employees."*

I strongly urge passage of this proposal, which transfers the authority for approving telecommuting requests from the Department of Administrative Services to the agency head. Currently requests for employees to telecommute are approved solely by DAS. I would respectfully submit that the agency head best knows the operational needs of their respective agency and should be granted authority over this process within approved guidelines. The legislation mandates DAS to adopt guidelines and specifies the goals to be achieved by the guidelines.

I have been working with DAS in efforts to get telecommuting approval for a critical employee to my agency. The proposal before you would give state Commissioners and agency heads some flexibility with regards to extending telecommuting to temporarily disabled workers, or recovering employees who have the capacity to work but are temporarily unable to travel to their work sites. Such a provision would be valuable to me as an agency head grappling with diminished budgets, retirements, and increased workloads.

I am aware of many large private employers that encourage employees, who have the capacity to work from home, to do so. This has become a valuable alternative both for the employees and for the company itself, due to site closures, consolidations and an increased need for office space.

While I understand that these options may not be available to all state employees, many do have the technical capacity and accessibility to workplace information to make this an effective program. A growing number of states are exploring telecommuting as a way to save money and relieve traffic congestion, but the public sector remains well behind the private sector in this regard.

While some of the long-term economic and environmental benefits of telecommuting may not be achieved for years, I believe this proposal is a meaningful first step and I urge the Legislature to approve this measure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.