

MELODY A. CURREY
MAYOR

TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD

740 Main Street

East Hartford, Connecticut 06108

(860) 291-7200

FAX (860) 282-2978

www.ci.east-hartford.ct.us

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Education Committee Public Hearing
March 15, 2010

**Testimony on: Raised Bill 5490 (LCO 2156)
An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement**

Good afternoon, Chairman Fleishman and Gaffey and Education Committee Members.

I come before you this afternoon to discuss Raised Bill 5490 – the MBR bill. The frustration level of many towns is that we have been supporting education over the years at the expense of the town side of the budget. We still have to pick up garbage, maintain public safety through Fire and Police Departments and run the remained of Town Hall on what is left on the “Town side of our budget. Education is approximately 55% of East Hartford’s entire budget. We have always passed on 100% of the money we receive from the state. 43% of the School Boards Budget is State funded in 10/11. That is a decrease from previous years due to the ARRA money we received. With the ARRA money and the ECS funds we are flat funded for 09/10 and 10/11 for education from the state.

A couple of weeks ago I testified in Appropriations that you, Senator Gaffey had answered Senator Boucher on the Senate floor that there would be no MBR in this budget but then in September’s special session a MBR was passed. This committed all towns to spending the same amount of dollars in 09/10 and 10/11 that they did in 08/09. This made it mandatory that we add \$3.5 Million that we cut on the Town of East Hartford’s side of the budget for 09/10. We did this mid year in January of 2010.

Since that time I want to thank you Senator Gaffey for sending me OFA report 0141 and 0151. The first report confirmed that my position was correct. You did not have to establish a MBR to accept the ARRA funds. However 0151 Report does confirm that if we do not continue with a MOE we put at risk our Title 1 funds and our IDEA funds.

So while I support the bill before you on MBR, I think we should get clarification from the Federal Government that we could proceed with this and not impact those funds. It would seem to me that if a school system had less children residing in their town and not at magnet schools or charter schools, we should be able to lower the Minimum Budget Requirement.

I also would like to confirm that I strongly support the clarifying language at the end of this bill in relation to East Hartford. Last year, this was addressed but a year was not referenced so that now becomes necessary. I am surprised to find it here and not in a technical revision bill. The inequity we have faced over the years with this has become impossible. Each year to be told we would receive “x” number of dollars and to have it given over to the Board of Education and then have it adjusted by sometimes over half a million, is not a hit we can sustain. The town side of the budget takes the adjustment while the Board receives the full funding. Thank you for your consideration of this and the MBR.