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*TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MARCH 1, 2010*

I appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 5269, An Act Concerning Delinquent Property Taxes.

This proposal provides discretion to local tax collectors to assess interest on delinquent taxes and provides the local board of selectmen, town council or town meeting with the authorization to lower the standard interest rate on delinquent taxes from the current statutorily required 18%.

My office receives dozens of complaints each year from individuals who have received notices of delinquent motor vehicle taxes from towns where they haven't resided in many years. These individuals often recognize that they owe the tax because they moved from the town after the October 1st grand list date. They never received a tax bill because they had moved before the July 1 tax bills were sent. They have always paid their taxes and would pay the principle on the delinquent taxes. Yet, they find it unfair that the accrued 18% interest has doubled or even tripled the outstanding amount.

Under current law, tax collectors cannot waive or lower this interest rate even if they are very sympathetic to the taxpayer.

House Bill 5269 would address this problem by allowing a town to enact an ordinance lowering the delinquent tax interest rates for delinquencies where a person moved from town prior to the tax bills being mailed. This flexibility would provide welcome relief to those honest taxpayers who simply never received a tax bill because they had moved from town.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 5269.