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**Testimony of  
Barbara Henry, First Selectman, Town of Roxbury  
On behalf of the  
Connecticut Council of Small Towns  
Before the Planning & Development  
March 10, 2010**

**Re: SB-198, AN ACT REQUIRING A TWO-THIRDS VOTE TO ENACT NEW MUNICIPAL MANDATES**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *strongly supports* SB-198, An Act Requiring a Two-Thirds Vote to Enact New Municipal Mandates.

This bill will help will create a more transparent process for voting on unfunded mandates by requiring a 2/3 vote of the General Assembly in order to adopt an unfunded mandate. A 2/3 approval requirement will highlight the cost of the proposed mandate to Connecticut's towns and cities and give lawmakers the opportunity to carefully weigh the fiscal impact before passing on another unfunded mandate to Connecticut taxpayers. A partnership must exist between each level of government and fiscal impact discussions must take place before mandate legislation is passed.

This bill will also result in greater sensitivity and accountability by the state to the impact of unfunded mandates on our communities' ability to meet our local needs for education, public safety and public health. If, however, the state determines that it is a significant priority, the bill will allow adoption by a 2/3 vote.

Unfunded mandates continue to drive up local costs beyond the control of our small towns and cities. In this uncertain economy, municipalities are experiencing staggering financial difficulties. Any additional unfunded mandates imposed by the state, however well-intentioned, will force increases in property taxes and cuts to other local services and programs. COST therefore strongly supports the statutory prohibition against unfunded state mandates on municipalities unless there is a 2/3 vote of the General Assembly.