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Ms. Mary Ellen Duffy
Principal Analyst
Legislative Program Review & Investigations Committee
State Capital, Rm 506
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear. Ms. Duffy:

The following is our written testimony to the Legislative Program Review & Investigations Committee regarding the briefing of an *Assessment of Connecticut's Implementation of E-Government*.

The Connecticut Economic Resource Center supports the continued improvement and enhancement of Connecticut's e-government efforts.

Connecticut needs to stay competitive in a global economy. A healthy economy survives on businesses competing for limited resources. Companies that best adjust their resources and methodology to meet customer demands succeed. Government is being forced to do the same. Customers demand government to streamline, create a business friendly environment and offer current day technology. E-commerce, offering online transactions, coupled with a business friendly regulatory environment and ease of access to information are just a few of many considerations.

With proven, relevant expertise, CERC provides clients with the knowledge and insight they need to gain a competitive advantage. CERC is a pioneer in the development of programs, technologies and capabilities to support effective economic development and offers a complete range of services – from strategic planning, data gathering and communications, to outreach, site selection and business assistance. Through our accomplished, professional staff, commitment to customer service, and connection to a network of strategic partners, CERC has earned a reputation for excellence in Connecticut's economic development community.

Through our experience in operating the state's Smart Start business registration assistance program and the Connecticut Licensing Info Center (CT-CLIC.com) (since inception in 1998) coupled with the Connecticut Business Response Center, we have provided business assistance to thousands of entrepreneurs and business that are starting, expanding and relocating. For several years, many of these entrepreneurs and businesses have questioned why more online transactions and services are not available in Connecticut. In addition, our research has identified that the level of (or lack thereof) e-government services available directly impacts opinion concerning the perceived business friendliness of our state.

Board Members and Utility Funding Partners

▶ The Connecticut Light and Power Company ▶ The United Illuminating Company ▶ Yankee Gas Services Company ▶ Connecticut Natural Gas ▶ The Southern Connecticut Gas Company
▶ AT&T ▶ Aquarion Water Company ▶ The Connecticut Water Company ▶ Verizon ▶ Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative ▶ Webster Bank ▶ Wiggin & Dana
▶ Dept. of Economic and Community Development ▶ Dept. of Public Utility Control ▶ Office of Consumer Counsel ▶ University of Connecticut

Connecticut started its e-government initiatives over a decade ago and has made some progress but still has a way to go in order to keep competitive among states. It is important not to reinvent existing programs/resources but to build on capacity and relationships to deliver services. A Governor's mandate and support is essential. Suggestions as we move forward include:

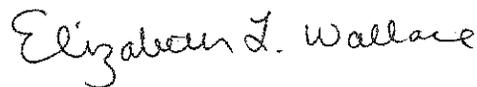
- Seamless government and consistency with portal and state agencies
- Centralized licensing agency by expanding Smart Start and relationships with agencies. Be able to work the back-end operations of agency and have agency representatives on staff or accessible to support
- Enhance functionality of CT-CLIC and encourage all agencies to use a centralized licensing database as originally visioned
- Universal application form
- Agency information sharing
- Expand business filings with the Secretary of the State to include sole proprietorships and general partnerships which will also allow for a centralized online business look-up function
- Office of regulatory reform encouraging
 - Agencies to continue to utilize lean practices and evaluate processes and the number of duplicative licenses
 - Communication to and encourage state legislators to pass necessary legislation to minimize regulatory obligations and do away with wasteful and costly regulations
- Develop and coordinate universal payment system among all agencies and revisit central policy on electronic signatures
- Revisit and support further development of a business portal (You Belong In CT) accessible and clearly presented on state portal
- Explore and make available social media alternative to communicate with government
- Add local government component
- Top notch customer service among all agencies

CERC would be pleased to assist these efforts by:

- Advocating for e-government and online transactions
- Conducting research, documenting findings, proposing options and presenting to governing entities
- Being a catalyst in promoting e-government to the state agencies and business customer
- Serving the role of contractor - manage, oversee and coordinate initiative and build on relationships with government
- Serving as a centralized resource and build on capacity of CT-CLIC and Smart Start and Connecticut's Business Response Center
- Supporting information and data sharing
- Being an active participant in the system



C. Stephen MacKenzie
Senior Vice President



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