

Town of



East Lyme

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Statement:
Proposed Bill No. 5156
AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISMISSAL OF LOCAL FIRE MARSHALS

Regarding the Proposed Bill No. 5156, "An Act Concerning the Dismissal of Local Fire Marshals" I have the following comments:

This act proposes to allow a municipal appointing authority the power to dismiss a local fire marshal "on an at will basis in accordance with such municipality's charter or home rule ordinance" as quoted from the bill's Statement of Purpose. The act also allows the appointing authority to appoint a successor.

This proposed bill allowing municipal appointing authorities to remove and replace fire marshals at will and in accordance with municipal or home rule charter would provide these authorities an opportunity for an abuse of power. It easily could be used as a vehicle to political favoritism.

The proposed bill mentions a "proper inquiry" but does not specify any "inquiry" guidelines.

State Statute Sec. 29-300, titled Hearing prior to dismissal. Appeal. , specifies the requirements of the local fire marshal dismissal process along with guidelines for hearings and appeals concerned with that process. The changes proposed in Bill No. 5156 would muddy these clearly stated guidelines.

I do not feel the state, the municipalities or their citizens would be well served by the enactment of this bill. In fact its enactment would be a clear disservice to all of the above.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard E. Morris".

Richard E. Morris
Public Safety Director / Fire Marshal

February 16, 2010