



**Testimony**  
**Bart Russell, Executive Director**  
**Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST)**  
**Before the Education Committee**  
**February 28, 2011**

**RE: SUPPORT - HB-6431 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE MINIMUM BUDGET REQUIREMENT.**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) supports HB-6431, which allows towns to reduce their minimum budget requirement for education by encouraging school districts to regionalize services, achieve efficiencies and lower costs.

Connecticut's small towns and cities are committed to providing a high quality education for their students. But escalating costs, state and federal mandates, unpredictable special education needs and declining revenues are severely challenging their ability to maintain standards of excellence.

We are very pleased that the budget proposed by Governor Dannel P. Malloy maintains level funding of the state's Education Cost Sharing formula and other municipal aid. In addition to urging your support for continued fair share funding of the state's Education Cost Sharing formula, we also believe that Connecticut should provide some relief to local governments whose costs are increasing significantly while state funding has remained flat for several years.

We therefore urge your support for HB-6431, which will authorize towns to reduce their minimum budget requirement (MBR) to reflect cost savings. The current MBR law does not provide incentives to towns to find solutions that would reduce educational costs. Even where efficiencies can be found in school budgets to help reduce costs or where enrollment has declined, the state mandates that local education budgets cannot be reduced below FY 10 spending levels. Municipalities must have more flexibility under the Minimum Budget Requirement in FY 11-12.

**Please support HB-6431.**

**Connecticut Council of Small Towns**  
1245 Farmington Avenue, 101 West Hartford, CT 06107  
860-676-0770      860-676-2662 Fax