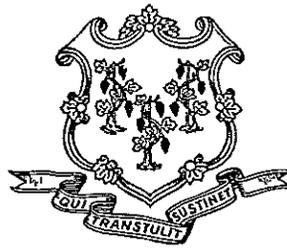


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State of Connecticut
SENATE

Chair
Select Committee on Children
Public Health Committee
Member
Judiciary Committee
Regulations Review Committee

Senator Slossberg, Representative Morin and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, I am Terry Gerratana, former five-term state representative and newly elected to serve the people of the Sixth State Senate District. While in the General Assembly in the past, I sat on the GAE committee for 6 years. After retiring from the House, I was nominated for the position of commissioner on the State Elections Enforcement Commission and served three years in that role.

I am here today to speak on the Governor's Bill No. 1009 " An Act Creating the Office of Governmental Accountability."

I strongly urge the committee to proceed with extreme caution and consideration before taking up the recommendation to place the SEEC under an office of Government Accountability. The SEEC is currently a "stand alone" agency and correctly so. This commission's work is arduous, specialized and sensitive. While the day-to-day work involves intake and resolution of myriad inquiries about election law, oversight and operation of the Citizen's Election Program, it also considers complainants that are filed proposing transgression of election law. Each complainant is handled on a non-partisan basis, with discretion and painstaking thoroughness. The nature of this agency is confidential and prudent and it acts with a

fair process that ensures protection and honesty in our elections, the foundation of our democracy. It is an agency that upholds the justice of a unique set of laws. The public trust is well placed in this commission because it stands apart from the threat of outside influence and political whim. Placing this agency in a position to answer to an executive director who reports to the governor jeopardizes its nature as independent and free of influence. Pooling or sharing attorneys and staff would further erode the integrity of this entity's mission, and compel prioritization of workload. Oversight of elections and administration of the CEP will surely suffer, as will enforcement of ethics, lobby and FOI laws. Finally, the economic message this year is a frugal one. I would suggest that OPM and the governor ask the commission for continued savings and reductions. I know SEEC has complied with many such requests in the past because I and the other commissioners took these under consideration and urged the executive director to do so.

I thank the GAE committee for its time and attention.