DENISE MERRILL
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

HB 5894: AAC Reducing Legislative Printing Costs

Thank you Representative Morin and Senator Slossberg, and fellow members of the GAE Committee for allowing me to offer this testimony today. For the record, my name is James Spallone and I am the Deputy Secretary of the State.

Today, I appear before you to offer testimony on HB 5894: AAC Reducing Legislative Printing Costs.

A Register for the State of Connecticut was first published in book form in New London in 1785 and, although it has changed in both name and content over the years, it has always been a valuable resource and reference tool for anyone interested in the State of Connecticut and its government.

Widely known as the "Blue Book," it is exactly the sort of publication you might expect from the "official record keeper" for the State of Connecticut -- a treasure house of factual information.

HB 5894 proposes to reduce the number of "bound copies" of the State Register and manual ("the blue book"). We do admire the goal of reducing both the state's environmental impact, and be watchful of state resources, but we are here today to speak against this proposal.

First, let me bring to your attention to the title of this bill: AA Reducing Legislative Printing Costs. The publication of the blue book is, in fact, a publication of the Secretary of the State and not the legislature.

The statute (3-90) reads: The number of copies of the State Register and Manual published each year shall be determined at the discretion of the Secretary.

Regulations detail the number of copies to be distributed to named persons or entities, for instance the State Police receive 50 copies, the Governor received 20, etc.

In 2009 these regulations were amended to eliminate over 3,700 named recipients. As I mentioned, the Governor received 20 copies, but it used to be 40. In fact, we used to require that the Department and Board of Education receive 2,000 copies to distribute to schools throughout Connecticut.

While we agree that the state must always use its resources judiciously, and that we should maximize web-based services, we should also consider the interest of the historical importance of the document and the public's access to information.

Thank you for your time and consideration.