



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
HOUSING COMMITTEE

March 1, 2011

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

Raised Bill 5890 "An Act Concerning the Election of Tenant Commissioners."

CCM urges you to amend this bill to provide that housing authority tenants submit a list of names to municipal chief executive officers for appointment as tenant commissioners. The municipal CEO would be required to choose a person from the list recommended by tenants.

H.B 5890 would allow housing authority tenants to form a tenant organization that would have the ability to designate tenants for appointment as tenant commissioners of the authority.

While CCM is sensitive to the intent behind this proposal, we are concerned that the bill removes a municipality's chief executive officer's (CEO) or governing body's ability to select members of the commission - - removing a core principal of the municipality's accountability.

Currently, housing authority commissioners are appointed by the CEO or governing body of the municipality. Each authority is overseen by five or seven commissioners depending on the number of units operated by the authority. State law requires that one member of a five-member board and two members of a seven-member board act as tenant commissioners. This mechanism balances the rights of the tenants with the need for municipal control.

Removing the appointing authority has implications that should be examined thoroughly. For example, federal law requires that tenant commissioners be residents of *federal* facilities. What happens if residents elect a tenant from a *state* facility? Or, what happens if there is no town-wide tenant association to assist with elections when multi-complex towns are involved?

CCM looks forward to being at the table during discussions about this proposal. We are happy to work with the Committee Chairs and proponents of the bill.

CCM urges the committee to ensure that all the details of the bill have been fully vetted before the bill moves forward in the legislative process.

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If you have any questions, please contact Donna Hamzy, Legislative Associate of CCM via email
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