



State of Connecticut

SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

SENATOR JOHN A. KISSEL
CHIEF DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER

16 FREW TERRACE
ENFIELD, CONNECTICUT 06082
TELEPHONES
HARTFORD: (860) 240-0531
HOME: (860) 745-0668
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-1421
FAX: (860) 240-8306
E-MAIL: John.A.Kissel@cga.ct.gov

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PROGRAM REVIEW AND
INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

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GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE

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Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, Senator Fasano, Representative Aman and Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I am State Senator John A. Kissel and I am here to speak in favor of *HB 5597: An Act Requiring the State to Provide PILOT Moneys to Municipalities Hosting Correctional Facilities.*

The Seventh Senatorial District which I have the pleasure of representing is home to six correctional institutions housing over 8000 inmates. The State of Connecticut gives payment in lieu of taxes to communities such as those in my district to offset certain tax-exempt state institutions such as correctional facilities.

PILOT funding is in place because towns like Enfield, Somers and Suffield are home to these important state facilities. PILOT was instituted to acknowledge in a concrete way that host communities have lost valuable taxable land in order to serve the greater need of the state. Also, many communities did not want new or expanded prisons and PILOT was offered as a fair means to address this.

To me, the PILOT relationship between my towns and the state represents a binding agreement. We understand there must be shared sacrifice to solve our budget problems and we have heard the Governor's message loud and clear. We also understand and appreciate the fact that the legislature and committees like this one have tried to minimize the negative impact of our poor fiscal situation on towns and cities.

However since 2006 the towns in the seventh district hosting these facilities have seen a dramatic decrease in funding. Enfield has seen a decrease of about \$600,000, Somers about \$350,000 and Suffield about \$390,000.

This bill before you, in essence, says do no harm. It requires the state to meet its budgetary obligation to provide PILOT moneys to municipalities that host correctional facilities. It seeks to protect our PILOT revenues and it seeks to ensure that our agreement with the state is in no way violated. The towns that I represent have held up their part of this agreement. All we are asking for is that the state holds up their part as well.

On behalf of the towns I represent who depend on these funds each and every year, I urge your support of HB 5597.

Thank you.