



State of Connecticut
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Representative Kelvin Roldán
Testimony submitted to:

The Connecticut General Assembly
Committee on Planning and Development

Co-Chairs Sen. Cassano and Rep. Gentile, Sen. Coleman and Rep. Groggins, Sen. Fasano and Rep. Aman, and members of the Committee on Planning and Development, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB5603 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF EXCESSIVE PENSIONS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS.

Enactment of this bill would prevent local town councils from using taxpayer funds to enhance the pensions of elected officials during their terms in office. This is a basic standard that we, the Connecticut General Assembly, follow whenever the Executive Branch offers an early retirement incentive. We should set the same standard for cities and towns across Connecticut.

Over the last couple of months I have been approached by many constituents and other individuals claiming that this bill is already in the books and therefore illegal. As I researched this further, my sense is that they are referring to Article XI, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut:

(Cod. Conn. Const. Art. XI., Sec. 2, as amended.)
(Extra compensation to elected officials and public contractors prohibited;
exception.)

Sec. 2. Except as provided in this section, neither the state nor any political subdivision of the state shall pay or grant to any elected official of the state or any political subdivision of the state, any compensation greater than the amount of compensation set at the beginning of such official's term of office for the office which such official holds or increase the pay or compensation of any public contractor above the amount specified in the contract. The provisions of this section shall not apply to elected officials in towns in which the legislative body is the town meeting. The compensation of an elected official of a political subdivision of the state whose term of office is four years or more may be

increased once after such official has completed two years of his term by the legislative body of such political subdivision. The term "compensation" means, with respect to an elected official, such official's salary, exclusive of reimbursement for necessary expenses or any other benefit to which his office would entitle him.

I have been working with LCO and will continue to do so to ensure that indeed this is the intent of this constitutional amendment. Nevertheless, the practice of allowing duly elected officials to retire as part of an early retirement incentive, which recently occurred in one of our cities, should be generally discouraged and frankly ruled illegal. Considering that generally speaking towns are not able to meet their pension obligations, it just seems hugely irresponsible for elected officials to increase their own pensions with a single act while in office.

Thank you for your time and consideration.