



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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## Testimony On H. B. (Raised) An Act Establishing A Task Force To Study Ways Which To Provide Municipal Mandate Relief

Planning And Development Committee  
March 21, 2011

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, Senator Fasano, Representative Aman, and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on HB 6411, An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Ways in which to Provide Municipal Mandate Relief.

I very much appreciate the Committee's attention to the critical subject of mandate relief for our towns, and understand that a study may prove informative. I believe, however, that proceeding with a study should not impede moving ahead with ways to provide mandate relief at the same time.

At the same time that our state government has accumulated a highly burdensome deficit, many of our towns and cities have worked through a prolonged period of economic distress to balance their budgets, while continuing to provide key services, to be attentive to the severe financial pressures on their taxpayers, and, in many cases, to maintain their strong bond ratings. Now, as they face the uncertainties created by the state's budgetary situation, many municipal governments are stretched to their limits.

Our state has been determined to preserve the independence of our 169 towns in establishing and managing their own forms of government. It seems therefore inconsistent to govern them in turn by imposing on them more than 1,200 unfunded mandates (according to the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities) that do not take their individual differences into account.

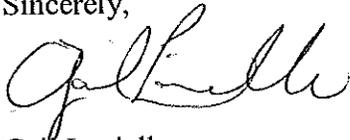
Given both this inconsistency and the current level of municipal financial stress, I respectfully suggest that the Committee consider, beyond the study proposed by HB 6411, the following:

- Establishing a procedure – such as requiring a 2/3 vote in both the House and the Senate – for imposing any unfunded municipal mandates in the future.
- Delaying the obligation, for any towns that choose to do so, to apply any new municipal mandates for a specified period, preferably two years.

I have made no mention of repealing specific existing mandates, as I would hope that the review proposed by HB 6411 would lead to the timely withdrawal of any mandates that have proven ineffective or unduly cumbersome.

Our state's economic and budgetary troubles have been financially distressing for Connecticut residents. Immediate mandate relief would attenuate their increasing local tax burdens, while helping our towns balance their budgets.

Sincerely,



Gail Lavielle  
State Representative  
143<sup>rd</sup> District