



ESTABLISHED 1659

CITY OF NORWICH

CONNECTICUT

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TESTIMONY – HB 5424

March 12, 2012

Madam Chairman & Honorable Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to address your Committee. I will make my comments brief and will be available to answer any questions you might have.

My name is Donna Ralston and I am the Assessor for the City of Norwich. I am here on behalf of the City Manager, Alan Bergren to speak in favor of HB 5424 in which the City of Norwich is requesting a delay in the statutorily required revaluation that the City is required to implement by October 1, 2013.

As the bill is currently written, Section 1 would not give any relief to the City of Norwich. We are currently scheduled to implement our next revaluation as of October 1, 2013. With that said, I would first like to respectfully request that the assessment year commencing date within section 1 of the bill be changed from October 1, 2013 to October 1, 2014.

Norwich is a beautiful “distressed municipality”, located half way between the Mohegan Sun Casino and Foxwoods. The 2011, third quarter survey done by CBIA indicated that confidence in the overall CT economy is improving, however it also noted that the shift has yet to be reflected in New London County. Norwich is a prime example of those results. We are struggling to revitalize and attract new business.

The cost of performing the 2008 revaluation was \$567,000 for 13,075 parcels. It most assuredly has gone up since then and the City feels it is an unfunded mandate that it just cannot afford at his time.

The real estate market is virtually non-existent with the exception of foreclosures and/or short sales. Similar properties sometimes sell for vastly different prices. These are not the sales that we should be using to perform a fair, equitable revaluation. Value would be difficult, if not impossible to determine, explain and most importantly defend. The City needs at least a year to allow for more “arms-length” transactions to occur.

It is also important to note that we still have 6 tax appeals remaining from the 2008 revaluation. Values determined in this type of a market are surely to be appealed. The financial impact of the increased legal and appraisal fees would be devastating to the City budget and would create an unexpected decrease in tax revenues.

On behalf of the City of Norwich, I respectfully request that you consider passage of HB 5424.

Thank you for your attention and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Donna L. Ralston, CCMA II
Assessor, City of Norwich