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**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

**Senate Bill 216 An Act Concerning Small Campaign Contributions To Non
Participating Candidates.**
FEBRUARY 27, 2012

Chairpersons Slossberg and Morin, Ranking Members McLachlan and Hwag and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. I want to thank you for raising Senate Bill 216 **An Act Concerning Small Campaign Contributions To Non Participating Candidates**. I am unable to present this testimony personally because of a conflict in my schedule. However I did want to place on the record my strong support for this proposed legislation. I strongly believe that each contribution made to a campaign should be disclosed from dollar one.

Under current law small contributors are defined as individuals who contribute less than \$50 in the aggregate during a campaign cycle. While it may appear that there are enough safeguards in the law it seems to me from viewing campaign finance reports that the amounts of money that are reported in this category continue to grow. This appears to be especially noticeable in local primary races where the names of individual contributors may not want to be disclosed.

I would suspect that those who may contribute more than \$50 over time and in the aggregate during a campaign cycle are never moved to the category Individual Contributor. I also have heard stories that many contributors in the \$50 contribution range ask that their names not be reported and the \$50 cash contribution is lumped under the "small contributor" category. While the names and addresses of those small contributors are required to be kept by the Treasurer I would suspect that under audit many discrepancies would be found. It would be interesting to know what current audits of local campaign reports disclose in this category.

My belief is that in order to foster greater transparency and open government this category of contributor should be repealed. Every contribution no matter what the amount should be itemized. This change will continue to clean up elections and bring greater transparency to our election system in Connecticut.

Thank you again for your attention to this proposal.

Respectfully Submitted

Jimmetta Samaha