

Town of

108 Pennsylvania Ave.
P.O. Box 519
Paul M. Formica
First Selectman



East Lyme

Niantic, Connecticut 06357
Phone (860) 691-4110
Fax (860) 739-2851
pformica@eltownhall.com

HB 5058

AN ACT CONCERNING FIRST SELECTMAN AND ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR PERMITS

Senator Doyle, Representative Taborsak, Members of the General Law Committee; my name is Paul M Formica; First Selectman of the Town of East Lyme and Executor of the estate of my late wife Donna Formica. I am here to speak in support of HB 5058- an act concerning First selectman and Alcoholic Liquor Permits.

Married for slightly more than one year and expecting our first child, my wife Donna and I founded and opened the Flanders Fish Market in the fall of 1983 in the town of East Lyme converting a small 600 sq foot single family home into a fresh seafood market. At a customer's request, we began cooking fish and chips shortly after we opened. Since then, my family and the business grew with the support of the community and today, 29 years later, the fish market and restaurant has been featured on the Food Network and occupy nearly 10'000 sq feet with 43 employees and my four children are ages 20 thru 27.

I became involved in East Lyme Town Government in the late 1980s as the local Chamber of Commerce President and in 1991 successfully ran for the Zoning Commission where I served for 8 years including 2 as Chairman and in 1999 was elected to the Board of Finance where I also served for 8 years until I was elected First Selectman in the fall of 2007. Shortly before the election in 2007, I became aware of the restriction specific to First Selectmen regarding owning liquor permits in the town where they serve and act as Chief of Police. To comply upon being elected, but prior to taking the oath of office, I transferred my 50% ownership of the Flanders Fish Market Corporation to Donna. Having complied with the statute, I went to work as First Selectman. In December of 2009, 3 weeks after I began my second term as First Selectman, my wife died suddenly and unexpectedly of cardiac arrest at the age of 56. As most married couples Donna and I had named each other Executor of each other's estate and as such I have managed the probate process for these past 2 years. The corporation is the final asset to be distributed and I cannot accept any portion of the ownership and continue to serve the Town as its elected First Selectman under the restriction that currently exists. Had my business been out of town, I would have been allowed. In November of 2011, I was elected to 3rd term.

East Lyme like other towns requires the First Selectman to serve as the Towns manager. I oversee 25 departments including the ELPD where I am, in reality, the "administrative" Chief of Police as I am not a Law Enforcement professional but rather an administrator. We have a resident trooper Sergeant that handles the department personnel and the day to day activities of the police department reporting both to me and also directly to the Barracks Commander at Troop E Montville. Representative Jutila testified to the fact that no other elected nor appointed officials outside of judges and actual Police Chiefs fall under this unnecessary and in my view outdated restriction.

It is my hope that the inequities of this restriction become apparent to all and that with the successful passage of HB 5058, I do not have to choose between continuing to serve the Town of East Lyme in a job that I love or not simply in order to regain ownership of my family business.

Thank you for your consideration.