

Government Finance Officers Association of Connecticut

Testimony in support of HB 5035 An Act Reducing Mandates for Municipalities.

Anthony Genovese
Director of Finance, Town of Woodbridge
Second Vice President GFOA-CT

Planning and Development Committee
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Good morning Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile and members of the Planning and Development Committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Government Finance Officers Association of Connecticut (GFOA) in support of HB 5035 AAC Reducing Mandates for Municipalities. I would strongly urge support of the following sections of HB 5035 which will provide significant cost savings to all of Connecticut's municipalities.

Section 1 of HB 5035 provides relief for municipalities from the recent State Supreme Court decision prohibiting the disclosure of residential addresses of certain Federal, State and Municipal employees per CGS 1-217. Though the court's decision narrowly applies to motor vehicle records, legal counsel for many municipalities are advising that the court's decision applies to all public records, including land records, voter lists, and tax rolls, and applies to all formats of records, both printed and electronic. The cost of complying with the court's decision is a significant burden that many of our cities and towns cannot bear. GFOA understands the need to offer privacy and protection to state and municipal employees that have jobs which may place them at risk, but the current statute is unworkable. GFOA supports the Committee's efforts to find a solution that maintains protections for these employees but in a manner that is cost effective and workable for the multiple departments within a municipality.

GFOA supports Section 2, which clarifies the ability of a municipality to assess property taxes to buildings that are under construction. This language is needed to address the ruling put forth by Kasica v. Columbia which ruled that towns may only assess properties that are completed and being used for their intended purposes. Section 2 of HB 5035 will confirm that towns have been and will continue to be within their rights to assess properties under construction. This is not a new law or a new tax only a clarification of existing practice. Failure to pass this language will have a devastating impact on Connecticut's cities and towns and could result in revenue losses in excess of \$30 million. GFOA would ask the committee members to change the effective date so that the bill covers any properties assessed in the October 2011 grand lists.

GFOA also supports the provisions of Section 6, which removes any responsibility for the storage of the possessions of evicted tenants. GFOA believes that the process of eviction is a

private contract dispute between the landlords and their tenants and should not involve the municipality. This measure will save our cities and towns thousands of dollars every year.

GFOA urges the members of the Planning and Development Committee to pass HB 5035 AA Reducing Municipal Mandates.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Anthony Genovese
Finance Director, Town of Woodbridge