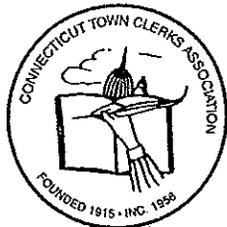


Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.

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2012 Legislative Committee

Testimony Planning & Development Committee February 22, 2012

Good morning distinguished members of the Planning & Development Committee. My name is Antoinette Spinelli and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Town Clerk's Association (CTCA). I am the legislative chair of the Town Clerk's Association and the Town Clerk of Waterbury. I am here today to testify in support of the Governor's Language in Bill 5035 with additional wording to reflect "No public agency may disclose, from their personnel and medical records,..." leaving no doubt that this would pertain to an agency's list of employees and medical records.

The Town Clerk's testified in January 2010 asking to exempt records including land records, trade names, dog licenses, vital records, lists of appointed and elected officials, meeting minutes, petitions and voter lists. This was not considered. Again, in April 2011, the Clerks testified in opposition of nondisclosure of residential addresses from public records. The bill 1234 did not pass but shortly after this a Supreme Court Decision came down that sent us all reeling to find a legislative fix to 1-217.

Clerks know first hand how unworkable it is to expect redaction of addresses from public records. We know our records, how they are indexed, how often they are accessed by the public, how many different formats of the same record there could be, etc. Unfortunately, many individuals have the impression that we can simply enter a name into a database and the address will be gone from all town records. It doesn't work this way. I am stressing this point because we do not want to give people a false impression that we can accomplish redacting their address from all public documents. The Town Clerks Association agrees with statement made in Governor Malloy's budget adjustments that concluded that this situation is "unworkable." The Governor's proposal "limits the scope of the requirement in a way that would protect both the public's right-to-know and the privacy of the public employees. "

Let's take a look at a filing of campaign finance from the last municipal election in November. This is one candidate committee. It was accessed twice in the last week. One person paid for copies, the other combed through and took notes. I have no way of knowing what or who they were looking for nor is it within my right to ask. I am certain there are individual's names and addresses within this candidate committee's filing that fall in the protected employee classifications. This is one example of many paper records that are held in our offices and are open to the public. As you can see, address

redaction of potentially hundreds of individuals in thousands of pages of documents in various formats is indeed "unworkable". Also, the internet is the tool most people use to capture information including residential addresses and is available at any time of the day or night.

The Connecticut Town Clerk's Association has always been thoughtful and cooperative to the needs of all our constituents. We feel an obligation to tell you and individuals of the protected classes that this ineffective, costly mandate is only providing a false sense of security. We recommend a task force to provide education to employees who fall within these classifications so that they may be proactive and prevent their home addresses from appearing on public documents before the document gets recorded in town hall. We would be happy and honored to serve on such a task force.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Respectfully submitted,
Antoinette C. Spinelli, Waterbury Town Clerk
Chair, CTCA Legislative Committee