

CCM 2012 Testimony

900 CHAPEL STREET, 9th FLOOR, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-2807 PHONE (203) 498-3000 FAX (203) 562-6314

PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE

March 6, 2012

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 90% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

HB 5381 *"An Act Concerning the Implementation of the Public Safety Answering Point Consolidation Feasibility Study."*

This bill would mandate the consolidation of *municipal* public safety answering points into *regional* public safety answering points (PSAPs) via a de facto state mandate. CCM appreciates the intent of this bill – **regionalization occurs on a daily basis among many facets of local government and should be encouraged** – however, we have concerns about HB 5381 as it would unilaterally endorse the recommendations of a study, known as the "Kimball Report," which was only released about five weeks ago. This report has not been properly vetted among key stakeholders, such as local CEOs and public safety personnel. Although the Kimball Report may have some theoretical merit – it falls short practically, and creates more questions than answers with regard to core logistical (emergency calls versus non-emergency calls) and up-front financial concerns.

Furthermore, the approach taken by the report, which HB 5381 seeks to codify -- is widely off the mark, as it would be the proverbial stick (absent any carrot) looming over already strained local budgets. Public safety officials rely on a certain degree of flexibility to (a) ensure the safety of their own communities, and (b) address the unique demands and concerns of their citizens. Therefore, local officials should continue to be afforded the discretion to determine which PSAPs work best for their communities – either operated locally or regionally – as they already do now. **HB 5381 would hamper local authority to determine how public safety services are delivered by, among other things, recommending that sanctions be imposed on hometowns that do not comply with certain mandated thresholds** (as referenced in the Kimball PSAP Consolidation Study presentation dated January 18, 2012).

Make no mistake – local officials strive for more efficient means to operate local governments however, they equally require the option to determine how best to manage those communities – i.e. their public safety calls.

CCM urges the Committee to **take no action** on **HB 5381**.



If you have any questions, please contact Mike Muszynski, Legislative Analyst of CCM
via email m-muszynski@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 500-7556.