



State of Connecticut
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Testimony of State Representative Matt Ritter
General Law Committee
February 28, 2012

Dear Chairpersons Doyle and Taborsak, Ranking Members Witkos and Rebimbas and members of the General Law Committee:

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 5058, "An Act Concerning First Selectmen and Alcoholic Liquor Permits." This bill would repeal the Prohibition-era provision in our statutes which prohibits a First Selectman from holding a liquor permit. Clearly, this section of the statute is antiquated and a throw back to a different time.

For starters, the law is inconsistently applied. There is nothing in the statutes which prohibits other elected officials from holding a liquor permit. In addition, our liquor laws are regulated and overseen in large part by the Liquor Control Commission over which a First Selectman has no control.

As you know, this antiquated law has caused a particular hardship in the Town of East Lyme. The First Selectman there is the owner of Flanders Fish Market and Restaurant and since the passing of his wife he has been unable to obtain a liquor permit for his restaurant.

I readily admit that I do not represent East Lyme at the Capitol and the municipalities which I do represent do not elect a First Selectman. However, I read about this situation in an editorial last month and believe we should try to update our statutes when we discover that they are no longer necessary or relevant. I applaud Representative Wood's efforts and hope that the Committee will move this legislation forward favorably.