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APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE TESTIMONY
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Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Ray Manzi. I am a resident of Woodbury and a member of the 2nd Connecticut Volunteer Heavy Artillery, a Civil War living history reenactment group. In August of 2007, the 2nd Conn hosted a first ever living history weekend in Woodbury.

We were extremely fortunate to have the support and co sponsorship of Mr. Jim Whitney and the Northwest Connecticut Convention and Visitors Bureau. The event was a huge success, bringing in over 700 reenactors from several states and over 3,000 spectators, many of whom were children. It was considered the best Civil War reenactment held in New England in the past several years and has set the bar very high for future events. Since that first event we have hosted events in 2009 and 2011 with continued success and growth.

Without exaggeration, it is Mr. Whitney and the Bureau's experience and expertise that make this event possible. They handle all the administrative and logistical needs of the event, planning and executing tasks to cover the smallest detail. They covered things we never would have thought of. In addition, the marketing support provided by the bureau insured a high quality program that brought much desired tourism dollars to our local economy.

Please consider the benefits of regional control of tourism efforts, as the needs of various regions differ. Centralized control and reduced budgets would severely impact groups like mine in regards to offering worthwhile local and regional programs.

We are again hosting a Living History weekend this coming August. We intend to make the event even better than the previous ones. With the help of the Western Connecticut Convention and Visitors Bureau, I know it will happen.

Sincerely,

Raymond Manzi

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