

**Budget Hearing Testimony**  
**General Government A**  
**Wednesday, February 20, 2013**  
**2:50 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.**

**Office of State Ethics**

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for considering my comments regarding the budget of the Office of State Ethics (OSE). As the OSE's former (and first) Director of Education, I have many years of first-hand experience with the agency, its functions and its budget. As one of the agency's first permanent employees, I was present through its start-up years, its time of growth and the initial phases of consolidation, and can therefore provide comment with a good deal of relevant background and knowledge.

While there is public outcry regarding some aspects of the Governor's proposed budget, the Administration's target reduction can be realized without impacting the integrity of the institutions and without harming any constituency. Within the Office of State Ethics, the positions of Executive Director and General Counsel should be combined, just as they are in the other major consolidated watchdogs. This simple change will:

- **Reduce the agency's budget** and come close to the Governor's target reduction amount;
- **Create consistency** among consolidated watchdogs (the OSE is unique among like watchdogs in having a stand-alone Executive Director);
- **Lessen the managerial bloat** of the agency (presently the OSE has four directors – an Executive Director, General Counsel, Enforcement Officer and Director of Education, Communications and Legislative Affairs – for just 10 staff members under them, resulting in one manager for every 2.5 employees, not to mention the managerial structure of the OGA above that); and
- **Eliminate redundant/unnecessary spending.**

To the last point, the first and current OSE Executive Directors historically spent time on fiscal/HR matters, communications and legislative affairs. As you know, fiscal/HR matters are now under the purview of the OGA Administrator. Additionally, during the last legislative session, the OSE received a brand new, full-time position (unique among watchdogs) to handle education, communications and legislative affairs, leaving the Executive Director with few substantive duties.

**This change saves money, creates consistency, does not disturb the integrity of the watchdogs and does not negatively impact any constituency.**

I apologize that I am out of state this week and thus unable to appear before you in person to present the above testimony. I am, however, available at any time throughout the session should any Committee Member wish to discuss this with me in more detail. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Meredith A. Trimble  
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Member, Farmington Board of Education  
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