

STATEMENT AGAINST BILL 6354

As a Connecticut resident and taxpayer, I greatly appreciate Governor Malloy's efforts to reduce spending by scrutinizing our many state agencies. The state's important oversight groups underwent their reorganization two years ago and became the Office of Government Accountability. Bills 6353 and 6354 going before the General Assembly right now, propose changes again to this group, this time radical changes that will strip them of their ability to remain independent and nonpartisan. I feel that it would be a step backwards for Connecticut. As a state, we lead the nation in making government open to its citizens. The State Elections Enforcement Commission and particularly the Citizens' Election Program ensure fair and open elections in our state.

Bill 6354 in particular affects me. I urge the General Assembly to not pass it. I am a stay at home mother that has volunteered the past four election cycles as the Campaign Treasurer for a State Senator. We participate in the Citizens' Election Program and file our reports through the on-line reporting program, eCRIS. The system that the SEEC designed for me to use and the staff the SEEC has provided to assist me make it possible for me to properly perform my duties as treasurer. The election rules and regulations are numerous and specific, however I am able to counsel the candidate and provide the public with access to our fundraising and spending activities because of the SEEC attorneys, liaisons, and IT experts that are available to me. There is only one way for me to serve as treasurer under the law and the staff at the SEEC partners with me from start to finish to make sure that I succeed. I cannot say enough about their professionalism, intellect and integrity.

The service provided by the SEEC as an independent and nonpartisan oversight of our elections is key to our being able to have good government. While budget efficiencies are important, the \$200,000 savings from reorganizing the SEEC as proposed would make it impossible for average citizens like myself to serve as treasurer for a political campaign. I urge the General Assembly to not vote for Bill 6354.

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