

“TESTIMONY”

Senate Bill 843, Act Concerning Revenue Items to Implement the Governors Budget

From; Steve Krasinski—Vice Chair Somers Board of Finance
55 Wells Road
Somers Ct. 06071

Dear Committee

I GENERAL

The current State budget plan is to eliminate the following sources of income from the Town of Somers. Auto taxes, PILOT Funds, and Pequot Funds. These combined revenue sources represent 20- 25 % of our current Town Budget. Eliminating these income sources will be a financial disaster to our town, resulting in a dismantling of our school programs, and reduction in Police, and Fire Support and Highway maintenance. To cover this shortfall will result in a 5.0 mil. Property tax increase on the middle class. I will never support this increase; therefore there will be the indicated pain to Education, Police, Fire, and Highway. We currently pay 100 % to the State of Ct. for services of Residence Troopers. Some of these Troopers will be let go, and you the State will be forced to pay their salaries, so plan on increasing the State Police Budget. I urge you to defeat this draconian budget proposal of elimination of Auto-taxes, Pilot Funds, and Pequot Funds.

II. PEQUOT FUNDS

Four years ago you cut our funding 1.4 million dollars per year. This accumulated 5.6 million loss had three effects **1.** Property taxes have dramatically increased. **2.** Fire equipment replacement was delayed, and we operated with a 30 year old Tanker, 27 year old Pumper, and 17 year old Pumper that continuously needed repair. We finally had to borrow funds to replace the two pumpers. With the proposed income loss I am not sure how we will pay the borrowing costs. The needed purchases have been committed. **3.** Our yearly road resurfacing program was reduced from 10 miles per year to 3 miles per year. Roads are deteriorating. You continually pull Pequot funding sources from our Town, and it needs to stop.

III. PILOT FUNDS

You have two major Prisons and one State Forrest in our Town. This land could be used for revenue generation housing. Instead, you propose to keep this land and give us nothing in return, by eliminating the PILOT Program. You also expect our Fire Dept. and Ambulance to service these prisons. We agreed long time ago to accept your Prisons, in return for taxable land compensation. Now you are renegeing on this commitment by eliminating the Pilot Program. For us to reduce costs it is obvious that eliminating our servicing of the Prisons must be considered. Your new budgets will have to consider equipping and staffing Prison Emergency services. How do we compensate for this income loss is not known at this time.

IV. CAR PROPERTY TAX

This is a 1.8 million dollar loss to us. Not only is this an income loss but a control loss. The most efficient management practices are to give responsibility and budget control to the lowest responsible group and person. In this case this responsibility should be at the Town of Somers level. This is Management 101 and it works. The Governor's proposal is to give us increased Education grants instead of car tax income. We as Towns have other responsibilities than Education, but the Governor now wants control of our income stream and dictates where to use it. He never learned Management 101. The Governor wants to increase LOCIP Funds, which means he decides the spending parameters, we apply and he decides if we get money. We do not need another decision Board at the State level. We know where to best spend the money, let us do our job. Your job is to give us the income stream and let us decide the best use. The Governor wants to control income stream of 169 Towns and Cities, a Bureaucratic mess and more State employees for review and approval.

V.SUMMARY

Our Town budgets are finalized by mid April and voted upon at Town meetings by mid May.

The draconian Governor's proposal will not even be decided by then, so how are we at the Board of Finance to determine what to do for income... The Governor has proposed an impossible situation to the towns without a proper time line. Stop his shell game and get us back to sanity.

LOCIP MONEY is borrowed money. Increasing LOCIP, hence borrowing is another shell game to transfer operating expenses to Bonding. Another bad and irresponsible move on the Governor. He touts no tax increases but passes his income shortfall to the Towns and to the Bond Commission. More debt to the Ct. citizens, when he leaves office. Stop this madness.

Steve Krasinski-VP Somers Board of Finance
55 Wells Road
Somers Ct. 06071