



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

*TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF HB NO. 6669*

March 25, 2013

*Statement of Anthony J. Castagno, Chair
State Elections Enforcement Commission*

I urge the legislature to approve HB 6669 because it returns significant discretionary power to the legislature and allows for continuity in the activities of the State Elections Enforcement Commission in administering the Citizens' Election Program and fulfilling its other statutory responsibilities.

Public Act 11-48 shortened the Commission's term from five to three years and removed from leadership the option to reappoint a member, if they choose. The inability to reappoint will dramatically impact the Commission during the height of the Citizens' Election Program going forward. Currently, if one of the appointing legislative leaders would like to reappoint an existing, experienced and willing commissioner, the law prohibits this. They will instead be forced to appoint new members who will necessarily be without experience in implementing the CEP, or leave it to chance whether the experienced members will be willing to continue to issue grants without being reappointed. Under the terms of Public Act 11-48, four of the five commissioners during the General Assembly election in July of 2016 will have never administered the CEP Program before; and in 2018 all five commissioners will be without CEP experience during the Statewide grant election, with four new members actually appointed in the middle of the grant application period.

HB 6669 restores the term to five years, returns to leadership the ability to reappoint commissioners for an additional term, and changes the term structure to run from April 1 to March 31 (instead of July 1 to June 30 as is currently the structure) so the change of commissioners will not occur during the CEP grant approval process.

This problem is an imminent one for the Commission. We are experiencing a wave of turnover now, with several commissioners leaving; without a legislative change, this would become a perpetual problem. We already are facing challenges ensuring that a quorum is available for meetings. One of our commissioners retired in 2012. Another commissioner's term has expired, but she has agreed to continue serving until replaced (or, we hope, reappointed under this proposed legislation). A third commissioner has resigned, pending a replacement being named. That leaves only one other commissioner and me currently in the midst of serving our pre-PA 11-48 five-year terms. Had we all been serving non-renewable three-year terms, the situation now would be untenable. It surely soon will become untenable under the current structure because statewide election cycles are four years.