



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

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

*March 25, 2013*

*Statement of Stephen F. Cashman, Member  
State Elections Enforcement Commission*

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Good morning, Chairman Musto and Chairman Jutila, Vice-Chairmen Meyer and Lesser, Senator McLachlan, Rep. Hwang, members of the Committee and the public. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you this morning about House Bill 6669.

This bill attempts to correct some problems that began in 2011 when the legislature curtailed the terms of Commissioners to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. As the only state body charged with the enforcement of the state's election and campaign finance laws as well as the administration of the Citizens' Election Program, the reduction in Commissioner terms and ban on reappointment frustrates any attempt to create experienced, knowledgeable, and independent commissioners by forcing commissioners to give up their spots on the SEEC just as they begin to understand their role in overseeing this complex body of law. The proposed legislation before you now would allow commissioners to serve renewable five-year terms, creating more consistency and stability on the commission. I urge you to approve this legislation.

I have served on the State Elections Enforcement Commission since 2000 and was its chairman from 2004 until last year. I can attest to you from personal experience that the work of this commission plays a vital role in the continued success of the state's public financing program. Meeting weekly during the summer and fall of General Assembly election years, Commissioners must review and approve or deny applications for millions of dollars in grants from the Citizens' Election Program. While the commissioners rely on staff to conduct the review of each qualifying contribution and determine whether a candidate committee has qualified for a grant, the Commission takes very seriously its role in ensuring that these funds do not go to unqualified candidates.

Commissioners also review hundreds of cases that are docketed each year related to election and campaign finance violations, referendum and voting allegations, as well as self-generated investigations based on staff audits or other information obtained by the SEEC. Maintaining a core of experienced and long-serving commissioners allows the Commission to administer consistent and sustained oversight of the enforcement of these laws that touch on the very essence of our democratic process.

In closing, I again urge you to adopt House Bill 6669 related to Commissioners' terms and allow these public servants to gain the experience they need to become fully engaged, fully informed, and fully utilized members of the State Elections Enforcement Commission. Thank you.