

# Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments

Testimony Regarding

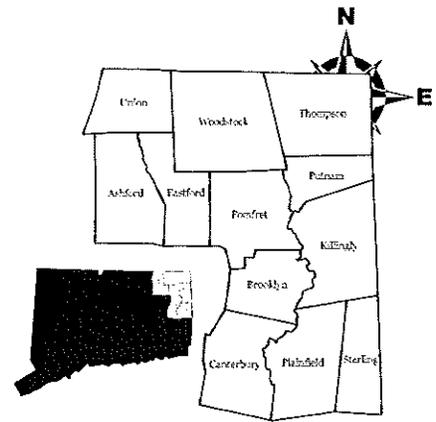
Proposed Bill 5267

An Act Concerning the  
Regional Delivery of Social Services

before the

Human Services Committee

February 19, 2013



**NECCOG**

The Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG), covering 12 towns in northeastern Connecticut and one of 8 regional councils of government in Connecticut, supports the concept put forth in Proposed Bill 5267 and asks that the members of the Human Services Committee give this proposal favorable consideration.

The reason for our support is that our State is far too fragmented in how it delivers services - all types of services - not just social services. This fragmentation results in the lack of cost-efficient delivery of needed services to the people of our state. Given the current budget challenges of Connecticut and our towns - it is imperative that we change the way we have been doing business. The approach suggested in this bill is to use the eight Connecticut counties as a base for the delivery of services. We support this approach. It is simple and consistent with the way the rest of the Nation operates. Unfortunately, we seem to reinvent delivery regions all too frequently - where today our state has multiple dozen regions - well beyond the social services outlined in Proposed Bill 5267.

Last week, the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston released a report titled: "The Quest for Cost-Efficient Local Government in New England: What Role for Regional Consolidation?<sup>1</sup>". This report takes a detailed look at regional consolidation of local services and examined three in detail - including local public health departments. This report notes that Connecticut has one of the most fragmented public health systems in the United States. Their study performed a hypothetical analysis using a county-based approach. The result was an estimated 41 percent reduction in expenses compared to the current approach. The Report went on to note that "in addition to cost savings, consolidation could sharply reduce service disparities in Connecticut."

Proposed House Bill 5267 begins a needed discussion regarding public service delivery on a regional basis - based on county boundaries (including councils of government). The county-based approach would, we believe, lead to better consistency and accountability. Therefore, we again ask that you move this proposal forward and allow the concept to be fully constructed.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If we can provide any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bos.frb.org/economic/neppc/researchreports/2013/neppcrr1301.pdf>