

Planning and Development Committee
Friday, February 1, 2013
10:00 AM in Room 2B of the LOB

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF HB 5530**

Good Morning, my name is Gregg Schuster and I am the First Selectman of the Town of Colchester. I am writing in support of House Bill 5530, "An Act Permitting the Posting of Legal Notices on Municipal Websites."

For centuries, newspapers were the sole-source of information for communities across the state, country, and world. However, "the growth of [the] newspaper market has stopped in 2007 and [has been in] decline since 2008.¹" Today, the Internet, which is more accessible today than ever before with the use of home and community-provided computers, smart phones, tablets, and other devices, allows for residents of all walks of life to get informed about local, state, and national concerns. According to a recent study by the University of California – Berkley, more people are getting their news from the Internet than newspapers². The Pew Research Center has also recently conducted a study showing that there is a more aggressive downward trend in newspaper readership and an equally strong increase in Internet-based news readership³.

With current posting requirements, there is a direct relationship to the necessity of the posting to the cost. To be more specific, the State already requires that certain information must be posted in a widely-circulated newspaper for specific events (i.e. town meetings, town budgets, planning & zoning notices, etc.) The more details that are mandated on towns to publish, the higher the cost is to the town. Until data can be published showing that more people have access to a hardcopy newspaper than an Internet-based newspaper, it is difficult to justify forcing Towns to spend money on legal postings when Towns could have the option of posting on their website, unless the sole purpose of the mandate is to keep newspapers afloat.

Posting on the Town website is free for many municipalities, since they manage their own IT services. Allowing municipalities the option of posting legal notices on their websites helps defeat timeline issues, since many area newspapers only publish once a week, as well as cuts exorbitant costs to publish in hardcopy.

Therefore, I encourage the members of the Planning and Development Committee to vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Gregg Schuster
First Selectman
Town of Colchester

¹ UK and US see heaviest newspaper circulation declines." Guardian News and Media Limited. Web. 20 Oct. 2011.

² <http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/digital-transform/print-and-broadcast-news-vs-internet/>

³ <http://www.pewresearch.org/2009/02/26/newspapers-face-a-challenging-calculus/>