

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 143 – *An Act Concerning the Publication of Notice in Newspapers*

Dear Senator Cassano, Representative Rojas, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee,

As Selectman for the Town of Bethel, I continuously hear from various Town department heads a complaint about the cost of publishing Legal Notices. Each year, as a town official, we attempt to budget an appropriate amount of money for Legal Notices. Each year, publication expenses increasing relative to print costs by the local newspaper.

Yet, at the same time, circulation for these newspapers is diminishing each year. We only have to look at the number of weekly and daily newspapers which no longer published in the State of Connecticut.

Today's electronic media is perhaps more reflective of the 21st century and more accessible. Each Town has its own web site and all legal notices are available in the Town Clerk's part of the Town's web site.

The following are facts which the Town of Bethel spent most recently:

Fiscal Year 2011/2012	\$35,636
Month of January 2013	\$ 6,000 alone for the publication of a proposed ordinance

Needless to say, we need State Legislation which allows municipalities to reduce or change the requirement for the publication of Legal Notices.

I would like to recommend the following:

1. Allow Town Web Sites to be a source of a Legal Notice as found and recorded in the Town Clerk's office and Town Clerk's web site.
2. If print publication is required, allow legal notice publication to be abbreviated with reference to Town Web Site
3. If print publication is required, allow Towns to utilize other print media sources which are mailed to every residence and business establishment within a municipality. (Example, The Pennysaver is published weekly and reaches every mailing address in the Town of Bethel. The cost of an insert (flyer) is less than \$600.
4. Allow the use of public media information sites (example Comcast Public Broadcasting) announcing the availability of a Legal Notice and its entirety at the Town Clerks Office.

Although there may be arguments that not everyone has a computer, the counter argument is that newspaper subscriptions are down and the fact that the Public Notice is available at the Town Hall and Town Clerk's Office.

Finally, we need to bring the announcement of Public Notices efficiently through electronic media and the 21st Century. Lastly, we need Legislation which allows Towns to be more efficient in the utilization of taxpayers' money. The Town of Bethel must operate on a balanced budget. If we can minimize expenses, we are performing our fiscal responsibility to the taxpayer.

Sincerely,

Paul R. Szatkowski
Selectman, Town of Bethel.