



State of Connecticut

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Sen. LeBeau, Rep. Perone, Sen. Crisco, Rep. Becker and members of the Commerce Committee:

I am Sen. Art Linares and I am testifying in strong support of Proposed S.B. No. 77 AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE HADDAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

The Connecticut Spring Antiques Show is perhaps the most significant antiques show in all of New England. It brings together dealers from many states and collectors from throughout the region. Hosted by the Haddam Historical Society, it features more than 60 antiques dealers showcasing thousands of items and examples of early American products such as furniture, porcelain, pottery, and fine art. Not only does it provide sales tax and rental revenue, the show is really a perfect fit with the historic New England image we want to project to potential tourists.

The event benefits the society's educational programming, exhibitions and collections care, as well as the Thankful Arnold House Museum, which is a part of the Connecticut Women's Heritage Trail.

In short, the show is a great investment. We want the show to stay here in Hartford and here in Connecticut. We want it to stay here because we are proud of our history and our heritage. We want visitors to come to Connecticut to enjoy the show and to also take in all that our beautiful state has to offer. When people and vendors visit Connecticut, small businesses benefit, restaurants and hotels and bed and breakfasts benefit. Those visitors will keep coming back to Connecticut, and they'll spread the word about their positive experience here.

Last year, I was proud to co-sponsor a bill to create a "Connecticut Antiques Trail". The bill, which is now law, establishes a trail to identify and market Connecticut sites where antiques are sold. State economic development officials must identify and include in the trail major antique dealers, communities with a high concentration of antique dealers, and auction houses with annual sales over \$1 million. The state must also promote the trail through signs, notices, and an internet website. It makes sense to connect more local antiques dealers with collectors in an effort to highlight the state's numerous antique shops.

S.B. No. 77 calls for \$50,000 to be appropriated to the Department of Economic and Community Development, from the General Fund, for fiscal year 2015, for the operating expenses of the Connecticut Spring Antiques Show.

I believe this proposal will not only provide assistance with the show's operating expenses, but that it will also send the message that Connecticut supports its historical societies. Connecticut is already a major magnet for antiques lovers and lovers of history. Let's keep our state moving in the right direction by passing this bill.