

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

Proposed Senate Bill No. 135 – An Act Concerning The Public, Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account.

Proposed House Bill No. 5172 – An Act Concerning The Public, Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account.

Proposed House Resolution No. 18 5172 – An Act Concerning The Public, Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account.

**Written Testimony of  
Walter L. Mann**  
127 Washington Avenue  
North Haven CT 06473  
Phone: 203-234-0025  
Email: [wmann@nhtv.com](mailto:wmann@nhtv.com)

Submitted March 4, 2014

Written Testimony of  
Walter L. Mann  
On Proposed Senate Bill No. 135,  
Proposed House Bill No. 5172,  
Proposed House Resolution No. 18 5172

Thank you for allowing me to testify before your committee today. My testimony is on file with the committee. I am here to speak on behalf of **SENATE BILL 135**, **HOUSE BILL 5172** and **HOUSE RESOLUTION 18**, all designed to re-institute and preserve the Public, Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account, more commonly known as the PEGPETIA account. My name is Walter Mann, and I am currently the Executive Director of NHTV-North Haven Community TV, as well as Station Manager of BCTV-Branford Community TV, and Station Manager of Totoket TV-North Branford Public Cable Access Group.

The PEGPETIA account was started in 2008 with the singular purpose of addressing the capital equipment needs of community access stations and educational institutions in Connecticut that would otherwise not have the necessary funds to purchase and upgrade much-needed equipment. To have allowed, and to continue to allow PEGPETIA funds to be swept into a general fund, is irresponsible. Why should local community access TV and schools in Connecticut be penalized and left with sub-standard and broken equipment so as to allow funds to be swept into a general fund.

I am here to focus on the local Public, Educational and Government television component of the PEGPETIA program. As a result of continued deregulation by the federal government in the telecommunications industry, we have seen a drastic reduction in local content in broadcast radio and television, to the point now where most radio stations are almost completely automated and have news imported into their respective markets from other states, done by people who have no clue as to the make-up of the communities those radio stations serve. This was due to large companies such as Clear Channel and Cumulus gobbling up hundreds of radio stations. Over-the-air broadcast TV is slowly heading down the same road, with many stations having already eliminated local public affairs programming that used to be required by the FCC in order to ensure successful broadcast station license renewal. This has left us with local content that is primarily "if it bleeds, it leads" news stories.

Community TV stations in Connecticut fulfill many critical roles, filling a void left by the lack of localism on broadcast stations, by televising important local events, local government meetings, and programs hosted by State and local officials. With the exception of the excellent work done by CTN-The Connecticut Network, LOCAL Governmental access TV stations are really the only TV stations that air many programs featuring State Legislators like you.

**Written Testimony of  
Walter L. Mann  
On Proposed Senate Bill No. 135,  
Proposed House Bill No. 5172,  
Proposed House Resolution No. 18 5172**

Local community access TV stations help get legislators faces into their constituents living rooms, this resulted attention contributes to greater recognition of those elected officials as candidates on election day. Local broadcast TV stations give very little coverage to the goings on at the State or local governmental level. At a press conference last year at North Haven Town Hall, I pointed out to Governor Malloy that other than one local newspaper, the ONLY media in attendance was NHTV, North Haven's local community TV station. And how was NHTV able to be there? With the assistance of the PEGPETIA account, which allowed NHTV to have the equipment necessary to cover these events.

Also, we have had many middle school and high school interns who have learned much about television production and who have gone on to college and careers in the broadcast industry, landing jobs at such respected operations as ESPN, A&E, CBS, MTV, Discovery Channel, Lifetime, and many other stations. This is experience these students only could have received at local community TV stations.

I ask you, our elected legislators, to help local community TV stations survive and be able to continue to provide important programming to our communities, by supporting the re-instatement of the PEGPETIA Grant Program. If not, you are simply helping to silence one of the last few voices of media left that actually provides important LOCAL information, public affairs programming, and in-depth coverage of local and State government to YOUR CONSTITUENTS, and YOUR VOTERS.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I truly appreciate the Committee's dedicated efforts to support the technological needs of local community television and education institutions. I am eager to answer any questions you may have.

Walter L. Mann