

Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee
Testimony of Laura Cordes
March 13, 2014

Good afternoon, Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding my nomination to the Connecticut Rail Commuter Council, formerly known as the Metro North New Haven Commuter Rail Council.

I am honored to be re-nominated by Senator Williams to serve on the recently reconstituted Council which has a long and respected history of advocating for rail commuters and riders.

When I joined the council in 2011 I was proud to be the first member to serve from a town east of the Connecticut River. As such, my focus has been on the sister service to the New Haven Metro North Line, Shore Line East. As a frequent rider and a New London City Center District Commissioner, I advocated for expanded weekday and weekend Shore Line East service to New London, which is home to one of the busiest train stations in the state. Shore Line East began full service between New London and New Haven last summer and is now enjoyed by Connecticut residents and visitors to our state.

I recently moved to West Hartford, and am eager to continue my service on the council as a resident of a municipality in which a new rail service will soon operate, the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield High Speed Rail Line (NHHS).

I have over 20 years of experience in public policy and advocacy and currently serve as the Executive Director of the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONNSACS). Previous to this position I worked with Judith Blei Government Relations, primarily on issues related to sexual abuse and women's health care. In addition to working as a lobbyist, I have been an adjunct instructor with the Connecticut College Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy, and served as the Organizing Director of the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group.

In my professional capacity I am an active member of the Commission on the Standardization of the Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations, the Office of Victim Services Advisory Committee, the Governor's Task Force for Justice for Abused Children, and the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Committee. In addition, I have also served on several community boards including New London Landmarks and the aforementioned New London City Center District.

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Metro North, its branch lines, and Shore Line East are vital to the lives of so many Connecticut residents and businesses. As the state looks to expand rail lines, our ability to improve the efficiency, safety and quality of service on our current lines remains essential.

I look forward to continuing to work with council members, the staff of CONNDOT, Metro North, and members of the General Assembly to identify ways to improve commuter and passenger rail service throughout the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.