

April 3rd 2014

Good day Senator Looney, Representative Janowski, Senator Fasano, Representative Camillo and members of the Executive and Nominations Committee. My name is Jay Shaw and it is an honor and privilege to be considered for reappointment as a member of Freedom of Information Commission.

My sincere thanks to this committee , for the opportunity to appear before you to speak to my desire to continue to serve on the FOI commission.

We have lived in Connecticut for more than 43 year, 36 years in Stamford and 7 years in Manchester. I am not sure we qualify as " Connecticut Yankees", but we have made Connecticut our home .

My 20 plus years in the newspaper business brought me into frequent contact with the activities of the Freedom of Information Commission. H.L. Mencken, once said that " the role of a newspaper is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable" I believe the role of the FOI commission is to see that the process of government be as open and transparent as possible. In the few years that I have served on the FOI commission, I have been stunned by the variety of issues presented to the Commission and especially the number of individuals' who submit requests for information relative to their incarceration in the state's prison system. The FOI Commission treats these requests for access to information in the same manner as those received by the general public.

I believe that the first duty of a member of the Freedom of Information Commission is to enforce the law as it is written, which includes exemptions from disclosure certain well defined matters. It is for the legislature and the governor to write the law on freedom of information. It's the responsibility of the FOI commission to apply the law to the facts of a case, not to change the law to what we might like it to be. My experience as a newspaper publisher has made me especially sensitive to the publics need for access to the deliberations and actions of those to whom they have given the responsibility of government

During the almost 40 years of operation, the FOI Commission has issued thousands of decisions, far beyond what was expected. The volume of these decisions has demonstrated powerfully the public interest in its government and the government's interest in serving the public. The FOI Commission has proved essential in advancing those interests, This ongoing role in protecting the interest of the public is critical to our society.

If I am reappointed to the commission, I will keep an open mind in each case as it is presented, I will approach each case without prejudice. I will seek to learn from my colleagues, and I will be proud to serve our state.

I appreciate your attention and thank you again for this opportunity to answer any questions you may have for me,