

**Testimony on Raised Bill 5507**

**Planning and Development Committee Public Hearing**

***AAC the Appointment of Zoning Enforcement Officials, Building Officials and Fire Marshals***

Joyce R. Okonuk, First Selectman

Town of Lebanon

The Town of Lebanon supports **RB 5507, with the strong exception to Section 1**, which would amend the Zoning Chapter of Connecticut General Statutes, Sec. 8-3(e) by removing the authority of the local zoning commission to enforce its zoning regulations and instead provides that responsibility to the First Selectman.

Members of the Town of Lebanon Zoning Commission, like many in Connecticut, serve for terms of six (6) years. This body collectively makes zoning decisions on private property, in support of the published zoning regulations and Plan of Conservation and Development. The number of members were created to provide the best possible discussion and decision-making when it comes to land use decisions affecting public and private property.

Most Chief Elected Officials (First Selectmen) take office for a two-year term and are not versed in zoning regulations or enforcement. As written, the proposed legislation puts the authority to enforce zoning squarely on the First Selectman who could in fact appoint themselves the Zoning Enforcement Officer and/or politicize zoning decisions without the authority or agreement of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

As the First Selectman in Lebanon for almost 20 years, I see the present balance of power with the Planning & Zoning Commission to provide a good balance of government when deciding important land use decisions of their friends and neighbors.

The changes proposed under CGS Sec. 8-3.(e) would not be beneficial to Lebanon or the State and could politicize the current zoning system.

I urge you to **amend RB 5507** by **deleting Section 1**.

Joyce R. Okonuk  
First Selectman  
Town of Lebanon