



NEW BRITAIN FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

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*"making New Britain safer"*

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Planning and Development  
Committee Testimony RE: HB 5580  
March 21, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding HB 5580.

My name is Thomas Ronalter. I am the Fire Chief for the City of New Britain and recently served on the CT EMS PSA Task Force.

Please accept my support for HB5580, "AN ACT CONCERNING THE PESTICIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL, THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PRIMARY SERVICE AREA TASK FORCE AND THE ELIMINATION OF A MUNICIPAL MANDATE".

Fortunately, HB5580 includes all 5 recommendations of the Emergency Medical Services Primary Services Area Task Force. All of these recommendations will improve delivery of EMS in Connecticut. However, it is Recommendation #5, the alternative provision of PSA responsibilities, which would allow municipalities to make a change to their state designated EMS provider. This may be to improve patient care, more efficiently allocate resources, allow regionalization, or to align with a new EMS provider better suited to meet its needs.

Most importantly, recommendation #5 is the alternative provision of PSA responsibilities. This recommendation states that municipalities shall have the right to submit a Local EMS Plan for consideration to DPH for the alternative provision of PSA responder responsibilities. Recommendation #5 does not require a change of EMS provider. Rather, it simply allows a municipality to determine its own destiny by requesting a reasonable provider change.

Let me return to one of the items above. The R-word. Regionalization. I know the M.O.R.E. Commission is continuing its good work on this issue. The reality is our current model of delivering municipal public services is not sustainable. While some view this as heresy, it really is the only path forward. Regionalized services will improve the quality of services and decrease costs. While this will not happen tomorrow, we must begin to set the stage to allow the possibility for this to occur. The first step is to remove obvious obstacles. The PSA issue is an obstacle to regionalization. Municipalities will drive regionalization in their effort to control escalating costs. They cannot regionalize what they do not control. Please give them that power to do so. Right now they have responsibility without the commensurate authority. HB 5580 will give them that ability to do so.

Municipalities must provide public safety services to their citizens. However, in the case of EMS services, local government has no direct control of the provision of its EMS provider. Primary Service Area Responders have enjoyed almost 4 decades of having the exclusive right to PSAs within the State of Connecticut. No other municipal services are granted this entitlement. It is time for a rational and reasonable change.

In closing, I ask your support of HB 5580. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas G. Ronalter  
Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director