



**Torrington Fire Department  
City of Torrington**



Chief of Fire Services  
Gary M. Brunoli

Chief of Operations  
Christopher Pepler

Training/Safety Division  
David A. Tripp, Jr.

Fire Prevention/Investigation Division  
Timothy J. Tharau

**Introduction**

Senator Osten & Representative, Rojas, and distinguished members of this committee, thank you for allowing me to give testimony and representing the best interest of my community.

My name is Chris Pepler and I currently serve as the Chief of Operations for the City of Torrington Fire Department. I have 24 years in serving as a volunteer firefighter, EMT, and career firefighter. I am here to express my support of some long awaited changes to our EMS system, and support House Bill 5580.

House Bill 5580 includes five recommendations that came from the Primary Services Area Task Force. Those who opposed this bill under the Public Health Committee, agreed with recommendations 1-4, but disagreed with recommendation number 5 due to the potential "subjectivity" that recommendation number 5 poses to the EMS providers.

I will begin by saying; I feel there is a big misunderstanding by the Private Ambulance Providers as to who is *ultimately* responsible for providing ambulance service to the citizens of their communities.

**Background**

If we refer to Connecticut General Statutes, Title 7, Chapter 98, Section 7-148 under the "Scope of Municipal Powers" we can see that there is a responsibility put on the municipality to provide the following:

- (4) Public services.
  - (A) Provide for police protection,
  - (B) Provide for fire protection,
  - (C) Provide for ambulance service

The language states that the municipality shall have the power to provide police and fire protection and provide an ambulance service. In both the fire and police sections, there is language included such as regulate, organize, prescribe, and maintain. While under "ambulance service" the only language that exists is that the municipality shall have the "power to provide an ambulance service by the municipality, any person, firm or corporation."



Torrington Fire Department  
City of Torrington



Chief of Fire Services  
Gary M. Brunoli

Chief of Operations  
Christopher Pepler

Training/Safety Division  
David A. Tripp, Jr.

Fire Prevention/Investigation Division  
Timothy J. Tharau

The language under ambulance service is vague to say the least, and HB 5580 final allows municipalities input and accountability to the "person, firm, or corporation" as mentioned in 7-148. Further, I feel that the current language restricts local officials from having the ability to regionalize, which we all know is a *huge* priority for the current administrations agenda.

The CCM agrees with Task Force's recommendations 1-5 the proposed language and stated in their testimony on HB 5542, "this is a logical means to provide local officials with the necessary authority to determine their Primary Service Area (PSA) providers."

**Conclusion**

Under the current language, there is no recourse for an elected official to hold their EMS provider accountable due to the PSA. I can tell you personally as the Operations Chief of my Fire Department, I am held accountable to deliver the highest level of service to the citizens of our community 24/7. If there is an issue in which a citizen is not happy with the fire departments service or performance, my Mayor will call me or ask to see me immediately as I would expect her too. Therefore, it is essential that the Chief Elected Official have the ability:

- ✓ To hold *ALL* emergency services accountable.
- ✓ Have options available to choose the best EMS provider for their citizen's safety.
- ✓ Have the ability, to explore regionalization concepts without being tied to a Provider assigned to their municipality.
- ✓ Have an option that allows for competitive bid process

Therefore, I am respectfully asking this committee to support HB 5580.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Christopher T. Pepler*

Christopher T. Pepler  
Deputy Chief of Operations  
Email: [pepler@torringtonct.org](mailto:pepler@torringtonct.org)



**Torrington Fire Department  
City of Torrington**



**Chief of Fire Services  
Gary M. Brunoli**

**Chief of Operations  
Christopher Pepler**

**Training/Safety Division  
David A. Tripp, Jr.**

**Fire Prevention/Investigation Division  
Timothy J. Tharau**

**Christopher Pepler  
111 Water Street,  
Torrington, CT 06790**