



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

My name is Chris Pepler and I currently serve as the Chief of Operations for the City of Torrington Fire Department. I have served the Torrington Fire Department for 15 years, and prior to that I served as a volunteer firefighter and have been a certified EMT since 1993. Thank you for allowing me to give testimony regarding HB 5542. I am happy to see positive changes to our outdated EMS system but I am disappointed that recommendation number 5 was not put into the bill.

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 our communities. It appears to me that there has been a strong emphasis on Title 19 of the Connecticut General Statutes, but there has been no consideration given to the powers and responsibility of the municipality itself.

Municipal Powers

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

(c) Powers. Any municipality *shall have the power* to do any of the following, in addition to all powers granted to municipalities under the Constitution and general statutes:

In short, the municipality has an obligation to provide the following:

(4) Public services.

(A) Provide for police protection,

(B) Provide for fire protection,

(C) Provide for ambulance service by the municipality or any person, firm or corporation;

There is language stating that the municipality shall have the power to provide police and fire protection. Under both the fire and police section there are words included such as regulate, organize, prescribe, and maintain. The Police protection language even says that there must be a suitable place of detention for persons arrested! Yet all it says for "Ambulance service" is that a municipality shall have the power to provide an ambulance service by the municipality, any person, firm or corporation!



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Although it says the municipality has the power to provide ambulance service via one of the three options listed, the municipality is not allowed to change any of the delivery options that may enhance the level of service to the municipality. Simply put, the municipality can decide how they want to deliver "ambulance service" one time only!

Conclusion

The ambulance service language is vague to say the least, and without the inclusion of recommendation five. The PSA will be viewed no different than a "stock share" by private providers while municipalities will have no ability to enhance a critical service that our citizen's rely on for their survival.

Therefore, I respectfully ask this committee that HB 5542 be amended to include recommendation #5 "the Alternative Provision of PSA Responsibilities"

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher T. Pepler

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