



**Testimony**  
**Betsy Gara, Executive Director**  
**Connecticut Council of Small Towns**  
**Before the Public Safety & Security Committee**  
**March 11, 2014**

**HB-5533 - AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

Given the difficult budgetary pressures facing Connecticut's small towns, we are very concerned about any proposal that will increase costs on municipalities. Although state aid to municipalities has been largely flat funded for more than a decade, costs for providing critical services, including education and public safety, have increased dramatically.

COST certainly appreciates the intent of this proposal and values the service of our municipal employees. However, we oppose HB-5533 which could significantly increase workers' compensation costs for towns and cities.

In assessing the fiscal impact of similar measures in previous years, the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) has indicated that the cost of this mandate on towns and cities could be significant. The Connecticut Insurance Department approved rate increases for workers' compensation for policy renewals on or after January 1, 2013, which included an overall rate increase of 7.1%. Expanding workers' compensation coverage at this time will further strain local budgets and put more pressure on towns to increase property taxes or lay off personnel.

Therefore, COST urges you to oppose HB-5533.

*COST is an advocacy organization committed to giving small towns a strong voice in the legislative process. Its members are Connecticut towns with populations of less than 30,000. COST champions the major policy needs and concerns of Connecticut's suburban and rural towns.*