CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
THE VOICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CCM 2014 Testimony

900 CHAPEL STREET, 9th FLOOR, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-2807 PHONE (203) 498-3000 FAX (203) 562-6314
Your source for local government management information www.ccm-ct.org

PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE

March 4, 2014

Good Afternoon,

My Name is Lisa Pellegrini, First Selectman for the Town of Somers, and a member of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) Board of Directors.

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 92% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to all towns and cities. I would like to talk to you today about two bills that are important to the Town of Somers and will have great impact on all the other towns as well. They include:

SB 288 "An Act Concerning Notice of Costs Associated with Resident State Troopers"

HB 5391 "An Act Concerning Overtime and Fringe Benefits of Resident State Troopers"

CCM and the Town of Somers *support* both SB 288 and HB 5391 as they would address inconsistencies in current billing guidelines and procedures to ensure municipalities are afforded ample amount of notice of cost adjustments, and are not handed additional mid-budget cycle costs by the State.

SB 288 would require the Comptroller to provide municipalities with advanced notice of any fringe benefit rate increases for the Resident State Trooper program. HB 5391 would reduce the municipal cost of the Resident State Trooper for overtime and the fringe benefit costs associated from 100% to 70%.

The Resident State Trooper program has been a vital link in the local-state public safety partnership in Connecticut and is one of the best examples of successful regionalized programs in the State. However, the program's continually increasing costs specifically related to the fringe benefits rate for troopers has become a significant financial burden on local budgets. The Town of Somers is served by a Resident State Trooper. Over the past two years the fringe benefit rate for the program has risen almost 20 percent. In addition, towns are not informed of these rate increases until months after towns had adopted their operating budgets. If these rate increases continue to occur, the valuable service that this program delivers to towns throughout Connecticut will be negatively impacted. It will force Towns to eliminate trooper positions, effectively dismantling a highly successful regional program piece by piece as each trooper is eliminated.

- OVER -

These two proposals would provide towns that participate in the Resident State Trooper program the ability to better budget for these services. CCM supports these proposals and urges the Committee to amend HB 5391 to also allow that the fringe benefit rate for Resident State Trooper *regular time* is capped at 70%.

CCM urges the Committee to ***favorably report*** both SB 288 and HB 5391, as recommended.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Muszynski, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM at mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org or (203) 500-7556.