



Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, and members of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee. My name is Kevin Egan. I am an elementary teacher in Waterbury and the President of the Waterbury Teachers Association.

I am here today to testify on [H.B. No. 7054](#) AAC Concerning Keno and the need for the state to generate sufficient revenue to fund Connecticut's schools. Waterbury is not only among the 119 underfunded towns that do not receive their full Education Cost Sharing Grant (ECS), it is the most underfunded town in the state. The State of Connecticut owes Waterbury \$54.7 million just this year alone.

In addition to ECS underfunding, the governor's budget proposes cuts that would significantly impact services to our schoolchildren. Programs such as Priority School Extended Hours and Summer Programs, which are vital to our Waterbury students, stand to suffer with potential cuts of up to 50% in student enrollment in these initiatives. Waterbury students are in desperate need of these additional opportunities to reinforce and enrich skills initially learned in the classroom.

The proposed budget also cuts Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) grants, resulting in a loss of \$279,000 to Waterbury. Cuts to municipal funding ultimately impact local schools too. In the end, the combination of ECS underfunding and proposed cuts would be devastating to Waterbury's schools.

As many on this committee know, Waterbury is a post-industrial city plagued with many brownfields and outdated commercial properties. Waterbury's properties – residential as well as commercial – cannot

generate enough tax revenue to provide the kind of schools all kids in the city deserve. Additionally, with a significant portion of the citizens earning lower-incomes, median household income in Waterbury is among the lowest in the state. Simply put, Waterbury's residents cannot generate sufficient tax revenue to pay for essential services, such as education.

I urge committee members to consider progressive and dependable ways to raise funds for local schools. Waterbury simply cannot do it alone. State resources are critical to the success of our schools and the children who attend them.