



State of Connecticut

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Testimony Len Fasano, Senate Minority Leader
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Senate Bill No. 1132 An Act Concerning the Admissions Tax
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Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, Senator Frantz, Representative Davis and members of the Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony regarding **Senate Bill No. 1132 An Act Concerning the Admissions Tax**. I am here today speaking in opposition to the bill which I believe unfairly burdens taxpayers by subsidizing a private stadium with tax revenue.

SB 1132 would allow for the transfer of moneys from the General Fund to the Hartford minor league baseball stadium by directing taxes paid on stadium admission charges from the General Fund to the stadium. This legislation would pave a path for tax dollars to make their way into stadium coffers.

I firmly believe the burden of this stadium should not fall on taxpayers.

No other venue in Connecticut gets to benefit from the taxes collected on admissions. The state of Connecticut has never allowed this calculated maneuvering of tax revenue. This private ballpark should not receive special treatment especially when the decision to move the Rock Cats from one city to another was made by the team owners, not by taxpayers.

When plans for this new stadium were first announced, many lawmakers including myself warned that a new stadium would be an enormous undertaking that the state could not possibly afford to take on at a time of fiscal crisis. We were reassured by the governor that this decision would not be wrought on the backs of taxpayers. But this bill challenges that pledge.

I call on the members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee to adhere to the words of our governor. In June of 2014 he stated, "I have made it very clear and continue to make it clear that we are not participating in this project...we're not part of it...we have no intention of participating in this program...Don't be counting on us." The ballpark owners in this case cannot count on Connecticut families to turn over their tax revenue to pay for a stadium. Tax revenue needs to be protected and used only to fund core government responsibilities, especially during a time of financial problems and difficult budgets. Creating this special arrangement picks winners and losers, with a ballpark coming out on top and all taxpayers falling behind.

I thank you for your consideration.

Len Fasano
Senate Minority Leader