



February 13, 2015

Committee on Children  
State Capitol Building, Room 011  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Senate Bill #208

Dear Committee Members:

It has come to my attention that you will soon be acting on **SB 208 AN ACT CONCERNING PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT SAFETY STANDARDS**.

It is my understanding is that this proposal is an unfunded mandate which will require the Commissioner of Consumer Protection to develop standards for playground equipment that are equivalent to the standards established by the Public Playground Safety Handbook. I also understand that the Commissioner will establish timetables by which municipal playgrounds must comply with these standards.

Municipal playgrounds already follow the Federal Playground Safety guidelines from the Consumer Products Safety Commission, as well the nationally recognized playground safety standards issued by the American Society for Testing and Materials. In Farmington specifically, the Town's insurance company inspector is a Certified Playground Safety Inspector who performs inspections and generates reports regarding the safety of the Town's playgrounds at least twice each year.

As an unfunded mandate, SB 208 would require municipalities to comply with standards over which they have no control; standards that could change drastically over time. Prior to voting on SB 208, the Committee should obtain a detailed cost benefit analysis to ensure that it considers whether this unfunded legislation would impose undue burden on Connecticut's cities and towns in a time when residents require municipalities to observe fiscal conservancy while providing premium public services.

Finally, if the State is going to mandate that municipalities comply with this bill, it should offer grant funding to assist communities in their compliance efforts. As the number of unfunded or underfunded state mandates increases, towns and cities face a difficult decision when creating their budgets: cut valuable public services or increase property taxes in order to comply with the State's requirements. By offering assistance in the form of grants, Connecticut's municipalities will be better able to comply with the State's mandates.

I would like to that you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Eagen  
Town Manager

KAE/gt

