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SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

SENATOR TONI BOUCHER
TWENTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 3701
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
CAPITOL: (860) 240-0465
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1421
FAX: (860) 240-0036
E-mail: Toni.Boucher@cga.ct.gov

DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER

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Testimony in Support of HB 5096 *An Act Increasing The Threshold Required For Passage Of Unfunded Mandates.*

February 4, 2015

By Senator Toni Boucher

Senator Osten, Representative Miller, Representative Aman, Senator Linares and other distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 5096 *An Act Increasing The Threshold Required For Passage Of Unfunded Mandates.*

The passage of unfunded mandates by the General Assembly continues to exacerbate the financial difficulties faced by Connecticut's municipalities. According to CCM, there are currently 1200 mandates, most of which are unfunded, that place an undue burden on towns already grappling with severe budget problems. Faced with ever rising costs, many of these towns are forced to raise their property taxes, or to cut back on services to the detriment of their residents.

This has proven to be the case for the towns both in my own district and across Connecticut, which is why I have consistently called for the modification of such mandates as the Minimum Budget Requirement and the prevailing wage mandate to name only a couple. Oftentimes these mandates impose a one size fits all solution that does not work equally well for all towns and which produces unintended consequences.

With the state asking so much of its towns as already, we should not add to that burden without the most careful consideration. HB 5096 would require two-thirds majority vote in both chambers for the passage of new or expanded unfunded mandates. Raising this threshold will slow the growth of new policies that grant our towns less flexibility in managing their budgets, and which greatly increase the cost of living for taxpayers.

I urge the Planning and Development Committee to support HB 5096 and thank all the members for their attention.

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