

## Testimony

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### **Proposed Bill No. 188. An Act Concerning Municipal Relief.**

The Connecticut Tax Collectors' Association is in support of Proposed Bill # 188 which would allow for online publication of municipal public notices.

Under current law, Section 12-145, Notice to pay taxes; tax collectors are required to advertise in a newspaper three times when a property tax is due. The notice must appear at least five days before it becomes due, within one week after such tax has become due and finally at least five days before such tax becomes delinquent. This requirement is expensive to the municipality and ineffective to the taxpayer. Late paying taxpayers often tell collectors that they do not subscribe to the local newspaper or do not bother to read the legal notices published. Many say they receive their daily news from the television starting at in the morning, into the afternoon and finally at dinner time. Just as television turned a nation of people who listened to media content into watchers of media content, the emergence of computers, smartphones and ipads has created a nation of real time media content creators. According to the most recent research data, nearly 80% of American adults are online and nearly 60% are able to use mobile devices. More Americans get their news via the Internet than from newspapers or radio.

The proposed legislation to allow for online publication of municipal public notices would benefit a much wider audience. Everybody has a friend or relative with online access and the library offers free online access. For people with a real interest in online notice publication, such publication is equally accessible both online and in print. The online advantage, if any in this regard, is that the notice is still easily available days later if you happen to throw out your newspaper before seeing an important notice.

Attached please find a survey of 44% of Connecticut municipalities' and the amount of money they spend to notify taxpayers that local property taxes are due. As you can see depending upon location, the cost to publish a notice can be very expensive. This bill will end what is essentially an unfunded mandate. Currently, print newspapers have a monopoly on legal notice publications. In Connecticut, there are only a handful of publications available for legal notices. This bill would allow for competition in the market place leading to lower prices and cost savings for taxpayers.

I would appreciate your support for Proposed Bill # 188.