



**Testimony**  
**Betsy Gara, Executive Director**  
**Connecticut Council of Small Towns**  
**Before the Public Safety & Security Committee**  
**February 17, 2015**

**SB-902 - AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND FIREFIGHTERS WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDERHB**

Given the difficult budgetary pressures facing Connecticut's municipalities, we are very concerned about any proposal that will increase costs on municipalities. For small towns, state aid to municipalities has been largely flat funded for many years. However, costs for providing critical services, including education, public health and safety, have increased dramatically.

COST certainly appreciates the intent of this proposal and values the service of our police officers and firefighters. However, we oppose SB-902 which could significantly increase workers' compensation costs for towns and cities.

In assessing the fiscal impact of similar measures in previous years, the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) has indicated that the cost of this mandate on towns and cities could be significant. Mental stress claims and the costs associated with such claims are highly variable. Depending on the duration and scope of treatment, claims could range from thousands of dollars to more than a million dollars, triggering premium increases on top of legal and administrative costs. Rates for workers' compensation policies are already on the rise and this bill is anticipated to result in additional increases in premiums.

Although towns are working hard to control local costs, declining revenues and increased costs associated with providing services is taking its toll. Expanding workers' compensation benefits at this time will further strain local budgets and put more pressure on towns to increase property taxes or make cuts in programs or personnel.

Therefore, COST urges you to oppose SB-902.

*COST is an advocacy organization committed to giving small towns a strong voice in the legislative process. Its members are Connecticut towns with populations of less than 30,000. COST champions the major policy needs and concerns of Connecticut's suburban and rural towns.*