

March 31, 2015

To : Honorable Sen. Beth Bye and Rep. Toni Walker and Members of the Appropriation Committee

This letter is in favor of SB816, an Act Establishing a Minimum Level of Funding Under the Education Cost Sharing Grant Formula. I moved to Haddam 9 ½ years ago and retired two years ago. My former position in education involved providing life skills training for adults and older youth. I am highly committed to a fair and equitable education for all children.

Over the years I have seen taxes steadily increasing. Why? Until 15 years ago, the Connecticut Yankee Power Plant provided a strong tax base. When it shut down permanently 15 years ago, our grand list dropped dramatically but our ECS allocation was never adjusted upward for that loss. Haddam is being funded as if the power plant was still in operation. With respect to the ECS formula, Haddam is one of 19 significantly underfunded towns throughout the state .Specifically we receive 42% funding, which is the tenth worst out of all 169 municipalities. This amounts to millions less per year than our neighboring towns.

Our selectmen, Superintendent of Schools and other town officials have worked hard to keep costs down but this inequitable formula has made it very challenging. We need more local businesses but it's difficult to compete when our neighboring towns have a lower mill rate. Also, our town's population is growing older and some are on fixed incomes. Higher taxes are forcing some to move elsewhere.

I believe that my town and other underfunded towns should be funded up to the 50% mark. This bill would be the first step in getting the ECS funding formula back on track and will show the people of Connecticut you truly intend to make the system fair once again.

Thank for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

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