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AppTestimony
Sen. Linares, Art
SUPPORT Senate Bill 816 - SPEAK OUT FOR HADDAM

Being new residents in the Village of Higganum as of June 2014, my husband and I were extremely disheartened to learn about the bias against Haddam in terms of ECS grant funding. We strongly support Senate Bill 816 and urge all CT legislators to work together towards "common sense" legislation.

"In past years, Haddam has received an unjustifiably low allocation resulting in a significant burden on the residents through increased property taxes. Unless there is a radical change in approach to address the inequity, the status quo will be repeated in 2015 with Haddam getting less than its due. Furthermore, the bias against Haddam does not appear to have been addressed since the 2000 Census at which time CT Yankee Power Station contributed significantly toward the real estate tax base. But today, Haddam's business base consist of only two Dunkin Donut shops, one Subway shop, two small grocery stores, four package stores and a small collection of small businesses, convenience stores in gas stations and a couple of bank branch offices. There is no industrial base and employment opportunities are limited. Moreover, Haddam lacks a large grand list on which real estate taxes are imposed. The level of ECS grant made to Haddam is even more lopsided in terms of its economic wealth. The Connecticut Department of Education lists Haddam as 73rd on the state's list with a wealth level of \$224 million, while Killingworth is listed as number 51 with a wealth level of \$268 million and East Haddam is listed as number 70 with a wealth level of \$231 million. The rationale should be to make a larger contribution to the towns with a lower level of wealth but the ECS allocation achieves the complete opposite result. The State's own wealth index would dictate a higher allocation of ECS funds to Haddam. An even more significant factor is the percentage of the school budget that is funded by ECS. Haddam and Killingworth make up Regional School District 17 with combined elementary, middle and high schools. Killingworth has 10.9% more Grand List per student, yet receives 82% more in ECS funding than Haddam for each student." - c/o HaddamNow.com

We strongly believe that SB 816 is an excellent first step in assisting the 19 towns that receive less than 50% of their calculated ECS funding. This underfunding places an inequitable burden on all Haddam residents as compared to other communities and it is critical that this legislation receives support. PLEASE SUPPORT Senate Bill 816 and help get Haddam its fair share of education funding.

Carly & Joshua Keith