



**Testimony
Betsy Gara, Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the
Labor & Public Employees Committee
January 29, 2015**

RE: SUPPORT - HB-5265 AAC Minimum Longevity Requirements for Unemployment Benefits

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) respectfully submits the following comments in *support* of **HB-5265**, which seeks to reform certain aspects of the state's unemployment compensation system.

Under HB-5265, an employee must be employed for 30 days before becoming eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. This bill recognizes the inadequacy of the current threshold for qualifying for unemployment compensation benefits, which is based on an earnings threshold of only \$600.00. This threshold has not been updated since 1982.

Rather than establish a 30 day employment threshold, COST supports efforts to increase the earnings threshold to \$2000.00. This is in line with 32 other states and would be helpful in addressing concerns regarding the cost and solvency of Connecticut's unemployment system.

In addition to addressing these concerns, COST urges lawmakers to consider additional reform measures to address increasing costs associated with unemployment compensation.

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.

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