



**Testimony
Betsy Gara
Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the
Planning & Development Committee
February 4, 2015**

RE: HB-5085, AN ACT AUTHORIZING OVERSIGHT OVER NONEDUCATIONAL EXPENSES IN SCHOOL BUDGETS BY MUNICIPAL BOARDS OF FINANCE

As Connecticut's small towns and cities struggle to do more with less, many communities are exploring new opportunities to share resources to meet these growing needs. Programs such as the Regional Performance Incentive Grant, the Intertown Capital Equipment Sharing program and the Nutmeg Network pilot funding, have been successful in facilitating the use of shared services and equipment to reduce costs.

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) supports efforts to assist towns in realizing financial efficiencies by ensuring that boards of finance and boards of education work together to explore opportunities to consolidate non-educational services. It is my understanding that HB-5085 is intended to build on Public Act 13-60, which was adopted to facilitate discussions between municipalities and boards of education on how noneducational services could be consolidated to achieve savings.

Inasmuch as the bill is in proposed bill format, it is difficult to assess the actual impact of the bill and what is intended by references to greater control and oversight. COST does, however, support efforts to strengthen Public Act 13-60 to enhance cooperation between boards of finance and boards of education to assist municipalities in achieving cost savings.

COST stands ready to participate in discussions regarding this bill as the language evolves and moves forward in the process.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.