



To: Planning & Development Committee
From: Leo Paul, First Selectman
Date: February 4, 2015
Re: HB-5096 - 2/3 Approval for Unfunded Mandates

I strongly support HB-5096, which will create a more transparent process for voting on unfunded mandates by requiring a 2/3 vote of the General Assembly prior to adoption.

Unfunded mandates continue to drive up local costs beyond the control of our small towns and cities. Municipalities are experiencing staggering financial difficulties because of their over reliance on property taxes to pay for essential public services. Given current limited levels of state aid, towns cannot afford new unfunded mandates.

Unfortunately, many well-intentioned bills wind up having big price tags for towns – price tags that we simply cannot afford. This bill will result in greater accountability regarding the impact of unfunded mandates on our property taxes and our ability to deliver critical services, including education, public safety and public health. If, however, the state determines that it is a significant priority, the bill will allow adoption by a 2/3 vote.

In addition to supporting the bill requiring a 2/3 approval for any new unfunded mandates, I **urge the committee to address the need for meaningful mandate relief to reduce the burden on our towns and taxpayers.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.