



State of Connecticut

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Senator Cathy Osten
Representative Philip Miller
Planning & Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2100
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Miller, Senator Linares, Representative Aman and members of the Planning and Development Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in favor of Proposed H.B. No. 5096: AN ACT INCREASING THE THRESHOLD REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE OF UNFUNDED MANDATES. This bill would require the approval of two-thirds of the members of both chambers of the General Assembly for passage of any new or expanded unfunded mandate on municipalities.

I represent the Town of Enfield in addition to six other small towns in north-central Connecticut. When I talk to any of the mayors or first selectmen in my district I ask them a simple question: What can we, as state legislators, do to help you as the chief elected officials of your towns? When I ask them that, they will all mention the unfunded mandates handed down to them by the state.

When those burdensome mandates get passed here in Hartford, they are soon forgotten about in this building. But towns – and the taxpayers in those towns – must foot the bill for those mandates. I don't know about the folks in your districts, but the taxpayers I represent are hurting. They can't afford higher taxes. And they really can't afford higher property taxes. They are stretched way too thin already. The same holds true for our municipal leaders – they are trying their very best to manage their budgets, but when these mandates get passed at the state level, they are forced to go and find the money somewhere.

Let's make it more difficult for state legislators to pass unfunded mandates. Let's listen to our mayors and our first selectmen. And let's listen to the property taxpayers we represent. Let's take this positive step and pass this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of H.B. 5096.