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# Town of Bolton

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Public Hearing  
Planning & Development Committee  
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## RELIEF FROM UNFUNDED STATE MANDATES

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB-188 which includes provisions to (1) allow for the online publication of municipal public notice; (2) allow probate court operating costs to be funded by state probate fees; (3) eliminate the state tax on municipal health insurance premiums; and (4) eliminate the requirement that municipalities store the possessions of evicted tenants.

### Online Publication of Municipal Notices

Allowing towns to post legal notices on the town's website instead of in print newspapers: could save our town about \$5,000 or \$10,000 per year. It will also make it easier for people to access information regarding the town's activities since the vast majority of residents prefer to obtain information from our website.

### Probate Court Operating Costs

The probate court system was intended to be self-supporting. Fees generated by each court should be sufficient to pay for the court's operating costs. However, towns are now required to pay a significant portion of these costs, which are increasing each year. I support efforts to ensure that the operating expenses are paid through the state probate fees as intended.

### Municipal Health Insurance Premium Tax

A growing percentage of our budget is due to increases in municipal employee health insurance costs. These additional costs are very difficult to absorb in our budget given flat or declining revenues. SB-188 would alleviate some of the pressure by eliminating the 1.75% insurance premium tax which significantly adds to the cost of our benefit package. The 1.75% premium tax on health insurance is particularly troubling for small towns like Bolton that do not have the resources to self-insure. We appreciate that this committee recognizes the need to try to provide some relief to small towns struggling to keep pace with increasing health insurance costs.

### Property Storage Mandate

In addition, I support eliminating the mandate that towns pay for the storage costs for the belongings of tenants who have been evicted. Although not a huge problem for a town of our size, it doesn't make sense to interject the town into this type of legal dispute between other parties.

Given the difficult budgetary climate and the continued pressure on towns to hold the line on costs, I also urge the committee to address other mandates, such as the Minimum Budget Requirement, prevailing wage and binding arbitration, which drive up costs for municipalities. We must give towns the tools to manage local budgets.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.