



## ***COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION***

February 24, 2016

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 96% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

### **SB 177, "An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Declining Student Enrollment"**

The bill would establish a statewide task force to examine the issue of declining student enrollment. Education is the largest item in municipal budgets. **CCM supports the bill** as a way to identify and make recommendations to address a concern that is putting a strain on municipal budgets.

In some towns, the education budget equates to as much as 80% of the municipality's total budget. Declining student enrollment is an issue across Connecticut that directly impacts municipal budgets and the quality of our public education system.

The state's public schools have lost a higher percentage of students than nearly every state in the country.<sup>1</sup> In 2015 the Connecticut General Assembly passed Public Act 15-99 and provided towns and cities with much needed flexibility in the local education budgeting process to address declining student populations. However, municipal populations and the educational landscape are dynamic and will continue to change. Municipal officials have direct experience in addressing local issues pertaining to education and we believe they would be an invaluable addition to the task force. Therefore, we ask the Committee to **amend SB 177 to add a Local Chief elected Official to the task force before voting on the bill.**

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<sup>1</sup> United States. Educational Finance Branch. "Economic Reimbursable Surveys Division. Table 3. Revenue From State Sources for Public Elementary-Secondary School Systems by State: Fiscal Year 2013." *United States Census 2013*. Washington: U.S. Census Bureau, 15 June, 2013.  
[http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wnpr/files/201506/school\\_enrollment\\_report.pdf](http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wnpr/files/201506/school_enrollment_report.pdf)

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