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Testimony of CTCA Legislative Committee
Finance, Revenue and Bonding
Date: March 9, 2016 - **Raised Bill No 5492**

Good afternoon, Senator Fonfara and Representative Berger and the distinguished members of the Finance Committee. My name is Patty Strauss, I am the Town Clerk in Westport and the President of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association. I am here today to speak in support of HB 5492, An Act Increasing Certain Municipal Filing Fees. CTCA testified on these very fees back in 2010 when they were proposed through SB 435, however, at that time, the bill did not move forward.

Our Association sincerely appreciates the raising of Bill 5492 for consideration. This bill focuses on fees collected by town clerks, including increases related to marriage, burial transit and cremation, notary public filings and certifications, map filings and liquor permits.

I direct your attention to the chart attached to our testimony identifying each statute affected by these changes, the current fee and the proposed fee and the cost of living index. You will notice that all fees listed have not been increased in over 25 years, with some fees not increased in 45-50 years.

We understand that these fees are nominal in the grand scheme of the budgets that you work with and further are cognizant of your desire to hold the line on taxing. The CTCA wishes to point out, however, that all of the fees charged in a Clerks office are set via State Statute and your approvals are the only mechanism to ever change those fees. Additionally, while fees collected in the Town Clerks office have gone up, the lions share of those increases pass directly through to the State on a monthly basis.

Like you, Connecticut Town Clerks have budgets to balance. In most towns the majority of our budgets deal with personnel and fixed costs including state mandated activities such as land recording software fees, land record index auditing, archival paper and binders for historic preservation, postage for land record returns and absentee ballots, microfilming, and local ordinance codification which is comparable to what Connecticut does with state statutes. Over the decades the aforementioned processing costs have risen.

Our association is asking for your support to bring these proposed fees in line with today's cost of doing business.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to take any question that you may have at this time.

Connecticut Town Clerks Association
 Summary of Proposed Fee Increases

11/16/2015

Statute #	Fee Description	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Yr Last Increased	Cost of Living Adj. to 2015*	Comments
\$30-53.	Liquor Permit Filing	\$2.00	\$20.00	1967	\$14.30	
\$7-34a.	Misc. Document Filing	\$5.00	\$10.00	1982	\$12.29	
\$7-34a.	Map Filing & Indexing	\$10.00	\$20.00	1971	\$59.00	
\$7-34a.	Map Filing & Indexing-Subdiv.	\$20.00	\$30.00	1971	\$118.00	
\$7-34a.	Notary Public - Oath & Commission Filing	\$10.00	\$20.00	1981	\$26.22	
\$7-34a.	Notary Public - Character Certification	\$2.00	\$5.00	1981	\$5.24	
\$7-73.	Marriage License Fee	\$30.00	\$50.00	1989	\$57.10	State receives \$19 of the current \$30 fee
\$7-73.	Burial or Burial Transit Removal/Disinterment Permit	\$3.00	\$5.00	1989	\$5.71	
\$19a-323.	Cremation Permit Fee	\$3.00	\$5.00	1991	\$5.21	

*Per Cost of Living web-site <http://www.aier.org/research/worksheets-and-tools/cost-of-living-calculator>

All proposed fee increases will remain in the municipality