



Written Testimony of

Ray Rossomando, Research Specialist of the Connecticut Education Association

Before the Government Administration and Elections Committee

Re: ***SB104 An Act Establishing the State Civic Network and SB16 An Act Increasing Efficiency in the Regulation Process.***

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Good afternoon Senator Cussano, Representative Jutila, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Ray Rossomando of the Connecticut Education Association. CEA represents 43,000 active and retired teachers across the state. I am testifying today on **SB104 An Act Establishing the State Civic Network and SB16 An Act Increasing Efficiency in the Regulation Process.**

SB16 AA Increasing Efficiency in the Regulation Process

CEA does not support SB16 as written.

CEA believes that in attempting to promote efficiency, SB16 weakens necessary checks and balances between the legislative and executive branches. In particular, section 1 (lines 22 to 30) provide a mechanism by which a state agency head can disregard the direction of the legislature to promulgate regulations. It also implies that agency heads can interpret statutory provisions broadly to enable agencies to implement actions without regulatory oversight.

Although this section may have been well intentioned, we believe that by circumventing the democratic process for developing and implementing regulations, it creates the potential for misuse and weakens public oversight and transparency of the lawmaking process.

SB104 AA Establishing the State Civic Network

CEA strongly supports this legislation.

CEA represents classroom teachers, a good many of them teachers of civics, history, and social studies. As Connecticut's version of C-Span, CTN has been instrumental in providing greater public participation and engagement in state policy making. It has been a tool that has helped to bring the legislative process into the classroom and to increase transparency and awareness of the state's deliberative process to the public.

However, as technology has changed the landscape for television, entertainment, and news, so too has the landscape for CTN. CEA believes that the proposed State Civic Network would enable CTN to better navigate this new landscape and be poised to further fulfill its public mission into the future.

Many here are already fully aware of the great coverage CTN provides of the legislative process. But during the legislative session and other times of the year,

many other proceedings of public import occur across the state. As your committee conducts this hearing today, there is a landmark school funding case being heard just down the street in Superior Court. This is a case of broad interest that should be available for viewing to policymakers and the general public. CTN, to its credit, has covered some of it. Passage of this legislation would provide CTN as the reborn State Civic Network expand its coverage and better ensure that the public's demand for coverage of the three branches of government can be met.

As a representative of classroom teachers, may we be reminded of an important lesson from US history given to us from Thomas Jefferson: "Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government;... whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights." – Thomas Jefferson to Richard Price, 1789.

Thank you.