

Testimony of Tom Swan, Executive Director of the CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG)

Testimony before the Government Administration and Elections Committee

On HB5049 AA Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for General Government and in support of SB 104 AA Establishing the State Civic Network

February 22' 2016

Good Afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and other members of the GAE Committee my name is Tom Swan. I am the Executive Director of the CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG).

We recognize the challenging task the legislature has in crafting a budget this year. We strongly urge you to reject proposals in the Governor's budget to cut funding for the watchdog agencies (SEEC, FOIA, Ethics) and to group of all of the watchdog agencies salary lines under the Office of Government Accountability. This appears to be a backdoor way to undermine the independence of these vital agencies. The legislature has previously rejected these type of power plays and should again.

On a separate front we want to make clear our support for SB 104 An Act ESTABLISHING THE STATE CIVIC NETWORK. CTN provides a truly valuable service to the residents of Connecticut and makes it possible for people to stay informed about the workings of our Government. However, there is much more that could made available to the public. This proposal would increase the public's access to information, while at the save time saving the state money. This win, win proposal is a bill that ought to pass.

Thank you for your consideration.