STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

J. BRENDAN SHARKEY
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5544 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONSOLIDATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2016

Good afternoon Co-chairs Representative Dargan and Senator Larson; ranking members Representative Zupkus and Senator Guglielmo and the other distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee.

I am pleased to offer testimony in support of House Bill 5544 AAC the Consolidation of Public Safety Answering Points. This bill represents a systematic change in the way government delivers services that better represents the new reality regarding what state government and taxpayers can sustain fiscally.

The proposal establishes thresholds for municipal public safety answering points (PSAP) to obtain in order to continue to receive funds from the Enhanced 911 Telecommunications Fund. If a PSAP meets the aforementioned criteria, they will also be exempt from having to pay for 911 terminal equipment, maintenance, training and certification.

Specifically, PSAPs that serve a population of 40,000 or more or receive and process 12,000 calls or more annually will be eligible to receive funds from the Enhanced 911 Telecommunications Fund and will not have to pay for 911 terminal equipment, maintenance, training and certification. PSAPs that fall below these levels will be required pay for their own emergency operations.

The point of this legislation is simple. If a town and its taxpayers want a standalone PSAP that does not meet the proposed thresholds, it can do so. But it will be the town's responsibility to pay for it, not the state's. As I have stated before, the state can no longer afford to subsidize inefficiency at either the state or the local level, and the time is now for towns to achieve taxpayer cost savings.

It is important to note that this bill will in no way jeopardize the Statewide Emergency Telecommunications system. Every PSAP in the state will still be required to purchase their

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terminal equipment, maintenance and certification either provided or approved by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP).

The policy initiative itself is based on the Kimball Report, released in 2012 by the Office of Emergency Telecommunications, which was conducted to determine the most appropriate, cost effective, and efficient way to implement the consolidation of PSAPs. Also included in the Kimball report was a comparison to other states.

Compared to the rest of the country, we have one of the most disjointed PSAP systems. The Kimball Report actually recommends consolidation to three regional PSAPSs and one Statewide PSAP operated by the State Police. While we will not be achieving this optimum level of efficiency as set forth in the report, the bill will move us closer towards a more efficient and effective system while ensuring the integrity of the system and better serving the public.

The PSAP consolidation proposal incorporated in HB 5544 will provide for an integrated, regionalized police, fire and emergency telecommunication service that will reduce call times, improve operational capabilities through efficiencies, and will save taxpayers money at both the state and local levels, while enhancing the public safety for Connecticut residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important proposal.