



**Administrative and Residual Employees Union
Local 4200, AFT CT, AFT, AFL-CIO**

805 Brook Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067
Telephone (860) 953-1316 ■ 1-800-842-4443 ■ Fax (860) 953-1377
Professionals Working So State Government Works

Testimony of
John DiSette, President
Administrative and Residual Employees Union
Before the Appropriations Committee
In Opposition to HB 5044

An Act Making Adjustments To State Expenditures For The Fiscal Year Ending June 30,
2017

Thank you to Chairpersons Senator Bye and Representative Walker and the honorable members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name John DiSette, I am the president of the Administrative and Residual Employees Union and represent 3,000 professional employees including: accountants, bank examiners, tax collectors, insurance examiners, and attorneys who proudly work for the State of Connecticut.

I am testifying in opposition to HB 5044, an act implementing the Governor's budget recommendations concerning straight line reductions to all agencies.

I ask that this committee reject three basic premises in the Governor's budget:

- 1) Reject the premise that the only means to balance the budget is to implement dramatic cuts to agency budgets;
- 2) Reject the premise that there is no room for increasing revenue streams in our State;
- 3) Reject any proposal which eliminates line item budgeting and puts the fiscal authority of an agency into the jurisdiction of politically appointed, non-elected Commissioners.

The premise that agency budgets must be trimmed in excess of 5% has a very real and negative impact on the public. The impact is not always seen directly. Dramatic and instant reductions such as those proposed would likely be attained through continued reductions in staffing.

Continued reductions in staffing create a weakening of expertise and experience, which ultimately undermines the service and the mission of each agency. When the legislature sets a line item, there is a purpose in mind, there is a void that the citizens need to have addressed. When the Governor underfunds these line items and asks the remaining employees to wear multiple hats and perform multiple tasks, he is ultimately harming the operation of each agency. Cuts of the magnitude that the Governor has proposed, accomplish nothing more than to undermine efficiency and operations. Quite simply, this approach will only erode the safety of the public, not just the physical safety but also the financial safety and the economic trust that our citizens have in the businesses with which they interact.

As the president of an organization comprised of 3,000 State employees, whose pride comes from the work they do, I know that the impact of these cuts will ultimately fall on these employees. The Governor's proposed cuts will not only strain our ability to provide the expertise and experience that the public deserves from us, but it would ultimately erode the ability of the State to provide the services it needs to provide to the public.

The Legislature has an obligation to implement and maintain service quality at the highest levels possible. This budget as proposed undermines the State's ability to do so. Please reject this budget for the citizens of Connecticut. Thank you for your time.