

Dear Appropriations Committee,

After reading the February 19, 2016, testimony by the executive director and general counsel of the State Elections Enforcement Commission Michael Brandi, I have become concerned about the soundness going forward of our electoral system.

I learned from Mr. Brandi's testimony that recent funding cuts have left SEEC without 40% of its staff and with only about half its non-personnel budget. Now SEEC faces an additional 5.75% cut in non-personnel expenses.

If you approve the additional 5.75% cut, SEEC will be left without sufficient funds for making copies, for postage, and for other basic office expenses while it is handling about 300 Citizens' Election Program candidate committees, distributing more than \$10 million in campaign financing funds, and enforcing various election laws during a presidential election year. That's like leaving an operating room without money to buy surgical gloves.

Mr. Brandi estimated that an additional 5.78% cut would push SEEC into a deficit of about \$93,000 for non-personnel expenses. It seems to me that sinking deeper into deficit spending with every use of the office copier would also drain energy from the morale of the SEEC leadership and staff.

The work done by the State Elections Enforcement Commission is vital to the functioning of elections in Connecticut, please do not approve a further 5.75% cut in non-personnel funding for SEEC.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

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