

Hello Honorable members of the Finance Revenue & Bonding Committee,

My name is Lawrence LeBel, CCMA II
Assistant Assessor, Personal Property
Town Of Manchester, CT

I am opposed to GB 5047 for the following reasons:

It is an administrative nightmare in Manchester; over 1,600 of approximately 2,900 accounts have a gross assessment of 10,000 or less. This is substantially more as a percentage of the grand list than has been suggested as affecting ie approximately 47%.

Often, when interviewing small new accounts at the Manchester assessor's office counter; a business owner says they have no or minimal personal property to declare. However, upon interviewing them they have substantially more tangible personal property than the threshold and it is appropriate to assess the business.

Taking in a written application for this exemption without the backup documentation of the declaration is fraught with the possibility of fraud or fancy financial footwork like shares of the personalty listed in several owners.

The mechanism for verification of that business has less than 10K in gross assessment is an audit rather than a site visit. However, personal property audits cost municipalities of \$400 to 500 per audit. Further, within such small business' federal tax returns there is often not a complete listing of business equipment that would be the basis for personal property declaration filings. Additionally with the recent increase in Federal Income Tax capitalization expensed equipment threshold to \$2,500, items that are under that amount might not be included within a declaration. Thus, it is economically prohibitive for such an audit process or even site visits for verification & for minimal returns to towns.

Fairness, businesses receive municipal services including police & fire protection. With this proposed exemption, businesses that receive such services are not contributing towards the cost of said services.

When businesses apply for a bank loan, often a bank will call the assessor's office for verification that we have such a business & query what the assessment is. This information often is crucial to the loan making decision.

Often, the public, that is having a dispute with a small business, calls an assessor's office to find who a business owner is & how much they have for an assessment. With the proposal of a checkbox exemption application without an accompanying declaration, there is less recorded available information for public.

I know with Manchester assessor's office, we put the personal touch into personal property filing thus making far less burdensome than say the CT sales tax report filing.

Thanks