



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF STATE ETHICS

### ***TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE***

***March 7, 2016***

***Statement of Carol Carson, Executive Director  
Office of State Ethics***

***House Bill 5229 – An Act Changing Certain Reporting Requirements in the State Codes of Ethics***

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The Office of State Ethics provides testimony in opposition to ***House Bill 5229, An Act Changing Certain Reporting Requirements in the State Codes of Ethics.***

The Office of State Ethics opposes Section 1, which amends subsection (k) of section 1-84 of the general statutes, as drafted, because it fails to define the term “an active participant” which replaces the term “a principal speaker” and it fails to explicitly state that only the sponsor of the event may pay or reimburse for the necessary expenses. By contrast, ***Senate Bill 361 (section 9)***, a proposal of this agency, which also amends “a principal speaker” with “an active participant,” defines the term within the statute and makes it explicit that necessary expenses may only be provided by sponsors of an event to which the public official or state employee is invited. Although this office agrees with the principle of the bill, we still must oppose it as drafted, particularly when the language contained in ***Senate Bill 361*** ensures public trust by maintaining timely transparency.

The Office of State Ethics also opposes Section 2, which repeals and substitutes section 1-96e of the general statutes. The proposed change in the reporting schedule for lobbyists with regard to necessary expenses would decrease transparency by significantly delaying certain reporting requirements. As drafted, the bill, in certain circumstances, could potentially create a gap of nearly 6 months. The Office of State Ethics supports language that would extend the reporting schedule from the current 30 day reporting requirement to 45 days. Such a change will address the concerns the Office of State Ethics discussed with the lobbying community while also streamlining the process of the Office of State Ethics to compile and maintain reports.

Thank you for your consideration of the Office of State Ethics views on the proposals.