



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***

***Senate Bill 338 – An Act Concerning the Filing of Statements of Financial Interest Under the
State Code of Ethics for Public Officials***

The Office of State Ethics provides testimony in support of ***Senate Bill 338, An Act Concerning the Filing of Statements of Financial Interest Under the State Code of Ethics for Public Officials*** which is an Office of State Ethics proposal that is on the Committee's agenda today.

The bill has two purposes; (1) to extend the notification time the Office of State Ethics has to inform departing officials of their SFI filing obligations from thirty days to sixty days, and (2) to clarify other portions of the statute often found to be confusing to filers.

With regard to the extension of time, when a public official departs state service the Office of State Ethics has thirty days to notify such official that he or she must file a SFI covering that portion of the year the official held such office or position. The Office of State Ethics does not become aware of an official's departure until so notified by his or her agency. As often occurs, the Office of State Ethics does not learn of the departure in time to provide notification. Thus, to facilitate this process, an extension to sixty days would be more fitting.

The raised bill clarifies the reporting of sources of income on the SFI. The filings that the Office of State Ethics has received, and the questions that SFI filers have submitted, point to considerable confusion regarding the disclosure of sources of income. SFI filers, in many instances, do not know what kind of description of the source of income to provide. For example, a filer who receives wages from company x or rent from a rental property often is not certain whether to describe the company and/or wages or the rental property and/or rent. In order to simplify the disclosure and eliminate any confusion, the bill requires identification of the source of income (i.e., name of employer, address or rental property, name of stock or name of trust) and the description of the type of income received (i.e., wages/salary, rent, dividends or interest).

The bill also clarifies the language concerning the reporting of similar business affiliations on SFIs. Because the current language regarding similar business affiliations has been a source of much misunderstanding, the bill restates the language to make disclosure requirements more clear.

Thank you for your consideration of our agency proposal.