

Government Administration and Elections Committee

March 18, 2016

Senate Bill 439: An Act Concerning the State Contracting Standards Board and Requirements for Privatization Contracts

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, Ranking Members, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide public testimony in support of Senate Bill 439: An Act Concerning the State Contracting Standards Board and Requirements for Privatization Contracts.

My name is Jan Lawrence; I am a state employee at the Department of Developmental Services and a Connecticut resident. I have worked at DDS in the state sector for 3.5 years. The DDS IT Unit supports over 2500 users on its network. With an extremely limited staff of fewer than 20 employees we provide network infrastructure support, development and support of applications, and desktop support.

Since I have been an employee, we have had numerous consultants participate in the development of some of DDS' applications. Instead of hiring additional development staff, DDS has outsourced this work. We have very capable staff that can do this work, but are spread thin.

Now, Blum and Shapiro has been hired as a consultant and they are to be approved to bring in around 12-14 consultants at a cost of \$900,000 for an 18-month span to develop solutions for converting Access databases. This work needs to be done, but could be done with additional staff and is, in fact, actually being partially done by existing staff. DDS has been targeted with 10's of millions of dollars in cuts. In fact, it is one of the Agencies being hardest hit with cuts. How can they afford to pay for these consultants? Through bond money. This example demonstrates how the state can face tremendous deficits, yet avoid addressing one of the real problems. These consultants are paid up to 3 times the amount for the same work as an employee yet are able to still be hired during an extreme financial crisis.

Committee members please support Senate Bill 439. This legislation will bring much needed transparency and function to the process.

Jan Lawrence
6 Hills Lane
Hebron, CT 06248