

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

Raised Bill No. 440

AN ACT REQUIRING THE DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN RECORDS OF THE  
FOUNDATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Testimony of the Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information

Sen. Cassano, Rep. Jutila, Sen. McLachlan, Rep. Smith, Committee members

This bill is a step in the right direction, and apparently is about as much as we can expect, given the power of the UConn Foundation.

As we have testified before, we believe the foundation should be subject to the state's Freedom of Information Law, but every year efforts to pass such legislation fails.

So we support this partial step.

We understand that UConn must increasingly rely on the foundation's fund-raising to grow its endowment and support its ambitions as a research university of the first rank. And we understand that the university must compete in a sophisticated way for the resources and talent that enable reaching those laudable goals. But we also believe that the foundation, created in 1962, thus performs a public function and is so intertwined with the university that the blanket FOI exemption is unwarranted. We believe the foundation acts largely as a surrogate for the university in fund-raising, marketing, investing and grants administration. It manages hundreds of millions of dollars on behalf of the school.

The public deserves detailed information so it can judge whether the foundation has invested well; allocated resources wisely and fairly; and transacted business prudently, efficiently and without impropriety. All the other foundations of the pre-eminent state universities in New England are subject to their state's FOI laws. The UConn foundation should be too. Thank you.

