



**Testimony
Betsy Gara
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The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) **opposes** provisions in **HB-5602, An Act Concerning Regionalism**, which sweep funding from the Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) to fund audits of private providers of special education services.

Although this may be a laudable goal, it undermines efforts to use RPIP funds for upfront capital costs associated with developing regional shared service programs aimed at increasing efficiency and reducing municipal costs. In fact, based on the assumption that MORE Commission recommendations for regional/shared service programs would result in cost savings to municipalities, the deficit mitigation budget reduced municipal aid by \$20 million. This “lapse” was enacted although municipalities have not yet realized any cost savings associated the MORE Commission recommendations.

COST does **support** the provisions in the bill which expand opportunities to use public purchasing consortia, allowing small towns and cities to purchase goods at more competitive rates. HB-5602 helps remove some of the obstacles towns have encountered in utilizing consortia to help reduce municipal costs.

COST is an advocacy organization committed to giving small towns a strong voice in the legislative process. Its members are Connecticut towns with populations of less than 30,000. COST champions the major policy needs and concerns of Connecticut’s suburban and rural towns.