Ashford Tax Collector's Office
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Feb.26, 2016

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to offer testimony on House Bill 5055 and why allowing taxpayers to register without paying their delinquent motor vehicle taxes would be detrimental to our municipalities. As President of the Tolland-Windham Tax Assoc., Inc., and as the Tax Collector of the Town of Ashford, CT, I can attest to the many discussions that center around the relationship between the DMV and the towns. There are 28 towns and cities in the two counties. In this Northeast section of Connecticut, there are two state universities, Eastern and UCONN, and the one community college of QVCC. The population of the two counties is approximately 268,365 people. There is approximately the same amount of motor vehicles, minimally. The amount of revenue generated by these vehicles is very significant. With the universities and the community college, there is a good percentage of a transient population.

When active collections are closed out on Aug. 1 and Feb. 1 of each year, the percentage of unpaid taxes is probably around 25%. Many people do not prioritize motor vehicle collections until it is time to renew their registrations. This has become a practice of how people manage their finances, for many different reasons. But one reality does exist for our citizens. They realize that they need to pay their taxes before attempting to register or renew registrations. To remove this reality because the system is in a state of flux would damage the ability to make the town revenues whole. While each Town works diligently to bring in the revenue to offset the services that the municipality deems necessary and desirable, each Town also depends on working together with the appropriate State agencies.

I ask that you reconsider this proposal and leave the process in place. The transition to the new system at DMV has been riddled with some challenges, but I am confident that they can be worked thru to a productive solution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Linda G. Gagne, CCMC
Ashford Tax Collector
President, Tolland-Windham Tax Association, Inc.,