



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 16, 2017

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 96% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

SB 1007 **“An Act Concerning the Collection and Reporting of Data Relating to Special Education Expenditures and the Intentional Underbudgeting of Special Education”**

CCM **opposes** this bill.

SB 1007 would allow the Commissioner of Education to withhold education aid to local or regional boards of education if the Commissioner determines the board has “knowingly or intentionally” budgeted funds for special education below the estimated special education expenditures for the fiscal year and the board is relying on funds from the budget of the town to pay for the difference between the actual special education expenditures and the budgeted amount for such expenditures for the fiscal year.

The costs of special education programs are high and continually growing. These high costs are exacerbated by a precarious fiscal situation at the state level. Connecticut towns and cities cannot afford to continue to provide costly special education services without adequate assistance from the State.

We believe it imperative that funding for special education be reliable and consistent during a time when municipal officials are struggling to continue providing core services to Connecticut residents.

CCM urges the Committee to **take no action** on this bill.

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If you have any questions, please contact Daniel C. Giungi, Senior Legislative Associate for CCM, at dgiungi@ccm-ct.org or (203) 498-3023.

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HB 7255 **“An Act Establishing a Task Force to Conduct a Feasibility Study Regarding the Creation of a Special Education Predictable Cost Cooperative”**

CCM **supports** this bill with modifications.

HB 7255 would establish a task force to conduct a feasibility study regarding the creation of a special education predictable cost cooperative.

CCM believes that any decision to adjust the ECS formula or allocation of state aid for special education should be subject to a thorough examination and involve municipal officials.

CCM has vigorously advocated for the need to reform the way the State funds special education. We stand willing to work with the proponents of this legislation to craft a solution that adequately addresses the complex problems of the special education funding system in Connecticut.

We respectfully ask that the Committee **amend this proposal to include language that would provide CCM the opportunity to participate in the task force established by this bill.**

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SB 1008 **“An Act Concerning the Financial Responsibility of Boards of Education Resulting from Residential Placements by the Department of Developmental Services”**

CCM **supports** this bill.

SB 1008 would require the Department of Developmental Services to be financially responsible for the costs associated with the residential placement of students by the Department.

CCM believes this proposal is reasonable and would help provide better predictability for municipalities when budgeting for special education services by providing a safeguard against the unanticipated costs associated with residential placements. Unforeseen demands for the most expensive special-education services often result in local mid-year budget revisions, supplementary appropriations and other extraordinary measures. This is particularly true in smaller towns where the arrival of a single new high-cost special education student during the school year can create a budget crisis.

CCM urges the Committee to **favorably report** on this bill.

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