



**State of Connecticut**  
**HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE**  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**Testimony in Support of**  
**Senate Bill 418, An Act Requiring a Two-Thirds Vote of the General Assembly to**  
**Create or Enlarge Municipal Mandates**  
**Senate Bill 421, An Act Concerning Municipal Budget Reserves for the Biennium**  
**Ending June 30, 2019**  
**Senate Bill 423, An Act Eliminating the Municipal Spending Cap**  
**Senate Bill 450, An Act Concerning Municipal Volunteer Services**  
**Planning & Development Committee**  
**March 16, 2018**

Chairs Cassano, Logan, and Lemar, Ranking Member Zawistowski, and distinguished Members of the Planning and Development Committee, the House Republican Caucus would like to thank you for raising S.B. 418, An Act Requiring a Two-Thirds Vote of the General Assembly to Create or Enlarge Municipal Mandate, S.B. 423, An Act Eliminating the Municipal Volunteer Services, S.B. 450, An Act Concerning Municipal Volunteer Services, and S.B. 421, An Act Concerning Municipal Budget Reserves for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2019.

As communities continue to feel the financial burdens of a crippling state deficit, we must consider ways to alleviate that pressure. While elected officials debate a litany of proposals including municipal cuts and regional taxes, part of the conversation must also be focused on mitigating unfunded mandates and simply allowing for cost savings. We are proposing four measures to accomplish this.

**Senate Bill 418, An Act Requiring a Two-Thirds Vote of the General Assembly to Create or Enlarge Municipal Mandates**

This proposal seeks to require a two-thirds vote in both chambers of the General Assembly to enact legislation that creates or enlarges a state mandate to local governments. Perhaps when the fiscal climate was better, the role of municipal mandates may not have been hugely problematic. But as the financial standing of our state, our towns, and our residents has worsened, overly burdensome requirements need to be reevaluated. Indeed, a holistic approach to eliminating and/or mitigating these laws will go a long way towards protecting taxpayers and the potential savings must not be underestimated.

**Senate Bill 421, An Act Concerning Municipal Budget Reserves for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2019**

This proposal protects municipal budgets by providing that municipal budget reserve fund balances of fifteen per cent or less shall not be considered by the arbitration panel when calculating the financial capability of a municipality. A viable municipal reserve fund is crucial for effective fiscal management and accountability. Building a robust reserve fund balance helps towns guard against unforeseen fiscal emergencies. There has never been a more important time to pass this legislation.

**Senate Bill 423, An Act Eliminating the Municipal Spending Cap**

This eliminates the controversial municipal spending cap which was established in 2015 under the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program. Municipalities in Connecticut vary greatly, and they should have the ability to spend responsibly on the services they believe are necessary and helpful to their residents. Since the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program was implemented, towns have not received as much as originally promised. So our communities find themselves in a situation in which the funding is evaporating, but the cap remains. Additionally, the cap exempts debt service payments which may only pressure towns into borrowing for ongoing expenses and therefore worsening the underlying problem. In light of these issues, we propose eliminating this burdensome cap.

**Senate Bill 450, An Act Concerning Municipal Volunteer Services**

This proposal seeks to prohibit municipalities from entering into collective bargaining agreements that limit the ability of municipalities to permit future volunteer services for the benefit of the respective municipality. This proposal stems from conversations that occurred during the crux of last year's budget debate.

Once again, thank you for considering our proposals. It is our hope we that we can come together on a bipartisan basis to relieve the burden on taxpayers and begin to move our communities towards a fiscally sustainable position.