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 99% of Connecticut’s population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

- **HB 7150**  
  **An Act Implementing The Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning Education**

CCM understands the complexities of the growing fiscal crisis at the state level. Towns and cities are not immune to the effects of these omnipresent fiscal difficulties.

We recognize that the problems are complex in nature and varied in scope. To that end we understand and appreciate the need for a comprehensive solution and a holistic approach.

While we remain willing to work with all stakeholders to address these important issues we cannot support HB 7150. **This proposal represents one of the largest property tax increases in modern history as it would shift a combined $73 million dollars directly on to Connecticut property tax payers.**

This is especially troubling given that Connecticut has the 3rd highest property tax rate in the country. Additionally, the newly enacted SALT cap will only amplify the intense negative fiscal impact this proposal will have on local property tax payers. While we oppose this proposal we recognize the difficult decision that the General Assembly must make when determining how to proceed.

We ask that in reviewing this proposal the Committee thoroughly consider whether it is in the best interest of the State to enact such a large local property tax increase and extensively examine the impact that it will have on local economies and communities.

This massive shift on to the local property tax payer will undoubtedly hit some communities dually hard when considering the drastic reductions in revenue they will incur as a result of the significantly shorter phase in period for reductions to ECS funding.
To this end, we would ask that the Committee include language for a 7-year phase in for reductions in ECS funding for towns to adjust to the policy rather than a shorter 3-year phase-in.

Additionally, we believe it paramount that any discussion regarding this proposal include a thorough examination and thoughtful consideration of measures to clarify and ensure that any payment toward the Teachers’ Retirement System counts towards meeting the obligations of the MBR.

Furthermore, we ask that the Committee include language that would provide towns and cities with direct access and the ability to participate in collective bargaining pertaining to teacher compensation. Currently, municipalities are not represented or under-represented in the process and we believe that direct involvement is critical to ensure adequate containment of cost in the out years.

Lastly, CCM seeks clarification as to what criteria was used to determine the contribution levels outlined in the bill and we ask that projections for municipal contributions to the Teachers’ Retirement System be made clear and taken into account when reviewing this proposal.

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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.