



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
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**Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Public Hearing, April 29, 2019
Testimony in
Opposition to
S.B. 1137 “An Act Concerning Deposits in Lieu of Taxes”**

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference, the public policy office of Connecticut’s Catholic Bishops, is *opposed* to S.B. 1137 due to the lack of an exemption for tax-exempt church property. The current language of the proposed legislation, contained in Section 1(B)(ii), could potentially result in the three Catholic dioceses, and some parishes, paying the fee required under S.B. 1137.

Section 1(B)(ii) states that a tax-exempt organization which maintains a pension fund, endowment fund or has “significant savings” (which is not defined in the legislation) would have to pay the required fee to the community development account. As an example, under this legislation the Archdiocese of Hartford would have to pay the required fee, since it has a pension fund for its employees. It also may have “significant savings” under this law due to donations and the financial investments of those funds. A few parishes in the state may also have “significant savings”, depending on how that term is eventually defined. The potential fee paid by the dioceses could also be significant based on the assessment of their cathedrals, office space and other property and land holdings.

Catholic dioceses and parishes in Connecticut operate primarily on funds donated by parishioners, or raised through fundraisers, to assist in maintaining the operation of the dioceses and to support the numerous social service programs to which the diocese and parishes provide financial support. S.B. 1137 would require the redirection of these donated funds away from their intended purposes and into a state run program.

S.B. 1137 has the potential of significantly impacting the ability of the Catholic Church to meet its spiritual and social missions in Connecticut. For this reason, the Conference asks members of the committee to oppose this legislation unless significant changes are made addressing our concerns.

Deacon David Reynolds
Associate Director for Public Policy
Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference