



**Testimony of Steven Zuckerman  
President & CEO, Root Center for Advanced Recovery  
*In opposition to***

**SB1137- AN ACT CONCERNING DEPOSITS IN LIEU OF TAXES and  
SB 1138- AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY RESTORATION FUNDS  
*Finance Revenue & Bonding Committee, April 29, 2019 Public Hearing***

Senator Fonfara, Representative Rojas, Senator Witkos, Representative Davis and Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, my name is Steven Zuckerman and I am the President and Chief Executive Office for the Root Center for Advanced Recovery (formerly Hartford Dispensary). **Thank you for the opportunity to offer my written testimony in strong opposition to section 1 of Senate Bill 1137- An Act Concerning Deposits in Lieu of Taxes and section 5 of Senate Bill 1138- An Act Concerning Community Restoration Funds.**

The Root Center is the largest provider of methadone maintenance in Connecticut. We have been treating clients in the state of Connecticut with opioid addiction since 1970 and opened our first outpatient medical clinic in December 1884, becoming the first such outpatient clinic in the state. We currently have approximately 250 employees with 9 locations across the state that serve close to 6000 clients a day in Bristol, Hartford (2 sites), Manchester, New Britain, New London, Norwich, Torrington and Willimantic.

SB1137 and SB1138 would add a new property tax of twenty-five percent to at least eight of our nine locations across the State. This would only take away from our vital mission of treating people facing addiction and providing them with methadone maintenance treatment. Any new taxation will only take away from the services we provide and the clients we serve at a time when we would like to be adding services to treat addiction.

Approximately 80% of the current clients we serve are on Medicaid. The Medicaid rate for methadone maintenance treatment is well below the cost to provide such treatment. Almost all grant dollars that used to help make up this underfunding have been eliminated. Agencies like ours are not in a position to pay such costs without a significant impact.

We understand the important intent behind the bills to provide community development in distressed municipalities and many of our urban areas. We share this mission and in fact ensure that many residents avoid needing to utilize public safety services in the future. A property tax, or any new tax, will only take critical resources away from those seeking to recover from opioid addiction.

Ultimately, such a tax would be counterproductive to non-profits like the Root Center who treat clients who may otherwise struggle in the community and require additional municipal resources. We urge you to take no action on any proposal to tax non-profits and instead focus your attention on ensuring there is adequate funding for providers like the Root Center.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Steven Zuckerman, MA, LPC

President & CEO

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