SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Everyone, welcome to the public hearing, February 13, 2019, Planning and Development on the agenda for 02/27/2019. Before we begin the hearing, I'd like to break to follow an announcement. Many of you have it memorized by now, but in case you haven’t, in the interest of safety I would ask you to note that the location for the exits in the hearing room; there are two doors back here and there's a door back on this side. The two doors through which you entered the room are the emergency exits and they're marked with emergency signs. In the event of an emergency, please walk quickly to the nearest exit. Please don't run. After exiting the room, go to your right and to the exit and right out to the main exits to the street.

Please quickly follow the instructions of the capital police. Do not delay and do not return unless and until you are advised that it's safe to do so.

In the event of a lockdown announcement, please remain in the hearing room, stay away from the exit.
doors, seek concealment behind desks and chairs until all-clear announcement is heard. I wonder who makes that if we're all under the desks, but, that's the announcement.

First of all, I want to call a meeting to order. It is a public hearing. I do before I call the meeting to order, want to thank many of you. I've had a lot of phone calls and notes and so on. It's been kind of a struggle getting -- going from a no knee to a new knee, and you guys have been terrific. The staff, the committee, the leadership, everybody has just done a magnificent job so we haven't lost a step and I think that's extremely important in the process. So I do thank you and I appreciate your kind words and your support throughout the entire process.

It is a public hearing. As you know, I try to do it a little differently. For years, I just think it's better to hear what you think as opposed to what you wrote to me or wrote to us as a committee. For me, if you go up and just read your testimony, we already have it and we read it. That's something that we spend a lot of time doing. We know what those bills are because we take the time to read it. I think it's much easier for us, and clearly better for you if you just tell us what you feel. I support this or I don't support this because -- and here's why -- and if you do that, you're not worried about reading. You give me your three minutes goes a lot easier and I'm getting something that's really from you directly. So if we can do that, I think we'll get more done. I'll think we'll have a better understanding of where you're coming from. If the buzzer does go off -- you wanna ring the buzzer so people know the buzzer? Wanna ring that buzzer?
Most people don't hear it. If I wave frantically, your three minutes is up. Alright.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Good morning everyone, and I'd just like to welcome Senator Cassano back. It's great to have him here with us and also just wanted to make note of the fact that we have a number of bills on this agenda today that are crumbing concrete bills. We will be having a joint hearing with the Insurance Committee on March 8, I believe the time is 1:00 p.m. but I'm gonna have to confirm that. We'll announce that again and confirm, but just so that you know there will be an opportunity for those issues to come before us together with the Insurance Committee on that date. And I believe Representative Zawistowski wanted to make some remarks.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Yes thank you. I just wanted to welcome Senator Cassano back. With a new knee it's usually a long process, but Senator Cassano seems to be tough as I thought he's always been. So I just wanted to say welcome back and glad to see you here, and thank you for being here today to support or oppose any of the bills that we're hearing today. Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Following our tradition, first on the list is Senator Kissel who I see right here in the front. Senator, welcome.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Indeed, I do. Chairman Cassano, Chairman McCarthy Vahey, ranking member Champagne who I was just with across the hall in judiciary, and ranking members Zawistowski and, my own state representative, Representative Arnone, and esteemed members of the Planning and Development Committee.
I'm here in support of House Bill 5125, AN ACT INCREASING THE PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT FOR CERTAIN FIRST RESPONDERS. And I'm here with East Granby's esteemed first selectman, Jim Hayden, and I'm just gonna turn it over to Jim, and Jim listen to what Senator Cassano said talk from your heart.

JIM HAYDEN: I will, thank you. I'm speaking from my heart in support of HB 5125, and currently the abatement which has been around for at least since 1999 is $1,000 dollars. This is for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers. And $1,000 dollars back in 1999 was roughly 40 percent of the average tax bill in East Granby for our volunteers. In the currently year, its 15 percent. So the bill does ask for $1,500 dollars and I would suggest and respectfully recommend that you consider $3,000 dollars, not $1,500 dollars, and if you did consider that then we would be looking at roughly 46 percent of the average tax bill for the average volunteer in East Granby.

Our volunteers over the last 20 or 30 years have been required to get more and more training and more and more skills in it's very difficult to recruit volunteers at this point. And without volunteers, we have a significant loss in our public safety, specifically in the fire service. So I would certainly ask you to consider this bill favorably and I would also ask it be considered that the dollar amount be increased to $3,000 dollars to kind of reflect certainly what it is that, A: it's a tangible reflection of our appreciation for our volunteers, but B: it will help with recruitment and retention. And that's frankly what we need. We're a town of 5,200 people.
There's an awful lot of towns like ours that have seen a decline since -- in the last 20 years. It's been an 11 percent decline nationwide in volunteer firefighters. So we need to do a tangible reward for folks that are going to the buildings as we're going out, and our volunteers and also our EMS workers, and we also need to do recruiting retention so that small towns will continue to be able to provide public safety at the high level that we have now.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you for your testimony. Two questions. First of all, the age old question is are you having difficulty recruiting members?

JIM HAYDEN: Yes, sir. Currently, two years ago we were almost at 30 volunteers and right now we are at about 25. Of those 25, half of those folks are probably active at most fire calls. Some are, you know, -- and that's the other thing, you know 30 years ago you were able to work in the same town that you volunteered in and now you don't. So you have less volunteers specifically during the day. So for all those reasons, we are struggling with numbers and we certainly need something to help us with that.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Alright, and the second one is there's an unfortunate image that goes back probably hundreds of years that the volunteers come it, sit around, play cards, they really got nothing to do. Would you tell a little about what the requirements are, the training, responsibilities and so on?
JIM HAYDEN: Each volunteer in order to get to firefighter one or firefighter two needs to do hundreds of hours worth of training. This is not a, you know, let's play cards. These folks they, every Monday evening in East Granby, they get together and they have organized drills and they do education and continuing education and training and teaching. And then they -- in order to become a firefighter; one: you have to donate a year, year and a half, of your life to complete all of the different classes and everything.

So there's an awful lot of hard work that happens in order to maintain their firefighter one and go to firefighter two. So there -- it's for lack of a better phrase "it's not the good old boys" its folks, men and women, that are dedicated to the town and want to give back to their community and take an interest in helping us promote public safety through the fire department or the ambulance.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Alright, and one last question. I'm sorry. I don't know if CCN is here or testifying but sometimes in these types of bills you're at, the bill is for $1,500 you've suggested $3,000, many times in the past we've had the not to exceed clause. As an example, if it was to pass not to exceed $3,000 dollars, does that create competition? And I ask that because really you have to be a volunteer in the town that you live in, so I don't know how it would. But, what's your feeling on that?

JIM HAYDEN: I would -- I would support a consistent dollar amount. I certainly understand why people would like to have a not to exceed. I mean, as a first selectman every day when we're talking
finances it's a not to exceed because you wanna make sure that the limits there. But if we have a consistent standard, I think that'll be effective and efficient. I don't know how much other towns, you know, I get $2,500 over here, you get $3,000 over there, I don't know how significant that would be. I do know that sometimes, you know most of your fire force is from your community, but if they work in the community they may live in another town and they might be in your fire department. So, I don't foresee it as a large problem.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Okay, thank you.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you Mr. Chair. I wanted to say welcome to my state Senator and my first selectman. Good to see you both here today. Just by way of background for the benefit of the committee. First of all, like when Jim Hayden actually came up with this idea last year which I presented as a bill, it actually got through committee and stalled in the Senate. So there has been some -- yes Senator Kissel it stalled there.

Anyway, it came through at the $1,500 dollars and I think one of the reasons that we decided on that number is to make sure -- it's better to get a bill that passes than one that gets necessarily killed because of a disagreement on amounts. So $1,500 was a very modest amount. I am certainly -- this is a bill that I had brought to the committee. I'm certainly open to a higher amount, I'm just concerned that you know I don't want just for any opposition. I think this is a really, really good idea. We do need to be able to have some rewards available to our volunteer firefighters because they are -- they do the angels work. And you know,
rather than winding up having to have paid staff -- I mean these folks just put themselves out there in harm's way and it just helps the town overall.

So I am definitely open to an amount that might exceed the $1,500 in the bill. But like I said I just wanted to thank you for being here. I just wanted to give a little bit of background on it. And did you have another bill that you were here to testify on today as well?

JIM HAYDEN: No, I don't. I do have my fire chief is here, and he's got some testimony.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay, thank you. And thank you Mr. Chairman.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in you know certainly you know as someone who represents a lot of small towns I know that recruiting for volunteer fire companies is very difficult and any incentives we can give to make sure that those slots are filled is certainly something we should consider.

But I have -- under this bill amends a statute that allows the towns to pass an ordinance that provides for this tax relief. Does your town have such an ordinance?

JIM HAYDEN: Yes, we do.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, now under the bill there are two -- you have an option tax relief can be provided either one, an abatement up to currently $1,000 dollars in property taxes during any fiscal year. Everybody understands that. The second one though is an exemption applicable to the assessed value of real or personal property up to an amount
equal to the quotient of $1$ million dollars divided by the mill rate in effect at the time of assessment expressed as a whole number of dollars per $1,000$ dollars of assessed value. Now, I have no idea what that means. Is that part of your ordinance or have you chosen one or the other of those?

JIM HAYDEN: Our ordinance reads like the state statute and I've been reading that statute for 11 years and I still don't understand it, other than the fact that I go to my assessor and our town assessor says "everything's fine and you know we'll go ahead with this". So if you wanted to clean up that language, that may be something that might be helpful. In practice, it's the $1,000$ dollars at this point. You know, and it could be someone that only owns a vehicle and does not own a property, a residence, so you know they would get the -- that's where that formula might work and they might get, and I'm making the number up, $500$ or $600$ dollars instead of $1,000$ dollars.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, but you -- is it fair to say that you generally invoke the first exception and provide the $1,000$ dollars currently?

JIM HAYDEN: That is accurate, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, now it also allows for municipalities to enter into local agreements. So if somebody is working in your department but living in another town, they can still get the abatement, the tax benefit. Have you entered into any of those agreements with anybody?

JIM HAYDEN: We have not entered into any agreements at this point. So, they you know we would certainly have conversations with surrounding towns and would
certainly work with them towards that, but at this point no.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so you're not opposed to it. That's not something that you feel shouldn't be applicable to your town, you just haven’t had the opportunity to participate in one of those?

JIM HAYDEN: Correct, I am not opposed to that and certainly would be willing to have those conversations with neighboring towns.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, well thank you very much. Thank you for coming in. And thank you Senator Kissel for bringing him. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Good morning. Thank you for coming out and testifying. In my world, I agree and we don't have volunteer fireman so we just paid them most of the compensation, so this is all new to me in terms of that. Just a couple of questions for you.

So, other than this tax abatement, would there be any other type of -- or is there any other type of compensation that volunteer firemen may receive?

JIM HAYDEN: There is a very small reimbursement for gas, which is -- could be $5 to $10 dollars per call. So you know these folks are strictly, really are volunteers. They get no compensation other than the abatement or you know it would be a reimbursement for their gas and wear and tear. Besides that, there is nothing there for them.

REP. BAKER (124TH): What about any training that they have to do? Is there any reimbursement from that?
JIM HAYDEN: The training ultimately is paid for by the department, so in the municipal budget we have a training line and folks that do training -- and if they're supposed to get reimbursed if it's not something -- a lot of times training is reciprocal so you host it in your town and folks get to go for free, but if it's -- but we do have a training line in the budget and we do reimburse the individual or just pay the bill.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Would that be also for like equipment that they use too?

JIM HAYDEN: Well the equipment would be -- equipment would be provided by the municipality.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Okay, alright. Well thank you for sharing that information. Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Representative Arnone followed by Representative Delnicki.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): Thank you. So as for Enfield, the Senator's hometown, we have a mixture of volunteers and full time, and we've had to -- we've noticed a trend in more and more and more signs up asking for help all the time, can't fill the positions.

So, but this is not a mandatory bill. This is a bill that is left up to the municipalities. Is that correct?

JIM HAYDEN: Yes, they have to pass an ordinance or have the ordinance in compliance with the statute.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): I don't know why they wouldn't, but I just wanted to make that known that it was not one of those mandates that we are sending back out again.
JIM HAYDEN: That's why I hesitated, I wanted to think that through.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): Yeah, right, so that was my intention there. So again, our town too would benefit from this incredible -- even our CERT Team which our CERT Team was an emergency management team if you remember the ice storm back in 2011 they were instrumental in keeping our town going and getting our firefighters even to the problem areas. So, thank you very much.

JIM HAYDEN: Thank you.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you Mr. Chair. And thank you for coming here to testify on behalf of a bill that saves small towns and communities like mine in South Windsor a significant amount of money. Have you calculated what it would cost for you to have a paid department?

JIM HAYDEN: Only when I wake up screaming at 2:00 in the morning. [Laughing] The -- I have not calculated at this time. It would be you know -- it would be a significant amount of money; $48,000 dollars is one percentage point in my general government budget and we have a $4,800,000 dollar budget. So it's you know, it would be you know 20-30 percent. Again, that's a guestimate, but it certainly would be a significant financial impact on our community.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): And my comments are in the context that there are cities and substantially large towns and communities that have to have a paid department because they can't get enough volunteers that are able to actually carry out the duties nor
would they in some situations based on the buildings that they have there.

Just doing the rough numbers here, you said you had 25 volunteers on the department at this point. If you're at $1,000 right now, that $25,000 it would cost a community like yours. If we went to $1,500 that would bring it to $37,500 and you still haven't paid for one position based on that.

And what kind of retention percentages have you had that you can attribute basically to the fact that you do have the tax abatement?

JIM HAYDEN: The -- it's hard to quantify that number. We have highly trained, highly motivated volunteers and they do it for their service and they do it for their community. This is just something nice that helps and certainly would assist us greatly with recruitment.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Sort of a thank you from the town for the good service you're providing on a volunteer basis.

JIM HAYDEN: Yes.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): And lastly, firefighter one and firefighter two, I'm assuming you guys go to the -- or the men and women go to the Connecticut Fire Academy for training there?

JIM HAYDEN: Yes.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): So they're receiving basically the same training a full-time career firefighter would receive?
JIM HAYDEN: I am not aware of what all the specifics are, but they certainly get first-class professional training.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Significant training. So there's a significant training component there where they have to spend a tremendous amount of their time, and at that point what are you using the five year as the beginning of the abatement or year one? In your community?

JIM HAYDEN: In our community, it's year one.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Year one.

JIM HAYDEN: Full year, a full year.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Full year. Well I supported it last year. I certainly support it this year, and hopefully we can actually get it passed out of the House and Senate and signed by the Governor. Thank you for coming today.

JIM HAYDEN: Thank you very much.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Hi gentlemen, thank you so much for coming. I'm a big fan of our volunteer firefighters and I know the good work that they do. Just a quick question for the selectman, if you put on that hat and say "okay in my town I'm going to give these guys $1,500 or $3,000" and that additional cost, how do you justify that in the budget when you go back to your town Finance Committee and say "okay now we're gonna pay these guys more" which we all absolutely should, but where can -- how do you justify that back in your town?

JIM HAYDEN: Well there's a couple of things that come to mind quickly. One is there are parameters that you need to achieve in order to qualify. So
not all 25 qualify because they -- you know they may only be able to come once a month or they may not be able to meet some of the other requirements.

The other thing that comes to mind is if everyone, and I'll make the numbers round, and if every one of our folks and we increased our force to 30 and we did $3,000 which would be $90,000 dollars, a professional full-time firefighter and benefits is probably still about that.

So that's how I would justify that. That we're taking care of folks that are doing us valuable service for us and we're providing some reimbursement for them and at this point it makes an awful lot of financial sense. We get 30 folks that are well-motivated, well-trained, doing a great job for us out there at 3:00 in the morning, you know God forbid any one of us are in a car accident and we're on a highway or another area, it's our volunteer fire department along with our police force that are rolling out making sure that people are safe and taken care of. And it's a small price to pay for that valuable, wonderful service.

REP. HAINES (34TH): I absolutely agree. Thank you so much for coming in today.

JIM HAYDEN: Thank you.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you Senator Cassano. Thank you for coming to testify today. I just wanted to ask, would municipalities that currently provide an abatement have to vote to increase the abatement or would this bill do so automatically?

JIM HAYDEN: I don't have the answer to that. I would think that I would have to have a small ordinance change to mirror the new revised statute
and as a result of that -- being a first selectman form of government we are actually town meeting is our legislative body, at one of our town meetings we would just bring the revised ordinance and explain it to our residents and our residents could say "yeah" or "nay".

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you very much. By the way, I was a firefighter in Mamaroneck in Westchester County more than 20 years ago. Thank you.

JIM HAYDEN: Thank you.

SENATOR KISSEL (7TH): Thank you all very much as well and Senator Cassano, I'm so glad your knee surgery went well.


SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD): Good morning and thank you to the Chairs and the ranking members and the entire committee for allowing us to come and speak on this bill. I would -- I didn't realize that you were gonna speak on the firefighter bill prior to this, and as many of you know I'm also a first selectman in a volunteer firefighter town and think that this a very good thing to pass because we're all struggling with retention and getting new volunteers, so anything we can do to incent the community to participate would be very helpful. And this is not a mandate, this is something that would allow more volunteers to get a benefit when they get no benefit really other than the joy of knowing that they help our communities.
I'm here to speak on, I submitted testimony about a bill that would really -- it's an attempt to start or further a conversation about some of the inefficiencies in the state. We have 169 towns and I think that that's a wonderful thing actually, I'm not here to talk about mandatory regionalization, but one of the areas that we struggle is in our whole IT infrastructure. We have 169 towns and frequently 169 solutions to every single problem that we face. One of them is mapping. So the underlying parcel mapping systems that each town selects, there may be 30 or 40 different vendors for that in the state. Many of us are struggling with figuring out a way to automate our permitting processes and our document management, and I think that if the state wanted to look at an area where they can save money and improve service and make the state more customer friendly it would be to look at the entire IT infrastructure that we use.

So the bill that I proposed was really speaking about the underlying mapping system which is a base layer. A base layer can be used for a lot of things; mapping, the municipal infrastructure, parcel mapping, zoning mapping and if you go to any towns GIS map and you click on it and then you want to go to the -- look at a parcel in the next town, you have to go to that town's website and open up that mapping program and try to navigate your way through the state to look at where roads go and where sewers may go or where infrastructure may go. So I just think it's about time that we address this. The future is data management and we're still functioning in an early 20th century system I think.

So I brought my town planner who I guess you know. I didn't know he was infamous, but he does do a
terrific job for us. So I would like to introduce John Guszkowski.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Thank you Senator Needleman, first selectman Needleman, members of the committee, Chairman McCarthy Vahey, Chairman Cassano and members. Thank you. We're -- in addition to being the town planner in the town of Essex. I'm also the town planner in the town of Hampton in Representative Dubitsky's district and in the town of Clinton. And I serve the Connecticut chapter of the American Planning Association as Government Relations Officer, so we spoke a couple of weeks ago on a couple of bills. I'm happy to be back.

We're very excited to see Senator Needelman's bill concerning geographic information systems. This has been a priority of the Connecticut Planning Community and the Connecticut Geospatial Community for many years. When Senator Needelman noted that we have 169 municipalities each with their own system, it's actually much worse than that because we do a lot of our planning and particularly our conservation planning on a land trust level. And there are over 150 land trusts in the state that also do their own geographic mapping -- or their own digital mapping.

In addition to dozens of state agencies, utilities, councils of government, everyone is trying to figure things out on their own and the problem is there is no centralized place for all this data to live and to talk to data from neighboring towns or other organizations and there is no common set of cadastral standards, no set of common data standards.
So if Senator Needleman, in the role of first selectman, wants to coordinate with the town of Deep River on the canopy of woods nature preserve, which is an open space that spans two towns, there really is no easy way for that data to communicate with each other. Fortunately, some of the COG's do a decent job of unifying their data and you'll hear from a couple of COG GIS representatives later, but town-to-town, across regions and certainly state-wide there really is no currently good way of doing conservation or development planning across municipal boundaries. They're frequently -- you know if you're dealing with a utility and a municipality, they might be using different systems.

So as Senator Needleman said, if the state shows a little leadership in this way, and a very I think efficient and good investment of some time and money to unify this, you'll see huge cost savings and efficiencies at the local and regional level. So we very, very strongly support this and we'd be happy to answer your questions.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Questions? Let's see, Representative Arnone.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): Thank you. So on the bill itself, it's a demand to make geographical information tools software available at a low cost. Are you two also considering to having a state-wide GIS system that the towns would layer on top of so they would all be uniform? Maybe through the bidding process to find one of the many systems out there to -- because then again if we were supplying low cost everyone would still have a different user, a different you know information system, so. Would it be better to have one system for the whole state?
So even if you were a state person, I could get on the state's website and see what's going on in East Windsor or down at the shoreline, and again conservation people could -- it would almost be a massive regionalization of GIS systems.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD): I'm not sure I would use that word; however, [laughing] --

REP. ARNONE (58TH): -- it's a good word --

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD): -- like I said this is an attempt to really further a conversation here about how to make the state's IT infrastructure and the municipal infrastructure more efficient. It could be done at a state level, make it -- I kind of liken it to a number of years ago the state issued a mandate for common chart of council platforms so they could consolidate finances. I'd prefer no mandates, but I think that we are all seeking solutions to the same problems and you know the mapping is the first step. So if you had a state-wide map and the towns had overlays there might be some security concerns, but that can be managed through access. You could also do it through the COG's, which would be less solutions to the same problem.

And I think that, again, if you think about all the things we do, all the functions that every town performs, we're all doing them differently. My building official wants to do things the way he does them, another town's fire marshal wants to do things the way they do them. We are a small state. Having common systems that work across the platform, taking into account that we have a lot of small towns and then some cities, we need to sort of differentiate there. But again whether you're talking about just
base GIS mapping, mapping of infrastructure, mapping of conservation properties, permitting software, again you want to do business in the state of Connecticut, every single town has a unique permitting process.

It's kind of wacky to follow all of it and it would make a lot of sense if the state took a leadership role or minimally in empowered the COG's to do this so that we just find a way to make the state more user-friendly and more efficient.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: If I could add to that, I think that at base -- the state needs to provide -- and I don't think there's any necessarily a need at this point to sort of get rid of each town looking for their own vendor necessarily, but when that vendor does their mapping, it needs to be on a common instead of standards. They all need to be -- and not to get too much into the weeds, they all need to be on the same projection and they need to be on the same data. And so, you know sort of like survey points that you know if you're looking at this latitude and longitude, it's going to be the same on every single map. So the state needs to establish those standards. All municipalities, all utilities, all land trusts, all state agencies need to map to that same standard.

And I think ideally, it would be nice if there was a central state repository whether or not the state controls it, that's maybe a discussion down the road, and obviously towns know their own lands the best and can do that efficiently, but it would be nice to go to a single place, you know whether that's UCONN 'cause UCONN actually does some very good things with mapping or DEP or OPM, some central
place where you could look at any parcel in the state in a relatively seamless way. But that could filter up, again, but there needs to be that baseline standard.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): Compatibility?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Exactly.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): That's the big issue is making sure that everything can be downloaded, uploaded across the lines at all the same -- all the same compatibility, like a PDF file or a Word file.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: That's exactly right, so if you're looking at a parcel you know in Hamden, it looks the same as the parcel in Haddam, you know from a data standpoint and you can stitch it all together.

And to give you just a very quick example. We're -- an organization I work with is doing a development plan along the airline train, which in eastern Connecticut a 12-town trail. So it's 12 towns to start. It actually spans four councils of government. This little trail, and to do some sort of conservation planning or trail connectivity or even economic development planning with this 12-town trail across four COG's is a nightmare, and it really doesn't need to be that way.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Representative Zawistowski.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you for being here today. Do you know if any state entity, whether it's somebody like DEP or possibly UCONN currently has state-wide data available that they're using in their own department?
JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Some. I mean everybody has some data. And a couple of years ago DEP did set up sort of a pilot portal where you could sort of essentially if you were a town or land trust you could upload your data and this portal was going to post it. Nothing really happened with that, and there wasn't a lot of participation.

I mean DEP does have its own data, they know where their parks are. You can look at that mapping. They know where their trails are. And UCONN hosts a couple of very good websites; CTECO hosts things like a lot of great aerial photography or photogrammetry, things like wetlands and open space and watershed boundaries and a lot of environmental data is statewide.

But if you're looking to overlay that -- let's say wetlands data or open space data with a town's layer, you -- it's tricky town by town. You probably have to start with the town and hopefully that they are you know on the same data mess as the DEP or someone else, but a lot of times then you're -- I mean the answer is nobody has all the data and you're still needing to shop a bunch of different stores, essentially, to fill your shopping cart.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): But there is some, at least, some state architecture in place that could possibly be built on? For example, if DEP had something that if the town's had the same type of GIS system they might be able to upload. Is that something that looks feasible?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I would think so. I would think so. I mean obviously as Senator Needleman said, each town sort of likes to maintain some of their own information and you know if you're looking for
Essex, you'll go to essex.ct.gov right? But -- yeah doing larger planning projects, there really should be and could be I think relatively easily a state portal.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Yeah, I'm just concerned about re-inventing the wheel if there's something we can work with, I think that's far superior than starting from scratch.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD): Also, I would like to say that our GIS provider, you know, they use ESRI's Maps, but recently they switched to Google Maps. So Google Maps as a base map is pretty good. Again, remember that the mapping component is sort of the first step in a broader plan to not have every single town looking for a way to automate permitting or to automate document management. Essex was chosen was to be one of seven towns that participated in the document management RFP that was a grant issued a bond -- a bonding grant a while ago to capital area COG and we're working on that, but again document management is another issue. I can tell you as a first selectman, historical tracing of contracts and documents is a problem. There's a lot of stuff that slips through the woods, so mapping is one piece of it. I just think that we're a small state, everybody's looking for a solution and leadership at the state level would be a huge plus, starting with mapping, moving to permitting, moving to document management, be that there's a real opportunity to save money, improve services and make the state a lot more customer and user friendly.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you very much.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Representative Dubitsky.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for coming in. The wording of your bill, which is proposed bill 550, led me to believe that you were seeking to have the state offer GIS software and tools to towns. Is -- from what you're saying it doesn't sound like that's the case. It sounds more like you're looking to start a conversation about the state taking over that function for the towns. Can you talk to what your proposal really is?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD): I think it's more in the realm of conversation. I think there are more specific proposals out there that planners and other organizations have come forward with. I'm open to any reasonable solution, whether the state becomes a provider or contracts with a provider and begins offering the service to towns for both mapping and permitting. I think that would not be a bad thing, but that could be done through the COG's also.

I just think we need a structure and an initiative on the part of the state. Part of the reason that I ran for the senate was to make sure that we keep talking about regionalizing and collaborating and cooperating, this is an area that's sort of right for collaboration and cooperation. I don't really care who takes the lead here, but I think that out of planning and zoning if you come up with a study or some focus, you know some focus on this issue we have an opportunity to make things a lot better.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well as your planner knows, I represent some towns that are in NECOG, Northeast COG, and they put together a GIS system that they offer to their members, and you know the NECOG does a great job on a lot of things, but quite frankly
our town found their GIS system extremely deficient so opted out of it and got a private vendor to do a system, it costs less and it was far better in the opinion of the people in my town.

So that's a situation where there was some -- some a group got together led by a COG that offered something that frankly was not very good and you know I apologize to the NECOG but you know that's why some of the towns opted out of it and got private vendors to do it.

It would seem that if the state took over that function, it would be much more difficult for a town to opt out of it and use a private vendor if they found those services deficient. 'Cause when the state takes over, they tend to take over. So I would just be concerned that as this conversation goes forward that this does not become a state takeover of a function that is better handled at the local level.

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD): I'm not familiar with what happened at NECOG and I'm not sure that they actually designed their own system, I would hope not. There are a lot of vendors out there. The problem is there are probably too many vendors out there and there's a lot of trial and error here. We pick the vendor for permitting, for example, who came in, sold us a bill of goods, told us that they were going to do a great job and we stalled dead in our tracks and are probably going to switch.

So again, you know the town of 5,000-10,000-15,000 people each seeking a solution to the same problem. They are all looking for a way to make their operations more efficient and they don't communicate with each other. So I'm not sure who NECOG picked,
but there are a lot of people out there that are selling products that don't live up to expectations.

In addition to that, you have a lot of local people that are so used to getting exactly what they want. I want this to work exactly this way, it may not have to work that way but that's what they're used to. That creates barriers also. So there's gotta be some concessions made. The selection process alone is complicated and time consuming and for it to be done in every single town is a problem, but in no way am I suggesting that we invent our own.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well as the Department of Motor Vehicles situation clearly shows, the state doesn't always pick the best vendor either. So to have the state come in and say every town must do it our way, you know, that way may not be a good way and you know frankly from my standpoint I think you know having a lot of vendors and having the private sector working toward solutions with competition between them is the way to come up with a best product at the cheapest price. And having the state come in and have an edict that everybody must do it this one way, even though that one way may not actually work, may cost way more than they ever anticipated.

I would work toward more options and more competition as opposed to less. Thank you very much for coming here. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: If I may, could I quickly respond to this? Representative Dubitsky?

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Quickly. We're getting way behind.
JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: With respect, just to push back a little bit. I think there is an important difference between state control and state establishing data standards.

You know, the state can say "you will all map to net 83 you know feet with a certain projection" without undulling stepping on you know free enterprise and competition. It's very important that the data speak to itself, that all -- that we have a common data set and that's different from the heavy kind of state government I think.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you. Representative McCarthy Vahey, Chair.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and thank you both for being here today. John, it's nice to see you at the beginning of the list as opposed to the end. So, the last shall be first, I suppose.

My question for you is, are you aware of METROCOG's efforts? I know later in the hearing we will be hearing from someone from METROCOG, but just in case folks aren't in here, are you familiar with the work that they've done and how does that apply with respect to this bill?

JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: Yeah, I am somewhat familiar with METROCOG's work and am, you know full disclosure, a great fan of Mark Goetz who is their GIS lead, and was actually the GIS lead in NECOG when they put together what I think is actually a pretty good regional system.

Yeah, I think -- you know just like they say the states are the laboratories of democracy. A lot of times COG's are the leaders in innovation, and you
know METROCOG I think is a relatively small enough region and they have the right talent and the right resources that they put together a pretty good regional model that all of the parcels talk to each other, all the data layers talk to each other. But METROCOG, and forgive me, is only five or six municipalities.

You know, it's too bad that they have to be the innovators this far along in the process. It -- the state could pretty easily replicate the sort of things that METROCOG has done. It's innovative for Connecticut and that's terrific, but we're way behind our, you know, New England neighbors in that sense.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you for that. And one other follow up, I do hope to hear from METROCOG later in the day and have a little bit more of a robust conversation around that. From my understanding, is in that region it is working fairly well in terms of being able to provide more of a regional resource and perspective and have things communicate across town lines in that regard and data access information as you were talking about, Senator Needelman.

I just was noting in testimony, I don't know if we are going to actually hear today from Chet Arnold, but the CT ECO testimony online available and one of the lines in here is that Connecticut is the only state in New England without an overall state entity to develop, collect and make available statewide geospatial information. Which is interesting that we are unique in that regard.

Did you want to comment on that at all?
JOHN GUSZKOWSKI: I figured Senator Needleman might want to claim credit for another superstar from Essex [laughing], Mr. Arnold.

But, yeah it is too bad. We actually, you know Chet and his shop at UCONN in the Haddam extension, do fantastic work, but again their charge and their scope has been limited. They haven't been given the resources or the mandate to kind of you know spread their wings and do the same sort of geospatial mapping that other states -- you know Rhode Island has Rhode Island GIS, Massachusetts has Massachusetts GIS, which is literally a one-stop shop for all your mapping from the local to the state level. It would be nice for Connecticut to follow.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Thank you Mr. Chair. Thank you for coming out here and sharing with your testimony. So, do you realize once this state puts some structure and some parameters in place and stuff that there might be some -- and say that each town or municipality has to follow this guideline and this particular GI system that it might be something that is not affordable for the towns? And you do realize that at some point, right? Are you willing to sacrifice that at your particular town?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD): Well I'm actually not sure if we added up what all of the towns paid for mapping services, we would actually spend more money if we had a common platform. I'm sure that study could show where the money would go, on how much it would cost then how'd you apportion out the cost to the towns and the cities. And again, I'm not saying the whole state, maybe by COG, so I just think that what we're doing is very inefficient right now.
And it's not only the money, it's everybody wants to be in the 21st century, every town hopefully wants to be there and every town is seeking its own solution. This is a very small state. It doesn't make a lot of sense for us to keep trying to find a competition notwithstanding. I like competition and I love the way our state operates with small towns and cities, but this is one area where data, documents, permitting, it's just not practical anymore.

REP. BAKER (124TH): So just to be clear, so what you're asking in terms with this bill is just saying that you want us to set the guidelines some structure and this is what we want in terms of what kind of software, what kind of map we should be using, and it's still up to each town/municipalities to go out and they could get their own private vendor as long as they follow these steps? Is that what you're looking?

SENATOR NEEDLEMAN (33RD): That's what John is saying. I would probably like us to be on a path to go further than that, but whatever first steps we take are fine with me. I just think that what we're doing is not working well right now.


REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you. Are there any further questions from members of the committee? With that, thank you Senator. Thank you John. We appreciate your testimony today.

We have reached our one-hour mark, so at this point we will begin rotating between our public officials and members of the public. So our next speaker is Jim Parris. Welcome.
JIM PARRIS: Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, ranking members Zawistowski and Champagne, distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Jim Parris and I'm the CEO of the Homebuilders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut.

Our association is comprised of developers, builders, remodelers and associate companies that service our industry. We build roughly 80 percent of all new homes in Connecticut each year.

I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 766, AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXPIRATION OF CERTAIN LAND USE PERMITS. You have my written testimony, so I'll take this opportunity to summarize and answer any questions you might have.

If enacted, Senate Bill 766 would eliminate the expiration of any permit pertaining to a given parcel of land until the last permit expires. Permits are obtained in a consecutive manner, each only after the other. It is one continuous process that must be completed successfully in order to develop a parcel of land. As such, we think it makes good common sense that these permits be considered to run concurrently and should only expire upon the expiration of the last expiring permit.

Depending on the nature of the parcel and the size and scope of the development, permits can last five to ten years. Over the span of a decade, it can be easy to allow a decline -- or a deadline to slip by. If this occurs, it can cost delays which costs money that is ultimately passed along to the consumer in the form of higher housing costs. This bill will
help to mitigate those unnecessary burdens and we urge the committee's support.

Since I have a moment, I'd also like to take a second to ask the committee to support Senate Bill 904, AN ACT REQUIRING THE COMMISSIONER OF REVENUE SERVICES TO ESTABLISH A TAX DEDUCTION FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS. We thank the committee for raising this bill and we believe in incentivizing new homeownership is a good public policy. To note, the National Association of Realtors last year -- I'm not sure if it was last year or not, but recently --

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): -- Mr. Parris if I may interrupt you. If I'm not mistaking 904 is not on our agenda today. So we will give you an opportunity to be heard on that matter certainly. So we'll stick with 766 today.

JIM PARRIS: Okay, 7290 is on today's agenda correct?

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): You had -- yes.

JIM PARRIS: Okay, so real quick on that then. [Laughing] We thank the committee for raising this bill. It's AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT MUNICIPAL REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY. We welcome the opportunity to be part of a state municipal and private sector collaborative effort that this would promote.

As I mention in my written testimony, we currently are building new residential units at only a fraction of what is needed to maintain current housing levels. This bill could help change this negative trend while simultaneously reinvigorating our urban areas. Thank you.
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Mr. Parris. Questions from members of the committee? Representative Gucker.

REP. GUCKER (138TH): Thank you very much Madam Chair. My voice is a little gone today. I sound like I smoked like 20 packs of cigarettes and I don't smoke so I'll try to make it brief.

With the expirations of permitting, would that be all land use permits that come through? ’Cause I know in our city of Danbury they had to -- I think they put a five-year limit on permits because far too often projects would be cleared for development and then just sit empty for generations.

JIM PARRIS: To answer your question, yes I believe it would entail inland wetlands permits, site plan permits and subdivision permits.

REP. GUCKER (138TH): Would this also go as far as let's say said permit is given to a developer to develop but the developer then goes defunct or goes out of business or you know moves onto something else; would these permits still wanna stay open or do they get passed on? What would happen in those events?

JIM PARRIS: I think the permit would apply to the specific parcel and to the developer. I don't think, as far as I understand and I apologize my knowledge is somewhat limited in this arena being that I'm relatively new to the associate, but I believe that the permits only apply to the specific parcel and to the developer.

REP. GUCKER (138TH): And one more if I could? My concern is this; that many times a permit is given or directed, especially to wetlands or any other
land use, under designed engineered systems
sometimes or maybe on what that particular developer
will do there to mitigate you know wetlands issues
down the road and I would be concerned that if there
isn't a review, you know say it goes past the five-
year mark and the permit is still sitting out there,
that maybe better technologies have come forward or
maybe there are some other extraneous areas like
[inaudible00:59:07] uplands areas have been
developed which now further negatively impact said
parcel that's already been cleared. That's you know
there possibly should be an opening to re-visit if
it's been sitting -- the project's been sitting
dormant for quite some time. Then I would worry
about you know just climatic changes in the area.
Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you
Representative. Any further questions from members
of the committee? Representative Delnicki.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you Madam Chair, and
thank you for coming forward with the permit issue
there. It's safe to say that every building permit,
wetlands permit, construction permit, has a value to
it, correct?

JIM PARRIS: Certainly.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): So if they were to be closed
out prior to their expiration date, there would be a
taking of that value?

JIM PARRIS: In theory, yes.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): In theory, yes? So if
somebody has taken the time to go through the
engineering process, had the wetlands agent take a
look at it, basically play by all the rules, then it
makes sense that that permit should stay in place until there is an actual expiration? Is that a valid concept?

JIM PARRIS: Yes, and I do believe to a certain extent that is true today with the process as it pertains to land use now. I think what this legislation would do -- it would treat the permitting process as one continuous process pertaining to a specific parcel. Therefore, saying that if for example the inland wetlands permit is the first permit to be obtained you are working on that -- working on achieving all the requirements under that permit's and then you obtain your site plan and thereafter your subdivision that -- one shouldn't be penalized for not necessarily completing the inland wetlands permit approval process while going forward and obtaining your other permits.

And you know, personally I don't remember what I had for breakfast yesterday, never mind you know trying to keep track of a permitting process that could take decades of approvals and sometimes with pertaining to the wetlands issue, you know there are permits and approvals and those things run contiguously and sometimes one might expire before the other. So there are a lot of variables in the process. This would just streamline that process. I certainly, you know after the end of or the final approval if there's an expiration nobody is saying that there shouldn't be a review of why that expiration occurred and maybe even a lookback at the approvals prior to that.

But again, I think allowing us to get to that point, that final point, that final permit expiration, I
think it would be incredibly helpful to developers and you know save consumers money down the road.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): So if you had a developer who went out there, got permitting for an economic development project, a say an office park, and they were going along and they were building the units as they had folks that wanted to move in. That obviously has a value to the community and obviously has a value to the developer and to the end user in the jobs that they would bring into a community. If we were to change that, and not have that continuity going forward, would that undermine say a project like that?

JIM PARRIS: Conceivably, yes.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Significantly. So basically, what you're saying, if I understand you correctly, is there's a value to the permitting process, there's a value to a project being able to be completed to its final point and that if we were to change that in some fashion and remove that protection, you'd basically be costing a developer, a land owner and a community some significant money?

JIM PARRIS: Sure. At the end of the day, time is money for developers. The longer a developer stays on a particular project, the more he's paying in taxes to that municipality and therefore shrinking his margins potentially and passing along those costs to the end user.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): I thank you for coming forward with your testimony on the proposal, and I thank the chair for the opportunity to ask a few questions.

JIM PARRIS: Thank you Representative.
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Any further questions? If not, thank you Mr. Parris for being with us today.

JIM PARRIS: Thank you very much.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Next on the list is Representative Ackert followed by Richard Hart.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): I think it's good afternoon at this point, right? Yeah. Good afternoon Senator Cassano, Senator Bradley, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Representative Baker, Senator Champagne, Representative Zawistowski and esteemed members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Tim Ackert, I represent the eighth district which includes Columbia, Coventry, Tolland and Vernon. Thank you for the opportunity to be here before you to speak in support of the following bills on today's public hearing agenda.

I hear we will probably hear these two bills at another date, so I will not testify in the future day. I'll take the opportunity now. So, proposed House Bill 5702, AN ACT CONCERNING QUARRY STANDARDS AND TESTING and proposed House Bill 6750, AN ACT EXPANDING THE DEFINITION OF "RESIDENTIAL BUILDING" IN STATUTES PROVIDING ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN HOMEOWNERS.

I want to start off by saying thank you to this legislature. Over the last few years, we had held many meetings, held open forums and many, many discussions adding up to thousands of hours in a bipartisan manner. What I want to include is that it isn't for naught. Today's homes with crumbling foundations are on their way to being whole again. But there's still much more to do. Like many
comprehensive pieces of legislation, it needs to be tweaked. The bills you have before you will help those that need adjustments to the good work we've -- already done.

House Bill 6750 will clarify that larger condominium buildings are included in this legislation to repair homes with crumbling foundations regardless of the number of units. And House Bill 5702 is a continued effort to ensure the best quality product is being used for new foundations going forward.

I was honored to be appointed as a member of the task force to develop a model quality control plan for quarries and to study the workforce repairing or replacing crumbling concrete foundations, and I look forward to getting that -- getting to work on that issue.

I thank you for the consideration of these two bills.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative Ackert, and thank you for being here and for all the work that you've done on this issue. We really appreciate it. Are there questions from members of the committee?

No, if not I just would like to emphasize the fact that this really has been a bipartisan effort, has been tremendous. And in addition, this is an issue that I'm new to as a new member of this committee, certainly not as a member of the legislature, but in a different way, and I really respect and appreciate the level of impact that it is having on the members of your community and all of you as senators and representatives, and I look forward to the
conversation on the eighth and hearing more. But thank you for being here today.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): It struck me, I was just in a meeting prior, for the quiet corner, and it was interesting that they did not have the knowledge, and they were right around the corner, literally the community next to the area impact, they go "tell me about this foundation thing". That was just this morning. So we need to better -- we need to better emphasize the work that we're doing on this. So thank you Chairwoman.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Yes, and before you go. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you Representative. I can't wait to talk about this more when we have our joint meeting, but thank you for the work that you're doing on this. I know we've been working together trying to make this whole, especially with the condominiums. I don't know how that slipped through, but it did. This is our fix. So I hope as we go forward we remember that. Thank you.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Senator. Representative Delnicki.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you Madam Chair and thank you Representative Ackert for coming forward. You have been a leader in this issue. I've had the pleasure of working with you on this issue, and I'm looking forward to the further testimony you're gonna have on March 8th, especially pertaining to quarry standards and making sure the condominiums are including and that people honestly will have the ability to know whether or not they've got the
pyrrhotite issue in their foundations. So, thank you for coming today and I look forward to seeing you on the eighth.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): And thank you for your work. And like I said, this was all -- we were all involved with this, both close side to the aisle in the Governor's office. So thank you.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Yeah, it's totally been a bicameral, bipartisan, capital region council of governments, the other CROG's and COG's all involved and it's now a state issue as the captive insurance is going forward and we have the state involved in funding that, and of course the surcharge. So, everybody's in on this one and there's skin in the game for everybody. Thank you Madam Chair.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): We just need the federal government to step up. Sorry.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): There ya go. That's the one last piece of the puzzle. And the insurance companies.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative, and I would just add that it's true, this is an issue that does impact everyone in the state even if we're not living in one of the impacted communities. So thank you for being here today.

We have up next Rick Hart followed by Representative Yaccarino.

RICHARD HART: Good morning Madam Chair, members of the public Planning and Development Committee. My name is Rick Hart. I'm the legislative Rep for the Uniformed Professional Firefighters that represent
4,000 career firefighters in the state of Connecticut.

Every day a police officer and firefighter puts on a uniform and expects to go home at the end of their shift, but often times that’s not the case. Injuries occur on a fairly regular basis unfortunately as a result of their job. I had the unfortunately incident or experience of watching a member of my crew when I was a captain on a truck company fall two stories through collapsed stairs in a vacant building. He came back to work, but unfortunately reinjured his back and was forced to retire. He was able to secure post-employment as a result of his injury. He was able to be reemployed but unfortunately was much less than what he was earning as a firefighter.

Senate Bill 556, AN ACT CONCERNING ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR CERTAIN RETIRED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES would make that employee whole. It’s a voluntary, based upon a -- as writing a two-thirds majority vote of the governing body of any municipality. I would ask the proponent of the bill, Senator Duff, if we could amend that to make it a simple majority to lower the bar a little bit to make it easier for our public safety employees to be made whole. The bill, as written, would allow for full compensation as if they were not injured and then at age 65 they would receive their disability pension. I think this is a small price to pay for rewarding an employee for receiving an injury in the line of duty.

So the UPFFA supports this bill and we ask the committee respectfully to move this forward.
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Mr. Hart. Are there questions from members of the committee? Representative Michel.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you. Thank you Mr. Hart for coming to testify. As I mentioned earlier, I was a volunteer fireman myself and sometimes we do live through things that we wished we did not, and particularly when others are getting hurt.

My question to you would be, how will this bill help public safety employees when they are injured?

RICHARD HART: In the city of Waterbury where I work, if an employee has not reached their 25th year, which would be when they would be able to retire, their pension would be substantially less than when they max out at 70 percent. A firefighter could very well have to retire with only a 50 percent or less retirement, which really in today's day and age is not a lot of money. So they'd be fiscally strapped as a result and if they cannot -- if they are permanently disabled and cannot secure post-retirement employment it puts an incredible burden on that family. So with this making them whole, it would be a substantial help to the public safety workers.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you Mr. Hart.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you. Representative Baker followed by Representative Zawistowski.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Thank you for coming out here this afternoon sharing the information. Just for clarification, wouldn't it just be easier to just -- or how should I say -- why can't most cities and towns just, you know in terms of their contracts put
in language to be able to take care of officers or first responders in the event of this happening? Couldn't it just be done through a contract?

RICHARD HART: I'm sure it could. But putting it in a collective bargaining agreement. Typically they're three to four years in duration. So every three to four years that could be a subject of negotiation so that it could change from contract to contract, which would not provide any consistency. By putting it in statute, it would -- I think it would be an easier and more seamless process to get the coverage for the employees.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Well I think that most towns and cities would be, you know would show that they're appreciation for the men and women that put their lives on the line through this. Do you know any towns or cities that's currently has something in place already, that which you're suggesting?

RICHARD HART: No, I do not.

REP. BAKER (124TH): No, there are none?

RICHARD HART: I do not know.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Okay, thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative Zawistowski.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you Madam Chair. Thank you for coming in to testify on this today. I have a question that actually looks intent, and I'm hoping that you might be able to give me some insight on this. Is the difference between the employee's disability retirement pay and regular rate of pay? I know that regular rate of pay may mean different things to different people, and I
just wanted to find out if you're looking at base pay or if you're talking about payment -- I know that for example some contracts have shoe allowances and things like that in addition to base pay. Is the intent here just the base pay?

RICHARD HART: I can't speak for Senator Duff and what his intention is, but our feeling it would be base pay. Just, you know, your straight pay.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay, thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you Madam Chair. Thanks for coming in. What would happen if a -- under this bill, if a firefighter was in an accident and disabled at 20 years old? So would this pay, their base pay, for the next 45 years?

RICHARD HART: Under the way the law is written -- I mean the bill is written, yes.

If the municipality deems that worthwhile. As written, it would be a two-thirds vote of the legislative body. So if they agree to that, then yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, and during that time presumably that person could also find other employment?

RICHARD HART: Depending on his disability, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Just so you know, when I was a kid, 17, I was a volunteer fireman and I was in a horrible accident and very, very severely disabled. You may not notice it, but I was. How would that have effect -- if this bill were in place
at the time, how would that have affected me as a volunteer?

RICHARD HART: The bill as written does not cover volunteers, it's just paid municipal police and fire.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So if there's a place such as Norwich that has both paid and volunteer, this would only cover the paid, not the volunteer?

RICHARD HART: As written, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Do you not see that as a problem?

RICHARD HART: I can't speak for the volunteers, but as a professional I can -- I mean as far as firefighting is concerned we all do the same job whether you're career or volunteer, so I would have no objection to including volunteers.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well let's say we did that, what would their base pay be? Zero.

RICHARD HART: Well no usually they -- it is in Worker's Comp it would be based upon the average weekly rate as set by the Department of Labor which would set the weekly rate or the weekly wage and we could base it upon that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So that would give somebody in my situation at 17 years old, I would be collecting Worker's Compensation for the next 48 years?

RICHARD HART: Conceivably, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, thank you. Thank you Madam Chair.
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative Dubitsky. Are there further questions from members of the committee?

Just one clarifying question Mr. Hart; this is the difference between any disability pay up to 100 percent?

RICHARD HART: Correct.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Okay, I just wanted to make sure that we clarified that. Representative Delnicki.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you Madam Chair. How many firefighters have actually had this situation occur in the past year and say the past 10 years? Where they were injured and they couldn’t come back and they were receiving a less than whole payment for what they had received prior?

RICHARD HART: Unfortunately, that data is very difficult to retrieve. We'd have to go through every municipality and see how many disability retirements there were, and unfortunately that is not impossible but it would be extremely difficult to find out.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Yeah, if there was some way to quantify it, it would answer a lot of questions pertaining to any concerns some folks may or may not have pertaining to the whole issue whether it’s a huge issue or a relatively small issue.

RICHARD HART: Right. And I understand Representative Dubitsky's concerns. As -- if any employee say the 21-year-old firefighter that's on a paid job, their pension -- they would move up to a 50 percent disability pension. So whatever that
would be, would be 50 percent automatically by their contract generally speaking and then they would have another 50 percent added on to that. So, but I just, the data is just not there that I could access.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): And in theory, would something like this be applicable to police officers because they face the same risks, the same challenges, though they don’t go into burning buildings, they basically run into people on the worst days of their lives.

RICHARD HART: Oh absolutely. It's written for certain first responders being police and fire.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Okay, so it's inclusive for both.

RICHARD HART: I've got a sneak and suspicion you're gonna hear some pretty compelling stories later on.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Well I thank you for coming forward. Thank you for your testimony on this issue.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): There are no further questions. Thank you Mr. Hart.

RICHARD HART: Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): And we have next up Representative Yaccarino followed by John Krupinsky. Welcome.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Good afternoon Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, ranking member Zawistowski, ranking member Champagne and the entire P&D Committee. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 5125, the tax
I'd like to turn it over to former state rep Curt Andrews and Lieutenant of our volunteer firehouse in North Haven, Connecticut. Curt has been a volunteer for over 30 years. I feel really strong about this. We've passed it in the past in P&D and in Public Safety, so it always gets killed, but these men and women volunteer every day of their life just like professionals. Just like when I was in the Navy, the Navy Reserve, I served along with my fellow active service members. They do the same job every day. So I'd like to turn it over to Curt Andrews.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Welcome.

CURT ANDREWS: Good afternoon. It's great to be in this building again. Thank you all. I submitted written testimony and I would like to just say that we've been trying to confront all of us in the country, the lack of volunteer firefighters and EMS and it's a difficult, difficult job. We've been trying to be proactive in North Haven a bit we've been working with our first selectman, our fire chief, and we have a group of us that have been exploring this and as we're going through increased benefits for firefighters, the town has been great in coming up with different options. We do have a pension plan for us that pays $200 dollars a month after we reach 65 with 20 years of service, and the town is -- we're negotiating changes to that. But then the town came back and said "we'd like to increase the property tax abatement to $3,000 dollars for you folks" and we said "that's great, but there's one problem". There's a limit. So what I would like to -- and I heard the first selectman
from Granby or East Granby earlier and I'm concerned about the dollar amounts et cetera, and my suggestion to the committee is that you look at instead of a dollar amount so that we don't have to come back every three to five years because property values and property taxes keep rising, that maybe you put a percentage in there. That the percentage of property taxes could be abated. Just kind of think about that.

And you know the current statute with $1,000 dollars, you've got some folks for example I live in Hamden and my property taxes are $10,000 dollars. So the $1,000 is great but it really doesn't do too much [laughing]. I don't do it for the dollars, I do it because it's great to help people on their worst days.

So the other thing to keep in mind; there are some things some ideas floating around about a statewide property tax on motor vehicles and there are a ton of younger volunteer firefighters that their only benefit that they get is $150, $200 whatever dollar credit for their beater pickup truck. And if we have a statewide property tax, you need to kind of consider that with this language. So I just want to throw that out there as an idea.

But we really need some more tools to attract and to retain volunteers to do this very difficult job.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you so much to both of you for being here today. Questions from members of the committee? Representative Zawistowski.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you Representative Yaccarino for coming in and testifying with Mr.
Andrews. Representative, I know that you've actually advocated for this in the past, so I'm glad that you were able to at least get forward in a public hearing this year and to work on this.

CURT ANDREWS: Thank you in veterans we do this now. Municipalities have the option we passed I think three or four years ago to increase the dollar amount for the abatement and I don't see why we can't do that for our volunteers. We have about 26,000 firefighters in Connecticut, 22,000 are volunteers that’s over 80 percent. And I would argue they save — besides giving great service and public service to folks and saving lives, they save millions of dollars. In North Haven, we have about 50 volunteers now if they were paid that's at least $5 million dollars in our town budget. So what they get for the abatement it's really a small — very small and they give up their time and unfortunately sometimes possibly their life, but they do that like anybody that volunteers at the will and the good for the people of our state and their communities.

So I feel real strong about this. I look at it not just for the tax abatement, but you're helping foster more volunteers. We're losing our volunteers and --

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): -- You brought up something that was, I think needs to be emphasized is the fact that this a municipal option. [Crosstalk] you are requiring the municipalities to actually participate in this and I think that's important to stress.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Curt lives in North Haven -- excuse me Hamden, but he volunteers in North Haven. For 30 years?
CURT ANDREWS: About 35.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Thirty five years, out of the good -- 'cause he's a true volunteer and we have so many men and women that do that every day. And so I think it's a municipal option. Our first selectman is for it, but like he can't -- we can't do it because we don't have -- we have state statute -- we could do it for our veterans which is good. I served and I applaud anybody that serves in any capacity, but I feel strong about this. We passed it, like I said, and I think bipartisan public safety I think two or three years ago Lynn Darigan, Steve Darigan [phonetic] was here --

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): -- And we did pass it in P&D last year.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): It never goes anywhere because there's pushback. And I think people should look at the larger picture that it's actually a cost savings and a good benefit to the community. And it gets young people involved. They see men and women volunteering. I think it's wonderful.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Oh absolutely. I have a question for Mr. Andrews as well. You brought up tax abatement on motor vehicles. I was actually unaware that there might be one available. Is this something that it's statute as well?

CURT ANDREWS: The statute the way it's written, it applies to any and all property taxes that the volunteer is responsible for. So with younger kids, that's all they got. They live with mom and dad. And you know they may be -- in our town it's staggered if you do a certain percentage of calls you get $500 up to -- $500, $750 or $1,000 based on
if you're forty percent of your calls then you get up to the $1,000 dollars.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay, so this is within the $1,000 dollar current limit?

CURT ANDREWS: Correct, but you have to be active in order to do it.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Yeah, no and I know that the towns have a lot of discretion on how it's administered as well. So I mean it's the $1,000 dollars is the maximum. So this works.

But anyway, thank you very much for coming in. I said I'm very, very supportive of volunteer firefighters, it really holds -- in small towns it's not just a public safety thing, it’s a community thing. It builds community and I think it really helps. So thank you very much for coming in today.


REP. MICHEL (146TH): [Laughing] Thank you Chair. Thank you for coming to testify. Just to go back on the percentage. I think it's a very interesting concept. You were suggesting instead of putting a dollar amount that we would put a percentage in terms of an abatement on overall -- all the property tax put together?

CURT ANDREWS: You know, trying to be proactive and having sat where you are, you know you don’t want to be addressing an issue three and four times you know, every three and four years if you can put in statute that it's gonna increase over time because you know property taxes are so. I just throw that as an idea.
REP. MICHEL (146TH): And do you have any suggestions in terms of the percentage? Because I -- there would be two things --

CURT ANDREWS: -- Personally you know 40 percent I think is a number that will fall within the numbers that the first selectman from East Granby was talking about and our selectman is talking about for our town as well. So that, but I didn't do any calculations, but that's.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): 'Cause I think we'd have to be -- we wanna make sure that since it is a choice of the municipality, it would have to be -- we would have to keep that in mind when we think about a percentage so that it's it most -- like it's more efficient. But thank you, that's -- I think it's a great idea.

CURT ANDREWS: Up to that percentage Representative. So you're -- again it's very, very permissive. It's not a mandate.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Yup, no, I appreciate it. I think it's a great idea. Thank you.

CURT ANDREWS: Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. If there are no further questions, I'd like to thank you both and Mr. Andrews thank you for your volunteer service. We are grateful.

So next up, we have John Krupinsky and followed by Senator Fasano. If he's not here, it will be Sam Gold.

Welcome. Turn your microphone on please. Press the button. Thank you.
JOHN KRUPINSKY: Good morning. My name is John Krupinsky. I'm the Connecticut State President of the Fraternal Order of Police. I represent municipal, local and federal law officers across the state of Connecticut.

I'm very happy to address you folks this morning. There seem to be some misunderstandings and I just want to clear this up. My understanding of the bill, and we're gonna have people who wrote the bill up here in a very short time, but this is not a widespread, across-the-board bill to boost everybody's pension in this state if they are injured in the line of duty. That is not the intent of this bill.

[Background talking] It is bill 556. I apologize. The intent of this is in some very specific traumatic instances where it would allow a local municipality, and again this has to be voted on there's nothing mandatory, that if that municipality wished to raise from 50 percent or 66 and two-thirds percent depending on the municipality, the Worker's Compensation up to 100 percent. And as the guy who travels the state all the time dealing with some of these officers that were seriously injured and traumatic injury and it's sad to say in some cases the officer is killed in the line of duty is better off than the officer that survives a situation. That officer is compensated in some ways that other officers aren't.

I hate to go to these houses. You go there and you see they have a family who is suffering because -- and I would be in the same position if I was injured. I work a ton of overtime every week, so that my wife and my children can have the things
that they need. When you're out injured, you can't work this overtime. You're not even getting 100 percent of your pay that you would've gotten if you went there and worked 40 hours. And it's an area that people kind of forget about at times.

I could be shot in a robbery and I'm gonna get my 66 and two-thirds, but it's not just the other 33 percent I lose, it's the other 40 hours or 50 hours in a paycheck of overtime that I would lose. So it's not about me. It's about the families. These families suffer immensely. You don't know what it's like to go to a place at Christmas and a family doesn't have a tree. But I deal with this, and it's a very -- folks I want to tell you, it is a very, very small percentage of people throughout this state among thousands of police officers and thousands of firemen.

I take care of approximately 13 families in this state whose husband or wife were killed in the line of duty. That's the kind of numbers we're talking about.

I will defer to my -- the gentleman here from the great state of Massachusetts. This program is in place there. They will be able to give you exact real numbers, but I just wanted to make sure we get past this isn't every situation of every guy who's injured of every compensation claim that's formed.

This is just gonna allow departments, cities and municipalities, and again not mandatory -- when it's one of those situations and I think it's pretty clear in all of our minds we know when that is. And when you're working your town, your town government, your mayor, your city council; they know when that
guy deserves something a little bit extra and you'll have the opportunity to vote on it.

Right now, there is no opportunity to do that. So I will take any questions that you may have.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you for being here with us today. Are there questions from members of the committee? Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): So what you're describing is the Worker's Compensation portion of this because under Worker's Compensation when an employee is injured they get two-thirds of their salary. Is that correct?

JOHN KRUPINSKY: It depends on also your local contract. It's combined. My guys in my department, I'm okay, I'm on an older pension, but my guys in my department would get 50 percent. I would get roughly 66 and two-thirds. It varies from department to department.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): So you're talking about the actual pension?

JOHN KRUPINSKY: Pension and paycheck. If a guy is out. It could be either or. It depends on what they have in their contracts.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay.

JOHN KRUPINSKY: We're just looking to keep people at 100 percent of the money they would have been getting if they weren't -- didn't receive that injury and continued to work.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): No, I went through it. When I got injured, the Worker's Compensation paid two-thirds and the towns picked up a third. But
there's a time limit that they put on it. And we had officers that had been out for a lot longer, not of their own fault. I mean the last one I could think of -- well I won't get into injuries, but it was bad and he was out for you know a long time. And you know it's because he basically got injured by somebody who shouldn't been driving.

JOHN KRUPINSKY: And we also don't want to rush an officer back to work, and I've seen this in cases. Guys telling me, I say "what are you doing coming back to work". They say "John I can't stay out, I gotta feed my family". That's something that we don't want to do.

SENIOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay, thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Senator. Further questions from members of the committee? Representative Delnicki, followed by Representative Arnone.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you Madam Chair. I think you mentioned -- did you mention a number of how many officers are affected by the say in the previous year in the state of Connecticut?

JOHN KRUPINSKY: We don't know because this hasn't -- I don't have any numbers to give you because this isn't in effect, but the gentleman --

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): -- 'Cause I'm just trying to get a handle on how many folks we're talking about per year.

JOHN KRUPINSKY: I can throw out some numbers again, tough they have the data, I don't. But I think you're probably talking between one in maybe five officers -- we're looking at the most traumatic or
large-scale events where you say "oh my god, look at this poor guy". Not the guy who got his arm broke or his shoulder broke. Very, very specific incidents that is so traumatizing or so nationalized that his own town says "wow, we really gotta do something for this guy".

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): And if I understand the language correctly in the bill, it's an opt-in by the communities? It's not a mandated?

JOHN KRUPINSKY: That is correct, it's an opt-in by the community and their town council has to vote for it.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Yeah, it'd be interesting to know how many folks are involved here but obviously as Senator Champagne indicated there is an issue there. And I thank you for coming forward to testify on it.

JOHN KRUPINSKY: Thank you sir.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Representative Arnone, followed by Senator Bradley.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): Thank you. So again the opportunity to have municipal -- as being a former town counselor we also had to go through a traumatic brain injury for an officer that could not return to work. His family were in -- just could not afford to make ends meet. It was very difficult for the family in long term and under a lot of Worker's Comp and pension issues, the town has to release in his best -- to release him from employment because we have no other option. One of the most difficult decisions I ever had to make and still to this day to have to release him from an employment so he
could get the settlements and able to get the house and mechanical advantages he needed in his house. It's sad. It's sad for the whole family. I still think of it every day.

But anytime you give a municipality an option in something like this, where everybody wanted to do something but we statutorily could not. So I thank you for this.

JOHN KRUPINSKY: Thank you sir. I appreciate it.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Senator Bradley.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): I served on the fire commission prior to being up here and a lot of times I saw a lot of tragic incidents where -- incidences where obviously warranted a firefighter getting some sort of assistance that statutorily was barred.

But what would you say to the argument that a lot of times, just because of looking up just their numbers of where a lot of cities -- I represent Bridgeport and a section of Stratford, they are so strapped for money, they've already exhausted a lot of the monies that we pay go to our police department and fire department and we just simply can't afford to do what's right, to do what's in the best interest of our firefighters or police officers.

What would you say to the argument that somebody has to play the bad guy and say "listen, we'd like to be able to compensate you more, but we can't" and you know allowing the state to play the bad guy makes it a lot easier than the local officers there -- you know the elected officials?
JOHN KRUPINSKY: We're on the same page on this sir. I agree with you. In some communities, that can't happen and that may be one of the communities. The nice thing is under this law, they would have the option of saying "look we would like to help you out, financially we can't do it". Where I'm lucky, my city's got AAA bond rating they can financially do it. It's not always gonna happen, but it's giving us a little bit of hope, like the gentleman over here earlier said he would love to have helped their family, but he couldn't because there was no mechanism in place. It's not a catch-all and it's not always gonna happen. If the money is not there, that council would have to do the right thing sadly and vote no we can't do it. So I'm okay with that.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Representative Gucker.

REP. GUCKER (138TH): Thanks Johnny for coming up. Johnny and I have a history. We both come from Danbury and we kind of all know the same people and I do have family members that are also on the police department with Johnny, so I understand a lot of what he's talking about.

That being said, could you see this compensation going towards officers maybe suffering from PSDS? To where they get into a situation that's just so debilitating that they wind up -- they just can't go forward anymore?

JOHN KRUPINSKY: I think it could be a factor. I don't think that factor alone would say "oh gee I have PTSD and I can no longer to work". I think it would be -- if it would be -- many times in these large traumatic incidents like we're talking about is that would be the major portion of it and PTSD would be a side effect of it. When you have these
major issues where somebody gets that injured, a lot of times there is PTSD to go along with it.

So indirectly, yes. That is an alone factor to say "oh I have PTSD, I can't come to work, I want 100 percent". No that wouldn't happen.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. If there are no further questions. Oh, Representative Delnicki for the second.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you Madam Chair for allowing a follow up. So if I understand this correctly, you're looking for a situation that on a case-by-case basis, not a full-blown program that would encompass everybody, but based on the situation, the circumstances and the nature of the injury, a town council then or a board of selectman or whoever would then have the ability to make the decision that they want to provide this or not want to? But again on a case-by-case basis?

JOHN KRUPINSKY: Yes sir. You have it right to a T and understand it. Absolutely the way we had all discussed this. That is exactly what we're talking about.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you because with the testimony we'd received I wasn't sure whether it was a case-by-case or a program.

JOHN KRUPINSKY: No, it's a case-by-case.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you for coming out and thank you for your testimony and answering that question for me.

JOHN KRUPINSKY: Thank you ladies and gentlemen.
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Thank you for being here with us today.

Next we have Senator Fasano, followed by the Roselle's who we will have you come up together.

Welcome Senator.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Madam Chair, thank you very much, ranking members, members of the committee. I'm not gonna read from my testimony, but what I am gonna do is just talk about Senate Bill 548, which is called THE ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN NEIGHBORHOODS.

So let me tell you what the idea here is. I believe the strength of our state depends upon the strength of our cities. And the only way we can have strength of our cities is that we invest correctly in our cities. And I think that sometimes what happens is money goes to our cities, municipalities, but particularly cities and never get to the end game, which is the neighborhoods that need it the most. And I would argue that sometimes a neighborhood knows better where money can be invested then perhaps a political unit being the town hall.

So what this community empowerment program does is it says it takes 33 percent and invests in those priorities set up by the Community Investment Boards; 33 percent by what the municipality believes is effective. And then the last 30 percent, it's actually 35-35-30 I should say, the last 30 percent by virtue of an agreement between the municipality and these boards. And if they can't agree, then the money stays with the state.
Essentially the board is made up of those folks in business, neighborhoods, religious leaders, community leaders and they look at it and say, you know in this area, we need adult education, or we need a police station, or you know what a playground, whatever it is, or an employment opportunities. But I think that every neighborhood in a city, or maybe in this valley, but particular a city understands from their own what they need and where the investment return is gonna be greater.

Then you put up what's called an Urban Challenge website which allows folks from that district to write into the website and say "here are our thoughts" which you'll be taking collectively.

There also has to accountability, which these boards would look at. So we have a lot of nonprofits who do great work, particularly in our cities, but once again there's no follow through, there's no real-time data back in terms of if we gave them the money if this board gives them the money because they feel they are doing a great job in a neighborhood; how many people they served? What are the results of that? Nobody is looking at any of these things, and there's good and bad points. Well we may find out that money's not being well served. On the other hand, we may find some not-for-profits who are doing great work and maybe that attention would drive outside private monies to the not-for-profits.

But we don't have any of that going on. It's kind of like we as a legislature say "we did our job, we sent a ton of money, fill in the blank" and that's what we're doing. But we never know where that money goes once it hits the town hall. Not specifically mentioned in the bill, but something
that I think we -- it's on our books, we need to remarket what's called neighborhood revitalization zones and these are zones we created a bunch of years ago in statutes. Where if individuals and neighborhoods get together and say "here's an area we have to revitalize" and they come up with a strategic plan that they bring that strategic plan to OPM and say "here's what we have, this is the buy in, what can we look at revitalizing this area".

So I think what the bill essentially does, that's about the essence of it. It's talk about a different way, rather than the feel good measure of an appropriation to a particular location, but a real methodology to ensuring that that area is getting the attention it deserves. And I made it on time. That's experience right there, okay.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Very impressive. You got here just on time. Perfect. Wonderful. Thank you Senator. Before I turn it over to members of the committee, I just want to just ask a clarifying question with respect to the title of the bill and what's within. And to make sure that I understand correctly. Neighborhood Assistance Acts, which provides tax credits, is -- you're not specifically necessarily referring just to the Neighborhood Assistance Act, you're talking more broadly about PILT funding and other funding, not simply the Neighborhood Assistance Act? Is that correct?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): That is correct Madam Chair. That is correct.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you for that clarification. And members of the committee? Representative Zawistowski, followed by Representative Dubitsky.
REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you Madam Chair. Good to see you here Senator. A question on -- just a further clarification, is the purpose of this to restrict how towns use grants that they're currently getting, such as PILT grants and municipal sharing grants, to actually have some guidelines as to what they actually have to use it for?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): It is to make sure that we understand as a legislature that if our purpose is to enhance municipalities and make them grow and make them more viable that that is happening. There's an argument to be made and it -- not as true rule for smaller municipalities than larger municipalities that once the money hits the town hall jobs get created or it gets diverted to other areas, or salary increases both union and nonunion. And when you talk to leaders and activists in community, which I have in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, New London, you find that they're saying that for every you know dollar that the state is giving to city municipality -- and I'm using cities, so I gotta say it that way -- city, you know 10-20 cents gets to where it's supposed to go by the time it washes through the system and they're frustrated by that process. I am too.

So I think it's more of an accountability factor, so that there's some board is watching this money as it flows through. It's not meant to restrict as much as it is to gather the right destination of the money based upon a more of a dissection of neighborhoods to enhance them. Does that make sense?

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): I think I get it, but for example if you have a small town that -- we've been
talking about some firefighter issues this morning, if one of my towns gets a PILT grant they may want to use it for firefighter training or something; is that something that -- it's not a neighborhood building thing. Would you want to -- your intent to your bill is to restrict it from being used from other --

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): -- No. As I said, if you look at the total package of money, 35 percent would be the Community Investment Board which is the religious leaders, the individuals of the business leaders and so forth, 35 percent municipality can say "yeah I want it to go to that fire house" and 35 percent is a joint agreement.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay, because what we have here is not quite set out in that much detail.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Okay, yes. I've kicked this around for a couple of years, so I -- this is what I've kinda put together and I'll share this testimony and maybe some suggestive language perhaps you could look at. Would that be helpful?

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Yes, actually it would probably be good to just take this offline and discuss it a little bit further, 'cause I know that -- you can't necessarily -- it's not a one-size-fits-all for the large municipalities and the small towns. I have some concerns about that.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): And you may want to put "towns greater than" or a percentage of what you get from the state relative to your budget this kicks in at some level. And that would be -- that would still fit the purpose for which I intend it.
REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay. Thank you very much for coming out.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Representative Dubitsky, followed by Representative Baker.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you Madam Chair. Thanks for coming in and testifying about this. This is one that kind of confused me. Perhaps I'm easily confused. Now it talks about which monies are going to be involved and it talks about expenditure of municipal revenue sharing grants and select payment in lieu of taxes grants. So what are we talking about? ECS?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): No. This would be PILT, municipal aid, not ECS. ECS is education money, so it would not include ECS.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So what money?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): [inaudible] is specifically for particular construction. This is for money that a town can use in its sort of discretion.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, can you give me an example?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Well like PILT money, paid in lieu of taxes money, things of that nature. Other municipal grants they get for various things. Money that doesn't have a restriction built in within the statute, [inaudible] has to be for particular projects of construction, ECS has to
be for education. So that money that is not earmarked by the state for a particular.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Got it. Okay, so walk me through this. They -- a town is going to let's say it gets $1 million dollars in PILT money. Right now, it has no restrictions you can just essentially just throw that into the general fund and spend it with all its other money. How would it be different under this bill?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): So there would be two things to this. One would be that if the money came in, the Community Investment Board would be able to look at it and say a certain percentage of this money we would like to go to this type of community development. The municipality could say 35 percent of this we're going to use for, I don't know, salaries, whatever they wanna do it for. And the other 30 percent, which is left over, would be an agreement among the two groups.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, now is that Community Investment Board, is that something that's a city board or is that a state board?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): So the Community Investment Board what I envision would be made up of stakeholders in the community including residents, businesses, religious, community development corporations and other community groups. These are for municipalities that have large populations is what I'm envisioning this for. So it would be selected people from the area who have an understanding of how to improve their community.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so each city would have a separate board?
SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): It wouldn't be a state board that would make these decisions?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): That's correct. It would be very localized to that extent. And the theory is, is that and I'm gonna say this probably more bluntly than I probably should, which is perhaps government doesn't always know what's best within the community that people who live and breathe in that community understand the needs of that community. And that needs to be brought to the attention.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, now I understand what's going on. And I would appreciate if you could supply us with any additional work that's been done on this to flesh it out. Thank you very much for coming in. Thank you Madam Chair.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. And before I go to Representative Baker, Senator I just would point out that we don't have a copy of your written testimony in front of us. It's not quite online yet, so I have asked the clerks to provide us with that as all. But I think that will help also in furthering you're -- the conversation with you.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Yes, okay. I will make sure you get that. Thank you Madam Chair.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Representative Baker.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Good afternoon. Thank you for coming in and sharing what's something that I'm experiencing a little bit in my city. In my district, we have an NRZ and it works very well in
terms of empowering the people and the stakeholders and the community in terms of development or what we want our district to look like.

So my question to you is; is this something that will enhance the NRZ process that we already have in the city of Bridgeport and also in other towns that have NRZ's or is this something a separate entity?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Well I think that what -- that's specifically provided but I'm gonna add language to some stuff I'm working on, but the NRZ zone I think we need to remarket that. I think it does work well, which is a separate piece of the Community Investment Board, so you'd have -- because the NRZ zone is where you put together a plan as you know, go to OPM, sell it to them and then they fund it.

And then if you wrap around for the other communities this investment, those two pieces work together to try to improve particularly areas like Bridgeport.

REP. BAKER (124TH): So would the -- so we have about four, five NRZ's, so would we be looking to create five more zones, empowerment zones, or would it be just one to oversee all the five?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): I haven't really thought about that and it's a great question. [Background laughter] I think it would kind of be a local -- I think a lot of these decisions have to be made not by us, but by the community is what works best for their community because I could picture two different zones doing different things because of the needs of those different -- and if you combine them then that probably doesn't get what we want.
So I picture these getting back to these zones, the neighborhood zones, which I think are extraordinarily important and then above and beyond that OPM money directed toward those zones having in other areas, we'll say at Bridgeport, this investment board where they're -- the money comes from Hartford to Bridgeport and community folks say "in this area, this is what we need" and that's not revitalization zone, which is something different, this is money that's coming to Bridgeport that we're gonna stop the decisions -- I should say slow up the decisions at town hall and make sure that people have a right to weigh in on how that money gets there. And all of it gets there, not 20 percent or 30 percent.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Alright, so it's safe to say that this would be something that would be established on the state level in terms of -- not just on a city level?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): It would be overseeing that we make sure that whatever decision is made, the auditors would make sure that once a decision is made, that money would go to that decision making areas. But it would be all local decision. The state should stay out of what you guys decide to do. And it's very localized. Representative Dubitsky's question -- it is not the state telling people how to spend the money. It's the community saying "those are our monies coming back to us, we wanna make sure it's gonna give us the best return for that dollar in our area".

REP. BAKER (124TH): I just wanted to make sure that it's not a process that's gonna stop money from coming getting directly into the different NRZ's or
the different empowerment zones, 'cause I know one of the experiences that we've had in Bridgeport, we've gotten money that's come down, the city has been the fiduciary of it and somehow that money -- there's been some kind of blockage at getting directly to the NRZ's. So I think that's been one of the problems, so I just wanted to make sure that this is not gonna be another road block.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): At the risk of getting some folks mad at me, I wanna remove that hurdle so it doesn't go through that cauldron called the town hall, but directly to the empowerment groups that deserve it. And I think that's the problem, it's being held up for all sorts of reasons I can envision and I'm trying to get rid of that so we can move these neighborhoods forward more quickly. With accountability, mind you.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Well thank you for coming and sharing. I would love to continue to have some more dialogue with you, but thank you for sharing that information with me.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Thank you for the questions.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Representative Arnone.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): Thank you. So I really like the idea of the Community Investment Board. It was a part of this bill that I read that I enjoyed reading. And when you just spoke also to taking those projects and moving them up to OPM and maybe finding funding and bonding for those projects, I think that's a really great way of doing it. Our town doesn't have a really -- doesn't have a community development corporation at this point so
that would help us. But we're -- the part of the bill I don't like --

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): -- I saw the "but" coming early on, yeah.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): Yeah, but is the PILT in lieu of taxes money. To tell a municipality, again as being a former councilman, what we have to do with our PILT money which we need so desperately because it's you know it's in lieu of having prisons and taking the you know traffic of prisons or the community college in our town. So we need those funds desperately. And really the same for the Revenue Sharing Grants because that's part of like sales tax money too and we have a large business district and large shopping centers in our town which really is really pressure on our town also from other towns using that development. So we feel we need that money, you know to put right back into it.

So if I went home and said "hey, this is how you're gonna have to spend your PILT money", I wouldn’t want to take that argument on our town council. But the rest of it, I do think it's a wonderful idea.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): So let me think about that, because once again that goes back to Representative Dubitsky's questioning, I think somewhere in there is if PILT money really is Payment in Lieu of Taxes, then if you divert it toward the community investment you're going to cause property taxes to go up because now it's going someplace else. And as you sort of asked that question, and you brought it my mind started to bend around that a little bit. So let me, with all three concerns in mind, let me go back and I think there's still a pathway there.
I just have to rethink some of these good questions and I will get back to you with some amended language.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): Can I say one more quick thing? And if you think also in those thoughts you know the TIF's the Tax Increment Financing that the state allows our municipalities. Those are wonderful programs. Those are programs that are really you know, really taking off in other towns around us. We're just putting one together right now for our downtown area and we hope that that'll encourage more investment in our town town's and problem areas. So if you could, thank you.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Senator Arnone -- excuse me, Senator Champagne. That was Representative Arnone. Senator Champagne, it's all yours.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you. Senator Fasano, I think you're onto something here. It's a great idea. And I think taking the ideas of everybody around the table and maybe listening to others, we can probably get something that really works well. So thank you for bringing this forward.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Well thank you very much, and I look forward to working with all of you on it.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Senator. And so I -- Senator, I would like to just ask you; when you initially looked at this and I hear you talking about what I think is some of our non-profit providers a little bit with this, is that correct?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Yes.
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): So in terms of looking at where the funding is going, was it really primarily directed toward looking at that and the kind of measurements and results or across the board to all areas where municipal funding might go, whether it be for police and fire, non-profit providers or any other functions in town government?

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): So I think that it would include not-for-profits who in some communities these organizations do better than in other communities, and I think the community knows which not-for-profit does the best.

We, as a legislature, there's no place we can look to determine whether or not -- what the results are. We just don't have that mechanism in place. So part of it was to make sure that not-for-profits are doing what we assume them to do, which they probably do do. But that is a piece of it that would help if the Community Investment Board or municipality believe that's a good investment because it saves tax dollars or whatever helps out a lot of people. That's one part of it, that the board they feel is necessary to fund. They may feel, "you know what we'd rather take this money and build a community swimming pool with it because we don't have a place for kids to go when it's hot" or whatever it is. That may serve this community better.

They can do whatever they want within the plateau of what they feel is best to make their community a thriving community. And I think the stakeholders around it have a vested interest to make sure it's going to improve their community, 'cause that's where they live. And you know when you talk to folks about their communities, particularly you know
Bridgeport or other areas, I think some feel as if there are things that can tangibly be done in their community but the voices may not be loud enough so that people at various levels can hear what's really needed, boots on the ground. And I think this opens up that door and that communication for them to say "here is my experience, and let's put some money behind it 'cause it makes sense".

It's sort of taking, as I said, from -- one could argue that a town hall may send money to a particular place because the return politically is great in that particular place. Which means that in another place, the political return is not so great, the money's not going there. Well that doesn't mean the money is not needed there and that doesn't mean that isn't a place that needs help. Those are the voiceless. This gives them an opportunity to say "we're here, take the politics out of it, it's our kids, it's our families".

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you for that. It's very -- this is a very interesting concept and putting on my former RTM member hat, I might argue that as five members in my small district, [inaudible02:05:43] district, that we were pretty close to the community and what was happening and that we were the ones that were then helping to designate where those funds would go.

I'm intrigued about the idea of looking at how we're getting the best bang for our buck in every community so that we're most effectively serving, especially our most vulnerable residents, and those are people who are served primarily by the non-profit organizations, and of course fire towns and cities as well. So I look forward to ongoing
conversation on this. I know there are some questions that we have, but I think it's an interesting conversation and I appreciate you being here with us today.

SENATOR FASANO (34TH): Thank you very much. Senator how's that knee? [Background talking] That's good, good. I'm glad to hear that.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): So next on the list. Thank you for being here Senator. We have Michael, Debbie and Phil Roselle who we're going to have come up together to testify today. Welcome.

DEBBIE ROSELLE: I'm Debbie Roselle. My husband is Officer Phillip Roselle, and this is my son Michael Roselle and he wanted to be here today to share his experience in what's happening.

MICHAEL ROSELLE: I'll start off with -- I support the bill 556, so it helps first responders like my father and others that risk their life to make other people have a good life.

The first thing I would want to start off with is the experience I had with the shooting of my father. That day I didn't say "goodbye" to him like I normally do. Every morning I would -- you know have cereal and stuff like that, I was rushing that day. I felt funny. It just wasn't my day, and I -- my mom had me stay over my grandparent's house and she just said that he got into an accident. I had no idea that he got shot.

So the next day, I walked into the hospital and my stomach was turning. I just knew something wasn't right, just like the day of the shooting. And I see my father laying in a bed and looks -- you know I thought he was dead, but he was sleeping. But he
told me when he woke up that he has got shot by a fellow officer. My heart just went down when I found out about that. So I -- his you know just over the months and stuff, him going to doctors and stuff like that, his PTSD has affected a lot of things.

I can't throw the ball with my father anymore 'cause his arm is not working. I -- he's just not the same. I miss my old dad. I mean I have him here, but it's not like you know my old one. But I also think that who my dad is to me is a special man and you know I hope that no one has to go through what I went through. And you now it was just -- it was a lot to take in.

I hope that this bill goes through so it can help my father and others. He is on dialysis now because of the bullet. I don't get to see him for four hours, come home to an empty house when I could be coming home seeing him. There's some games that he missed when I was at football. Looking around, "where is he", he's at dialysis. There's times I had to call 911 at the house 'cause he has passed out or his blood pressure was down. There was, you know, it has affected my life a lot.

I have gone to school with people knowing about my business. And they’re not -- there's no harm to it but I always get cameras in my face and stuff like that from other news companies and stuff like that. And I just hope that, you know, it just can get better.

The, you know, it changed my little brother's life. He doesn't understand as much as I do. I know, you know, about guns and stuff like that. My little brother's only 10. He was eight when it happened.
I was in eighth grade when it happened too, now I'm in high school. My father almost missed my graduation 'cause this is when he found out about his kidneys.

I, you know, I don't know what I'm gonna see in my dad in 10 years. I will -- even though this happened to him, I still wanna be a cop and I love helping others. And I just hope that my dad can see me become a cop. And I hope that when I become a cop, this bill will be around so if I get hurt and I have my kids, they won't have to go through what I went through.

And this event -- my dad's PTSD is totally different. When I say he's not the same person, I mean he's not the same person. I wanna show you this -- I have a photo here. This photo that I'm about to show you -- I'm not gonna see this man again in this uniform. [Crying] That man is dead. I still have my dad with me in person, but his whole self is not there. I had a chance to say "goodbye" to him, but I didn't. I walked off, it wasn't that good of a day, but I look at my father all the time. I can't throw the football with him anymore. I can't do a lot and I just hope that you know this bill can go through to help him and others. And I just want my father to get well and get a kidney and stuff. But I just don't want to lose him. And, yeah.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Michael, thank you so much for being here with us today. And you have done an amazing job sharing your story and the story of what's happened in your family, and the grief and the loss that you all have faced. So thank you for taking the time for having the courage to be before
us today and share this in an effort to try and help your dad and other people.

Did either of you want to say something as well?

DEBBIE ROSELLE: So I'm just gonna speak. I'll never forget the day. I was working and, September 5, 2017, and I was working and the deputy chief came to my job and my worst fear came true. I never thought that it would happen. I mean they say that you know you can get shot and you always hear about it, but when it actually happens -- I became numb.

So we went to the hospital and Phil was in shock himself. And as time went on, he seemed to be getting better. But then there was a decline. Unfortunately, due to the gunshot he was accidentally shot by his sergeant at gun training, he has permanent nerve damage in his right hand. He has the bullet still lodged in his rib that they cannot remove because he'll bleed to death. His mental stability has declined rapidly affecting his any physical health that can get better. And his kidneys have failed as a result of this gunshot six months into the shooting.

His life has changed and the Phil that I knew September 5, to me is gone. I don't know who Phil is anymore. And we're all trying to figure out the new Phil. This has been devastating on my family. I have spent hours and hours of research looking for support as to what's going on and what's happened. I have called many police departments for support, trying to figure out what I can do and trying to get some help. I have made a lot of friends across this nation for Phil. Other injured police officers, who unfortunately, are dealing with the same sort of situation; the abandonment that my husband has
The abandonment feeling has trickled down where I feel I have that abandonment from the city — it's a feeling that is indescribable for me and I have not served for 30 years. So I can only imagine what Phil feels.

So that pushes me to fight and fight and fight hard. I have not had a good night's sleep since before this incident, doing the research in hours in sleepless nights. I came across someone from Massachusetts, Mario Oliveira former a police officer, who was critically, violently injured. He was shot six times, essentially died three times and came back. He is a true miracle. He gave me the knowledge and told me about special legislation. And basically what that does, is that allows you to retire with 100 percent tax-free of your pay. Phil wasn't gonna retire for another six years, and so when I heard about special legislation I immediately started my research in Connecticut, only to find out that nobody has ever heard of special legislation in the state of Connecticut. Chiefs, I have spoken to chiefs, in fact I have spoken with the Norwalk chief, Kulhawik, who is in full support of the bill. And I want to thank him for that; however, he has never heard of special legislation.

So I have -- I presented the bill to Senator Duff and I thank him so much for doing that, for filling that bill. And the bill states to obviously help my husband, but not just my husband, all first responders, all of them, because they all deserve it. These guys put -- these men and women, they put their life on the line every day to save us, whether there's a drowning baby or if somebody is having a heart attack, our mothers, our fathers, our sisters, our brothers. They need to be protected. Like they
go and do their job every day, we need to support them. God forbid something happens like my husband, who can never work again, and his life is essentially declining. I don't know the expectancy. He needs a transplant. He's not on the list. He's developing other problems from the stress of Worker's Comp. And just everything.

So if you're not mentally okay, you're physically going to decline. So we need some protection here, and we need it for all of the first responders. And the state of Connecticut does not have it for anybody right now. And they need it, because it's fair and it's the right thing to do.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Mrs. Roselle.

PHIL ROSELLE: I'm assuming you know who I am, Phil Roselle. I've been a police officer for 30 years. It was all I ever wanted to do, was to give back to the community. I come from a family of law enforcement officers, so that's our norm, giving back to the community, helping others.

On September 5, 2017, I was shot accidentally by my sergeant in a low light training shooting incident. My life did a 360. Prior to that, I was active. I loved my job. I loved my family. I was a coach, did a lot of things. I'm dominantly right-handed, that was taken away from me. I have a bullet still in my chest that I feel every day, when I breathe, laugh, cough, I feel it every day. And the last resort was my kidneys stopped. Going through all of this was very hard. I didn't have the support that I needed. I was in a lot of -- I felt in a dark place. I felt that somehow "what did I do wrong, for 30 years I put my life on the line to protect
the city that I love, that I live in, that I work in, that my kids go to school in, my wife works" and I couldn't understand the stress that I was receiving because I got shot in the line of duty.

My son is a New Haven police officer. He's been on four years. Had this happen to him, he's in the midst of getting married next year, he bought a house and everything, he would have been done.

Sitting in that hospital, not knowing what was going to happen to me, I was worried that I was going to lose my house, I was going to lose my car. My older three sons have gone to college, was I gonna be able to help my younger two go to college? I wasn't the man I was before. [Crying] I can't do anything with my kids. I feel like I'm a burden. You know, sometimes I feel like I would have been better off if I died for all the stuff that I'm going through. I just can't figure out why, what did I did wrong? Why is Worker's Compensation stressing me out? Why isn't anybody helping me? And why do I have to worry about, you know if I do die is my family gonna be okay? You know. I can't do extra jobs. I can't do anything anymore. So my career of being a police officer is done. And as for getting any other jobs, I don't know. I don't know.

So I hope this bill goes through, not just for me or my son but for all my brothers and sisters out there who put their lives on the line every day. And they don't do it because they're made to do it, they do it because that's what they want to do. You know. They want to protect the cities that they live in and the people. And that's all I've ever wanted to do. That's what my son wants to do. That's what my other son wants to do. And I just want to make sure
that down the road if anything were to happen to any of my brothers, sisters, you know my brothers that they'll be taken care of, like we take care of civilians out there. We'll be taken care of if something happens to us horribly. Thank you for your time.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you. Thank you, as I said to your son, for your courage for being here to share your experience with us. And I am grateful, and I know I can speak for all of us, for the service that you've given and that you're continuing to give here today by being here as an advocate. I'm sure that there are members of the committee who will have questions and comments. And Representative Baker.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Good afternoon to Michael. I just thank you for coming out here and pouring your heart and your soul out and telling people of your experiences of not having your dad there. You know. I have a son and he, you know, I can only imagine not being able to be the father and do -- you know I feel I remember you from the Norwalk community. You know, you're always a familiar face in the community and when I didn't see you around I figured you'd retired. So, I was just you know I know the impact that you had knowing the community and feeling safe and you reaching out to people. So you know my prayers are for you and your family. You know, it's the officers like you are strongly needed in the community through community policing for the youth. So my prayers are here for you.

I just got a couple of questions for you. So the city in Norwalk -- was there anything -- did they try to reach out to you or make some sort of
arrangements to help compensate you for not being able to go back to work or?

PHIL ROSELLE: Well when I was injured, like you said, not many people knew what happened to me. It was kind of low key, you know. And being that I'm a loyal -- you know to my police department and all, I figured that its taking time because they're working through stuff and all. 'Cause I'm the first that's ever gotten injured in the line of duty like that. It wasn't until they cut off my Workman's Compensation, used up all my sick time, my vacation time. I didn't even know that I was advised by my tenant while I was in the hospital -- with my kidneys and all that they're expecting me to go back to work. Obviously, I couldn't. I have a hand that doesn't work. I have a bullet in my chest and my kidneys are shot.

So it wasn't until I, you know, went to the press to kind of give out my story as to what's going on, which I really didn't want to do because I'm a private person and all, but it kinda opened some eyes and got some things like "well we can do this or we can do that", but it was words not actions. And you know that was great, it made me feel okay, but down the road I still have bills, I still have mortgages, car payments, medical bills and all, and when Workman's Compensation just kinda turned their back on me, I was in a dark spot. You know. And if it wasn't for Mario and the others [crying] who had gone through what I went through got me out of that dark spot. You know, 'cause I didn't want to be a burden on them. You know. But my hands were tied. I was up against the wall. I didn't know what I'd did wrong and why I was going through this. For years, I put my life on the line and I just can't
understand this. I still can't understand it. Not a night goes by that I wonder, "well what did I do wrong", you know, "why am I getting treated like this, why are first responders getting treated like this" you know. Protecting somebody and all. What we want is fairness. Something happens to us horribly, now we're gonna be protected. It's the same, military and police, that they're gonna have my six, it's my back. I didn't have that.

And if it wasn't for my wife being a strong advocate [crying] and pushing for this with Mario and everybody else, I don't know where I'd be right now. Honestly, I don't know. And I feel bad that my kids, that you got kids that gotta go through this and I'm not the father that I want to be to them. And that they gotta pamper me and make sure that -- I mean my kids have to sleep in a room with me because their afraid I'm gonna die and they're not gonna see me anymore. I shouldn't have a life like that. They shouldn't. Until they feel like I'm gonna be out of this nightmare, I don't know when it's gonna end.

REP. BAKER (124TH): So you, I know you said earlier that the police chief was in full support. Has anybody from the unions or anything reached out to you in terms of you know trying to work out something with the city, the city council or the police commission to try to accommodate you in some way or negotiate something with you?

PHIL ROSELLE: I was afterwards, but it was kind of almost like a rush, like okay this is what happened to you, this is what we can do and move on. And when you're in a predicament that I'm at, you know, it's kind of hard to move on and all, mentally,
physically. You know, and I was still trying to figure out what had happened and why I'm going through this. You know, most of this stuff was through my wife's dedication and strong will to make sure that everything's gonna be okay for me and other first responders. You know, and through her hardcore research and all is where we're at today. You know, basically something that we took on ourselves.

REP. BAKER (124TH): Okay, just we will just keep you in prayer and just continue to be encouraged, okay.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Okay Representative Zawistowski, followed by Senator Champagne.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you Madam Chair. Thank you for coming in today. Mr. Roselle, we can't imagine some of what you've gone through. All I can offer is our thanks for your service and you and your family to your community and to the state. Thank you very much.

And Mrs. Roselle, thank you for bringing in -- for researching and coming up with the idea that has resulted in this proposed bill. I think it's important not only to your family, but some of the other first responders who may find themselves in similar situations. And thank you for being a rock to your family, because I'm sure that it has been a very difficult road for you and all of you.

Michael, your parents much be incredibly proud of you. Very articulate young man, and I appreciate you coming here to speak about the bill today.

And thank you very much. I wish you very much the best for the future.
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Debbie, you got that call that no wife ever wants to get. And you know I know how hard that must've been. The whole family, what you've gone through, you know number one Phil this isn't your fault. You know. It's not your fault. It's part of the system. And we're trying -- with this bill we're hopefully gonna fix a little part of that if we can get it to go through. You know, 22 years as officer myself, now you're my brother because we're all together in this and I'm gonna keep your family in my prayers. I have a long list of people I have in that category and I'm hoping this bill does go through and that somehow it helps you out. But keep strong because there is somebody watching out for ya here.

DEBBIE ROSELLE: I just wanted to add. I know this bill isn't going to be a miracle worker. Phil's, his health, I see a decline, but I know that what this bill can do is it can give him some hope. He wanted to retire with dignity and respect after 30 years of serving his community. And this may give him that, although it's something -- it may be minute to whoever, but this can give him the hope and the light that he needs to carry on on a mental note so that he can physically get better, and know that he has made some sort of impact.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Keep fighting because, you know, if it doesn't go through this year, bring it back next year. And keep going, because you know what -- you know as brothers we may not be helping each other right now but hopefully we can help our other brothers and sisters down the road. So keep
fighting. I'm hoping this goes through this year, but if not keep bringing it back. Keep fighting the good fight. Alright.

MICHAEL ROSELLE: I'd like to add something. What's it called? Oh yeah, everyone pretty much in the city knows about my father. They always say "your dad was a good man". There's times where when he was a cop and we were in the store, people that he has arrested and they give him a lot of respect. And my father never did anything -- was not a crooked cop, did not do stuff to slip it under, take money when there was money there, did everything by the law and I would like for the respect that he gave the city for the city to give him that same respect back. And, yeah.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): I understand that. Again, thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Senator Champagne. Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you. I apologize for sneezing. We're getting a draft up here.

I want to thank you first of all as a family for coming in together. Very, very important. Connecticut's an interesting state; 169 principalities I sometimes call it with 169 different governments. This is the central government for all of us and in a situation like this, this is the place that you need to go. I think all 169 cities and towns would want to react the same way. I know just from the reactions of the committee members here and what we've heard about this situation and so on before we got here today, this was a bill that we wanted to look at and move.
But you brought the human aspect into this that we haven't seen. We see paperwork. We weren't there. We didn't experience it. We didn't experience what Michael's gone through. We didn't feel the losses. We didn't feel the losses that dad went through, and I say "dad" and a father, dad as the police officer, dad as the husband. Those are the kind of changes that, overnight, can just drain everything. The way you have stayed together and worked together to fight this is incredible.

And I can assure you that this committee will work -- I'm not talking next year, we're gonna work and try to get this thing done this year and do the right thing. 'Cause it is right thing to do. If we really believe -- in Connecticut that we will step up and we will do it. I promise you that this committee will make every effort to make this a priority bill. Thank you very, very much.

MICHAEL ROSELLE: I want to thank you very much sir.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you. If there are no further members, I just want to reiterate what Senator Champagne said that this is not your fault and you are not alone. And you're right that even this bill will not be a panacea. You've had many, many levels of loss that you've experienced, but your strength and courage today is an inspiration. And please go forward with that as well. Thank you so much for being here today.

Oh Representative Carney.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much Chairwoman. I just wanted to echo the comments of my colleagues. Thank you so much for coming out here to testify. I actually think it's a shame that there's only eight
of us here. I wish that everyone in the general assembly could have heard your testimony today and really make -- and so everyone knows how important this legislation is and look to see, to find ways to make it so officers who are injured in the line of duty really do get that support. And to try to find out where those cracks are and where those failures are in government because under no circumstances should you have to go through what you've been going through as someone who dedicated their life in service to the community.

So thank you so much for all you've done, for not only the citizens of your city, but thank you for all you've done for the citizens of the state. We do owe it to you. And I wanna make sure that we fix what's broken.

And thank you Michael for your testimony. It's the best testimony I've ever heard. I've been up here -- I'm in my fifth year, it's the best testimony. And I'm being dead serious. All of you have shown so much courage for what you've done today, and I just want to thank you and applaud you. And I wanna make sure we get this done. Thank you so much.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative Carney, and thanks to all of you for being here with us today.

Oh, Representative Michel, sorry. I think he'll be our last one.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): I also wanted to thank you for these very touching testimony which definitely was courageous and I'm short of words. And just I agree with Representative Carney and hopefully as a committee we can really share our experience of
listening to you today with the rest of the assembly.

So thank you very much. Keep up the courage. And keep going forward. Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Thank you. [Background talking and laughing]

Next we have Sam Gold, followed by Betsy Gara.

SAM GOLD: Well that's quite something to follow. Good afternoon. My name is Sam Gold. I'm here both as the Chairman of the Connecticut Association of Councils of Governments and the Executive Director of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments. So thank you co-chairs for allowing me to speak today, and members of the Planning and Development Commission.

As the Chairman of the Connecticut Association of Councils of Governments, I'm here in support of House Bill 6561, AN ACT DESIGNATING COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS AS COUNTIES.

And as Executive Director of River COG, I'm here in support of Senate Bill 550, AN ACT CONCERNING GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS.

So, I'm first going to speak on House Bill 6561. This bill -- the Councils of Governments of Connecticut all strongly support this bill and we've been working with the Office of Policy and Management and the U.S. Census Bureau for over the last two years to obtain federal recognition of our Councils of Governments as county equivalents for the state of Connecticut for federal purposes. What's very important in this, is it doesn't change
a single Connecticut statute. It actually would be communicating to the federal government the nature of Connecticut statutes that have been longstanding that Connecticut statutes particularly Section 8-31 B, subsection b, recognizes COG's can be recipients of grants, federal and otherwise, intended for counties.

The idea here is that by the state requesting this recognition from the federal government, that the COG's will be able to work with their member municipalities to obtain more federal discretionary grants. Currently, we -- across the country on average counties get about $45 dollars per capita in federal transfers. In Connecticut, we have a deficit of about $75 dollars per capita in federal transfers. We are hopeful that over time, having this recognition will allow the COG's to apply for more grants and eventually be successful in bringing more federal dollars back to Connecticut.

In many different areas, this would be helpful. One area that I have in my written testimony, which I've given the clerk. I identified as an area such as FEMA Disaster Recovery. Right now, FEMA does disaster declarations on the county boundaries. Connecticut hasn't had county government in 60 years. So there's no entity on the county to apply for a disaster relief. Which means every first selectperson or mayor has to individually deal with FEMA and the bureaucracy and learn how to speak their talk and it's incredibly time consuming and difficult.

If we are considered the county equivalent for Connecticut, we could actually apply with a single application for FEMA Disaster Relief. It won't make
the bureaucracy or the process any easier, but at least we can do one process instead of multiple. And this is something that's going on with my first selectman right now and as they deal with a disaster in Middlesex County.

And just very quickly on Senate Bill 550. This is a bill from -- to make available cheaper geographic information system software, digital mapping software to towns. I just want to raise the attention of the general assembly and to this committee the model used in North Carolina where the state has an enterprise license with ESRI who is the vendor of this software to allow -- to provide software either for free or cheaply to municipalities. This is becoming very important with economic development and planning municipalities and we do not want that to be an impediment. So thank you very much.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Mr. Gold for being here with us today. And for your testimony on these two bills.

Are there questions from members of the committee? So Representative Arnone, followed by Representative Carney.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): So doing my research on this too, the lot of federal money we are losing. And not only what you said too, but also you know a lot of workforce development can be funded through these. A lot of little different committees every district could have from health and welfare to aging and all that can be funded with federal dollars just because we're now a -- you know a larger portion of council of government. So I found it very interesting. And I had no idea how much money the
state is losing because of the lack of counties. So if we can develop counties without having developed counties [laughing] and take advantage of that funding. It's a fantastic idea.

SAM GOLD: And just to speak on that. It provides another way for towns to work together. They are already working together through the COG's, but this is a way that the federal government will respect. And will allow -- right now we have cities and maybe larger towns who can apply for federal funding, but smaller towns who don't have the staff to either apply or to administer a federal grant. By using the COG in this way, the first selectman, the mayors can come together and have the COG do it on their behalf. And hopefully be successful in bring in more money.

REP ARNONE (58TH): Very good legislation. Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Representative Carney.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much Madam Chairwoman. Sam, it's always good to see you up here. I just have a couple of questions. So regarding treating the COG's as counties for federal funding, has any state ever done anything similar?

SAM GOLD: Yes, so there's six other states that have county equivalents. Probably the best example of a state that has no counties is Alaska. Alaska has -- their boroughs, they incorporate boroughs, are considered counties for purposes of the federal government. We also had examples in other states of combined city/county government. In Virginia, you have independent cities that are considered the same
as a county. We have parishes, of course, in Louisiana. So there are a number of different examples of something other than a county being represented as a county.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): And receiving federal funds?

SAM GOLD: And receiving federal funds.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay, alright good to know. And the other question I actually have on the other piece of legislation. So I'm just curious why this legislation is necessary?

SAM GOLD: So a number of our towns -- I can speak in my region. GIS is a very expensive software, it's more a monopoly on the software through ESRI. And a town's -- it's an expensive software to procure. It is something which I think more can be done on the state level, particularly of OPM in facilitating the access to the software. And also I say the state OPM could do -- should be empowered to do a little bit more when it comes to actually providing data and managing data when it comes a base layer software of aerial photos, road lines, parcel data, and trying to maintain that on the state level because of how useful it is. But if towns can have better access to the software, it's a good thing through negotiating as a group.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay, so the state -- having the state try to get this low cost would be much more easily done then towns or COG's doing it?

SAM GOLD: Yeah, the towns and the COG's don't have enough leverage. And the North Carolina model, I think there's other states have done this as well. I think that's what Senator Needelman was getting at
with his bill, but I provide an example in my testimony.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Alright. Both good bills. Thank you very much Sam.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Senator Cassano and then Representative Dubitsky.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Yes thank you for bringing this forward. We tried to get this moved last year. I had the opportunity to serve as past president of the National Association of Regional Councils. And Homeland Security Board, all of those have counties, and I can tell you that I am thanked continuously for the funds that we're supposed to get that go to them, because if they don't come to Connecticut they divide it up and they go to other counties. So we are funding the other 49 states in the union by giving them our county funds because they don't go back to the government, they go back into the pool. So this is a timely bill and it makes a lot of sense.

It does not change the way we govern. What it does is allows us in a regional way to take those funds and use them, whether it be bridge work or road work or human services, whatever it might be, the way that the COG's in the area would choose to use them. So it's a smart bill. It's a sensible bill. It brings funding back to Connecticut to organizations that already exist and deserve the funding. So thank you for bringing the bill forward.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Senator. Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you Madam Chair. Thanks for coming in. What -- you're saying that
towns are having a hard time paying for GIS software? Can you identify any of those towns?

SAM GOLD: So I'd say that particularly the smaller towns, like I'll give you an example of one of my towns, Killingworth, they have -- and most small towns in Connecticut are run very cheaply. So anything that you can do, particularly for the state negotiating better pricing would help. Of course, it wouldn't necessarily make available at the town, the staff to be able to do -- to have a dedicated mapping person there, but if there can be a way that the state can negotiate better prices for everyone who uses it, whether it be the COG's, the towns or the state agencies, I think that would be helpful.

As for, I know that in my region which is the Lower Connecticut River Valley, our larger towns do have GIS software. I know that we do as well. It's quite an expensive piece of software to not only purchase, you have to pay an annual maintenance cost which are expensive. And we just don't have any leverage on the vendor to really bring down the price, so we're hoping that maybe as a state we could.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Can't you go to a different vendor?

SAM GOLD: Unfortunately when it comes to GIS, the standard battles were fought out 20 years ago and ESRI won. So.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I'm sorry, who won?

SAM GOLD: They're -- ESRI is the name of the vendor. And they monopolize this software.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): How many people in Killingworth?

SAM GOLD: How many people in Killingworth?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah, how many people -- how many residents?

SAM GOLD: Maybe about 3,000 to 4,000. I don't know the exact population.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): My town, we have 2,000 people. We have GIS software. I sit on the Board of Finance. It's not very expensive. We shopped around. We got the best price. We talked to, I think, five or six different vendors and we found one that we were comfortable with that was cheap. I don't understand why everybody else can't do that.

SAM GOLD: Is that the software or actually the GIS services for your town?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): It's both. We get the whole package.

SAM GOLD: Yeah so the licenses can run tens of thousands of dollars per year. So -- and if -- what town?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Chaplin.

SAM GOLD: Chaplin. I would love to be in touch with them. And also if your COG is assisting you as well, that might be -- the COG's, we do a lot -- whatever we can for our towns, through GIS, but even the amount of money I feel that we pay for our licenses is quite expensive for what we get.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well I would encourage you to shop around because I know there are plenty of vendors out there that are competing with each
other and I would hesitate to pass a law that would prevent that competition.

SAM GOLD: So each one of those vendors, like let's -- that provide GIS services, they all use ESRI software because that is the national and now global standard for Geographic Information Systems. And it's unfortunately that other vendors who used to be -- who used to compete for this like MapInfo have just not been successful over the last 20 years when it comes to GIS.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, well I would encourage you to look around because I don't believe that we use that software. In fact, I think that maybe the COG has used that software and we opted out of that and got a private vendor. They're around. I would just hate to have the state come in and impose one thing just because it's cheap and gets a good deal and say everybody has to use that and put all these other little vendors out of business.

SAM GOLD: And when it comes to actually the actual software, there is one vendor and that's ESRI. When it comes to the consultants who can do the work on behalf of towns, whether it's creating data for parcels or all of the mapping that's necessary for towns or creating your portals for public access to that data, there are a number of companies in Connecticut and throughout the country that will compete on that, but when it comes to actual the software that runs the databases that are geospatially referenced, it's unfortunately ESRI.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well I think we had a previous witness who testified that everything is different all over and that the different towns do not -- that the software doesn't talk to each other
across town lines. Now you're telling me that it's all the same across state lines. Can you?

SAM GOLD: It's the same software, but yes I can actually guarantee you that they don't talk to each other. Although last year a bill was passed, I don't have the number in front of me, that's requiring towns to now submit that data, their parcel data, to the COG's to then transmit to the state. So there should be one statewide archive, at least of the parcel data, and that's due to the state on May 1st. I don't know the section of statute for that, but we just announced at our COG meeting this morning that that mandate is now being implemented. But you're right, the databases don't talk to one another, our town boundaries don't line up. So if I was to take my parcels from my region and compare it to the neighboring regions the parcels overlap, we have major geospatial data issues in Connecticut. But -- and anything we can do -- whether or not we can find -- get a better a price for the software in through a group or not, we're all using the same software but the data is all over the place.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but now you're telling me that it's already state law that everybody has to submit their data that will eventually make it to the state for one depository?

SAM GOLD: I'm assuming that that's what the purpose of that bill was last year. If your town does not have GIS, which a number of our towns don't, they don't have to submit it if they don't have it. But for the towns who do have data and they're keeping it up to date they are required, I think on May 1st
of every year, to submit it to their COG; their parcel data, digital map data.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Do you know how that data is used or stored at the state level?

SAM GOLD: This is brand new. I do not know. I -- OPM has limited mapping resources, but they do have mapping resources, but I'm hopeful that this will be the beginning of actually having some sort of statewide portal for people to go and get mapping data because some towns are very fortunate to be able to have been able to fund and create data and make it accessible to their residents and to their realtors. Other towns haven't. And maybe this will be the movement towards actually creating the seamless data that we need to be able to do all of our work.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, well I will continue to watch this. I'm just a little baffled that you know I live in one of the smallest towns in the state with one of the smallest budgets of any town in this state and it doesn't seem to be much of an impediment to us. I can't imagine that towns 2-3-10-20 times the size can't afford that.

Thank you very much for your testimony.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Representative. Are there other questions from members of the committee?

And Mr. Gold, thank you for being here. I believe later in the meeting we are also going to hear from one of the COG, METROCOG folks about GIS to talk a little bit more so perhaps we can continue the conversation then. But thank you for your time today.
SAM GOLD: And thank you very much for your questions.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Next up is Betsy Gara. [Background talking] Okay, so we then have Representative Rochelle who I don't see here right now. Mike Wright, followed by Robert Reed.

Welcome Mr. Wright.

MIKE WRIGHT: Good afternoon. My name is Michael Wright. I'm here for the Connecticut construction industry. And my company is North American Reserve and I am the owner of the company. We are a geologic firm that evaluates aggregates for acquisitions if you're going looking to buy a quarry we would evaluate the quarry and tell you whether it's a good/bad, you know mediocre, deal. We would also work for people who want to start a quarry where we would go out and evaluate the rock and tell them, again is it good, this is an opportunity, it's not an opportunity, it doesn't look good.

And what I'm here to discuss is on 5702. We are opposed to it, mostly based on some of the Army Corps presentation that was done. We are not in agreement with how they have come about some of their decisions. I don't think this is exactly in their wheelhouse, so I don't think they're really very knowledgeable in doing geologic evaluations.

Just for example, what I do when someone asks us to evaluate a quarry, first thing we do is look up the U.S. GS Mapping of the site and then we further go to the local state maps and then even further down to the quadrangle maps which are you know small-scale geologic maps of the area. And we look at the rock types and figure out what we want to do for
testing right away. And we look at the primary and secondary minerals. And in the case of where -- Connecticut if you were looking at the quarry in question that caused most of the problems, the first thing that we would have noticed is on the U.S. GS that calls it a sulfidic schist. And the sulfides are what are causing the problem, the pyrrhotite to be specific. And when you have a rock type with a modifier of sulfidic in front of it, that means it's probably 20 percent to 40 percent sulfides and that immediately would have told us that it is not a rock you want to use to create a quarry.

And then when we further analyze this, in the primary minerals pyrrhotite is mentioned. So immediately all the data is out there already for analysis of the rock type and everything. You already have known that it's a sulfidic rock, it's not good and it also has pyrrhotite.

So what the Army Corps is doing is analyzing all the different quarries, whereas your sulfidic rock in Connecticut is mostly in eastern Connecticut. There is some all over the state, but the dominant rock over in the eastern part does have a lot of sulfides in it. There are several different rock types over there and they're all smooshed together, but you know there are sulfides throughout. Whereas in several of the other areas, there is no pyrrhotite, there's no sulfides and we think that most of those quarries should not be required to do all this testing. I do think it's probably a good idea to start testing, maybe a baseline from all the quarries, but not have successful you know testing weekly, monthly or anything like that.
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Mr. Write. I think you're gonna have some questions. I believe Representative Delnicki has a question.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Maybe one or two. I hope you can come back on March 8th?

MIKE WRIGHT: Yes, I can.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Good because that's when we're really gonna have the public hearing that should be covering these issues, so I'll probably only ask one or two and remain holding the other questions in advance.

You made, and I have to apologize I was going from committee to committee and I was up in Insurance and Real Estate, and I knew you'd probably be testifying at some point in time today and I ran down here.

So I did catch the comment pertaining to the Connecticut River Valley Till and the Army Corps of Engineer's statement on it, and quite frankly the Army Corps of Engineers maybe my trust is misplaced, is an organization that literally has been the organization that has done tremendous things in this country, above and beyond what any other organization could possibly do. And quite frankly, I have a huge amount of confidence in their ability to develop a reasonable standard for doing different things.

But I'm always willing to listen to alternatives. In 1981, if there had been a quarry standard and a testing program, is it fair to say, and if that program occurred at quarries in Connecticut once a year, would we conceivably have 36,000 homes that have the pyrrhotite problem in their concrete?
MIKE WRIGHT: If every quarry was tested once a year.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): So then my second question is this; and this comes from the Army Corps of Engineers' testimony not from supposition on my part, they made an interesting statement and their statement was Connecticut River Valley Till by their definition is probably safe and not a question but nonetheless you know based on the experience with Becker's Quarry, that was safe until probably 1983 before they hit the vein. So based on that thought process you would want, in my opinion, you would want to have a yearly testing of all quarries, even in the Connecticut River Valley because again we're supposing based on mineralogy exactly where the vein of pyrrhotite or multiple veins could be.

MIKE WRIGHT: Right.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): So getting back to the point there. They made a statement and it was their statement, not mine, that their concern lies with the uplands in both the eastern part of Connecticut where we've established that there is a vein that is definitely coming down from Canada and could very well go down all the way to the Long Island Sound and past that point, we don't know. Conceivably, they said that they're concerned about the uplands in the western part of the state also. Now the Army Corps standards, if I recall correctly, does have an "out" based on testing. You know the initial testing and if you come up 100 percent clean, then your testing conceivably would go from a particular specified load paradigm down to like once a year.

Now I know you don't necessarily agree with the Army Corps theory and methodology and the way they go
about it, but the point being right now that is probably the one standard that we have out there. I mean there's ASTM 33, but there's no real way to get there without having a testing paradigm to make ASTM 33 work. [Cross talking]

But we do have a testing paradigm outlined. My question to you is this; based on that thought process, would it make sense to as an interim utilized the Army Corps testing paradigm until something cheaper, better, easier, just as good came forward. And I look to 1981 because we had a committee that was supposed to meet and come up with quarry standards. For whatever reason, we don't have quarry standards and that was supposed to occur and the report was supposed to hit in December. We're probably going to have a committee that's going to continue on that to come up with some kind of a report back. I'm gonna guess six months to a year.

My concern is knowing that if we had had testing paradigms in place in 1981 we wouldn't have, and by your admission, we wouldn't have 36,000 homes conceivably contaminated by pyrrhotite in their concrete. Wouldn't it make sense as an interim to utilize that until we came up with something better? And wouldn't that spur the industry to want to come up with something better, easier, cheaper, but just as effective?

MIKE WRIGHT: The testing existed back in 1981, it existed back in the 1970's. All you had to draw on was an XRF on it and you would have had a percentage of sulfide identified. And whether you, at the time, there is no technical standard for sulfides but no one wanted sulfides in their mixes or
anything else. But the testing was available and it is available now and you can do that as an indicator and then if the indicator comes up and says "okay we have say 0.1 percent, one-tenth of a percent" then go ahead with the further testing, go ahead with the petrography, go ahead with the you know made up tests that needs research and development that identify the pyrrhotite.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): And I would maintain that's what the Army Corps put in their report, was pertaining to the 0.1 percent sulfur content and then from there you had heavier standards that kicked in for doing more complex. So going back to my original statement and I'll stick by it, wouldn't it make sense until we have a tried-and-true report back on a different testing standard to provide that kind of protection, because this has become a state problem. You know the state of Connecticut is bonding $100 million dollars over five years to actually fund a captive insurance company to try to make these people whole.

Also we have for the next 10 years a surcharge on insurance policies and there could very well be something, investigations pertaining to the insurance industry and any culpability they could conceivably have there. We already have three insurance companies that are coming forward offering clients $25,000 dollars in and above the $175 that the captive insurance company is providing.

That's my goal here, is to make sure that we don’t have a repeat of that disaster and that tragedy again in the state of Connecticut, and I'm willing to listen to standards above and beyond once it's
established. That may be better. But as an interim, that's where I'm coming from.

MIKE WRIGHT: But most of this would have been negated if you would've just analyzed the fact that you shouldn't have a quarry in sulfidic schist.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): But nobody knew that at that time.

MIKE WRIGHT: Technically the industry knows that.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Now.

MIKE WRIGHT: Well no, we knew it back then too. I've been analyzing things for 30 years and when we see sulfides, first off it makes ugly concrete so no one wants ugly concrete, and it also causes it to break down. It's been known for years.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Can I relay something? And I'll just make my last comment so that we can save the rest of this for March 8th. I feel compelled to have to make a comment about ugly concrete. In the town of South Windsor, one of the finest developers who built custom homes utilized JJ Mottes concrete from unfortunately 1983 going forward. That concrete, from what I've seen, [cross talking] -- well once it deteriorated it's ugly but prior to that it wasn't. So.

MIKE WRIGHT: Well that's when we say ugly, that's typically what happens [cross talking] -- over a duration of a period of time the concrete, the iron will leach out, something will happen, it doesn't happen on day one, it happens later when weathering and wetness and things like that occur in the concrete.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Come back on March 8th.
MIKE WRIGHT: I'll be here.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): 'Cause I know the Chair is saying "oh boy Delnicki's gonna be here for an hour", right? [Laughing] Just an hour.

Thank you for coming. I have probably 20 or 30 more questions pertaining to the whole issue. Unfortunately I've learned more about concrete and pyrrhotite than I ever wanted to know.

MIKE WRIGHT: Pyrrhotite's a unique one.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): It is very unique, but unfortunately we are plagued with it and conceivably it could be both in the western part and the eastern part based on the Army Corps of Engineers' analyses.

So, thank you for being here. Thank you Madam Chair for indulging the questioning.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you Chairman. Thank you for your testifying. I'm new to this domain and trying to grasp what the exact issue is why there is no testing and all of that stuff, and why we end up in this crumbling infrastructure.

First, can you see sulfides with the naked eye when you're approaching an area?

MIKE WRIGHT: No not really. You can see pyrite, which is a sulfide, fool's gold, and then you pyrite is fairly obvious. And again that's one of the components when we see that, we do not want to make a concrete stone out of that 'cause we know that's gonna leach red you know from the irons, it's an iron sulfide.
REP. MICHEL (146TH): So would be the following step? If you see pyrite and then you're not gonna do a quarry if you're gonna test the area correct?

MIKE WRIGHT: You'd find out how much you might avoid the area and do selective quarrying. We would avoid this one area, we'd set up a mine plan where they would mine around it. We would have looked at the rock in that advanced area and said "yeah there's no pyrite, no pyrite and no sulfides, everything's testing below 0.1, it looks good to proceed".

REP. MICHEL (146TH): And how do you test? [Cross talking] How do you get that 0.1 percent?

MIKE WRIGHT: Pull out actual cores of rock and sample it.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Do you have to dig deep or you just?

MIKE WRIGHT: It's a drill rigging it. You drill straight down. They can also go horizontal too. But we'll pull out the rock core, we'll send that for testing. It gets crushed down. For a construction industry, we would do abrasion which tests the durability. We would absorption, which tests like mica would expand with water and it breaks concrete, it's not good. We test for soundness, which is its disintegration. And that's really where you should've found this issue with the concrete up there. It should've had soundness testing and most likely it would have been seen in that. But again, if the XRF came up and the soundness passed and we still had higher than 0.1 percent, we wouldn't recommended petrographic testing which is again along the lines of what the
Army Corps said and to identify how much or what the percentage is of pyrrhotite.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): What do you think is the motivate -- not the motivated maybe the demotivated to not conduct testing in this quarry?

If it's easy to say?

MIKE WRIGHT: Some people, like if someone came and asked "I want to put in a quarry". I would have dug out there and said "look you're in sulfidic schists, I wouldn't put a quarry in here". That's where my work is done. What they do is what they do. I think sometimes they just want to go -- they think they're gonna make stone just for fill but someone buys it and puts it in concrete. You know, it's -- I don't know whether it's.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Is it because it costs money to test?

MIKE WRIGHT: It does cost a lot of money.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): A lot of money, okay. So it's kind of okay cutting corners basically.

MIKE WRIGHT: It could be, yes.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Okay, and the Army Corps of Engineers was mentioned a couple of times? What's their role exactly in this?

MIKE WRIGHT: They had provided, I guess Connecticut had asked anyone to come forward with developing some type of protocol to make sure that this doesn't happen again. And they've come up with a PowerPoint presentation and we just felt it was little excessive and I don't think it's quite right. And they even say several times in there there's no
research -- they're gonna require research and development to develop techniques to find the pyrrhotite. They don't exist right now. Although there are some labs that do say they can detect pyrrhotite to what levels it needs to be detected.

So it's mostly a lot of research needs to be done, and you know it's a lot I think all -- everything is there already. It's been identified by the U.S. GS and you know there are simple techniques that we know that these quarries don't have sulfides or they do have sulfides and where testing should be done is in the sulfidic rocks in these quarries that already have known sulfides. Whereas the basalt quarries and some of the other granitic-gneiss quarries that don't have any sulfides, they should provide a baseline test and perhaps be left out of further testing, just so they have done the testing. Everyone probably should do at least the start testing.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): And just so -- to make sure I understand everything. I'm missing one acronym, XRF is?

MIKE WRIGHT: Oh, that's X-Ray Diffraction testing. It basically takes a piece of rock. They pulverize it into a powder and then vaporize it with flame and analyze all the different components of it. So you'll see the irons, how much silica is in it, how much sulfur is in it. And from there, we know okay if there's one percent of sulfur that means there's a lot of sulfides in this rock and that's probably way too much for the concrete industry, asphalt or you know aggregate industry, so.
REP. MICHEL (146TH): Well thank you very much. This is -- thank you for the help with the knowledge.

Thank you Mr. Chair.

SENATOR CASSANO (4th): [Mic off]

ROBERT REED: Sorry Senator, I thought I was prepared there and I lost my testimony, so just give me one second.

Here it is.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): You wanna just give us a summary? That'll be fine. You don't obviously don't need to read it.

ROBERT REED: I appreciate that. I intend to Senator. So thank you Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy Vahey.

I'm here representing the city of New Haven. My name is Robert Reed. I'm the Director of legislative affairs for the city of New Haven. And I'm here to discuss supporting proposed bill 557, which is an ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IN NEW HAVEN.

So very quickly, 557 in terms of the Regional Development Authority is specific to you know economic development in the city of New Haven. It should be noted that New Haven is among the best opportunities for growth in the city. It's been quoted by economist John Traynor through most recently at the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce as a "place for growth". We, as an economic engine in the state, know that New Haven is critical so a regional development authority that can oversee the economic and infrastructural
development of the city we think is paramount. So that is what bill 557 is proposing and that's what I'm here to discuss in terms of supporting.

There's also, if I may Senator quickly, a bill called bill 7209 which is a Connecticut -- ESTABLISHING CONNECTICUT MUNICIPALITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, and we do not support 7209. That is a bill that the Malloy Administration put forth and that's a bill that is similar to the Hartford Regional Development Authority and that would oversee the entire economic development in New Haven, and we feel that that just adds a layer of complexity. And with individuals that are on boards that are specific to New Haven and understand the knowledge and the infrastructural and economic needs of the city of New Haven.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Questions? Let me ask. One question. I don't have any experience in the Hartford region, I've been involved with PROG for 40 years. We've got a separate economic development authority. It seems that the region, the council of government is going one way and economic development is going another way. Are we creating another divisive kind of a situation? We spend a lot of time and effort in strengthening and trying to get the COG's to do a better job to get the cities to do a better job and working in a relationship with the business groups and so on. And it seems like we're creating a layer here that maybe could be a problem in the long term.

ROBERT REED: We believe so Senator. I want to also mention that the city of New Haven have been in discussions with our fellow COG's in our area around
the need for you know overall regional development. So it's important as a key function or a key piece in the development of economic development in the state that the New Haven will reach out to its fellow municipalities that border New Haven and say "we're not against having a regional development authority that is more broadly expanded outside of New Haven, it's that we want to make sure that we don't have -- we have one that is invested more in the regional economic development not necessarily governing us from Hartford". So as a note, we are in conversations with other municipalities that border our fair town, our fair city.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): [Background talking] Thank you very much. You get off easy today.

Daniel Giungi.

DANIEL GIUNGI: Good afternoon Senator Cassano, members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Dan Giungi and I'm a senior associate with CCM.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Giungi?

DANIEL GIUNGI: Giungi.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Giungi, thank you. I'm sorry about that.

DANIEL GIUNGI: That's okay. I get it a lot.


DANIEL GIUNGI: Unfortunately I am here today to oppose Senate Bill 556. But please before I begin, the remainder of my comments, I want to preface them by ensuring that the committee is aware of the fact that we fully appreciate the role that our first
responders play as well as the commitment that they've made to keeping all of Connecticut's residents safe, and CCM fully supports efforts to ensure that first responders are made whole when they are injured on the job.

However, we do have a number of concerns with Senate Bill 556. The first being that municipalities are already capable of providing this benefit. We have some members who offer this benefit as part of contracts that have been collectively bargained. We have some members that offer this benefit in conjunction with a pension offset provision, those again are parts of contracts that have been collectively bargained. And we have other members who have gone above and beyond contractual obligations in the most extreme circumstances to help first responders when they're injured on the job.

With that being said, fundamentally this type of benefit should be realized through collective bargaining. Another issue with the bill is that the way it's drafted it would create a mechanism to enable local legislative bodies to go in and selectively invalidate -- excuse me provisions of contracts that have bargained in good faith and that would undermine the integrity of the collective bargaining process.

Furthermore, the bill would provide financial incentive for individuals to remain out of work because it would create a situation in which individuals would be enabled to earn more money while they are unemployed than they would have been compensated prior to the injury that they sustained, and this runs counter to the purpose of Worker's
Compensation insurance because it is a no-fault program.

Lastly, we have concerns with the definitions in the bill such as "public safety employee". It's unclear as to who exactly would be covered under that definition. The term "disabled" is also ambiguous and it's unclear as to whether -- excuse me it's unclear as to how these definitions would relay or comport to current statute.

And lastly, the additional concern that our members have with this proposal is that it doesn't establish any kind of set criteria to make a strict comparison amongst individuals applying for the benefit. And because of that, it's unclear as to whether or not the local legislative body would have to vote on each individual legislative applicant or if they would have to just vote once to codify the language that's in this proposal. But that creates a situation in which the benefit or decisions as to who is awarded the benefit could be done in a discriminatory nature and that opens the door for litigation.

That being said, that is the end of my testimony and I'm happy to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you Senator. Thank you for your testifying today. First, how many people do you know that that would impact on the state level? Like this bill 556 Senate Bill that you're opposing, how many people would this affect? Like how many people are you know -- do you have any research on that or anything regarding the impact?

DANIEL GIUNGI: Well Representative first if I could just clarify, you said on the state level, we
represent the towns and cities so that would be on the municipal level.

No and I think that's part of the issue with the bill. You know when determining exactly how much it would cost is the volatility.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): You said that they would if compensated through this bill, they would end up making more money than they would have; can you elaborate on that please?

DANIEL GIUNGI: Yeah, the Worker's Compensation municipalities are employers and because of that they are required to carry Worker's Compensation insurance to pay out benefits to employees. And the purpose of Worker's Compensation insurance is that it's a no-fault system. So there's no burden of proof at a claim it has to meet in order to be eligible for benefits under the Worker's Compensation system.

And because of that, it is a fundamental and core principle to the system that an individual should be indemnified to be made whole with respect to the benefits that are outlined in the contracts that they're covered by that have been collectively bargained and mutually agreed upon by all stakeholders.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): And I just have a couple of comments. I said outside that you get the short straw 'cause I would not want to be testifying in the opposition for this bill at this thing. I'm a past president of CCM. I've long been involved with the organization. It's a very good, very strong
organization, but sometimes -- have a narrow focus. The narrow focus is the protection of 169 cities and towns and municipalities and sometimes we get too narrow in trying to enforce those protections. Each -- many municipalities have different sets of rules and that's probably why the city of Norwalk has allowed this to even get to the point where it's before us. Simply because this man is not being compensated for full compensation for an injury that he suffered on his job. If we were to become a state that would not support people in law enforcement 100 percent as to what they've earned and what they deserve, then there's something wrong with Connecticut. So I'm gonna full-heartedly support this, as much as I love CCM, because it's the right thing to do. I know your job is to do what's -- is to protect the pocketbook and to protect the role and effort of CCM and I understand that. And I want the family to understand this is nothing personal or anything like that. He got the short straw, I'm telling ya. [Laughing] And so that's the way it works and so we'll be on opposite ends through the system as we have before, but this is a very unusual situation and the beauty of Connecticut government is that we can deal with those unusual situations and it's my intention that we do that.

So thank you for your testimony.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you. And I'm sorry for that. I mean this is the decision of a municipality, right? And if 556 were to pass, it's the legislative body of the municipality that would vote on it.
DANIEL GIUNGI: That's the way it's drafted, yes. But I think the issue is that each individual town and city has intricacies that define its operation and financial standings. So each individual town and city has a different position as to what exactly they can offer with respect to benefits. What this proposal would do is enact, you know, a very broad blanket in the system and not take into account those intricacies and unique details of each town and city.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Yeah but I mean this is -- like we're offering the municipalities to make a decision on it, right. I don't see anything wrong with that really, and to second Senator here, the good Senator, what kind of a state would we be if we don't fully support our first responders.

So, that's it. Thank you. Thank you. I'm still new to this, so I'm learning how to ask questions. Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Any other questions? Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

DANIEL GIUNGI: Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Brian Anderson.

BRIAN ANDERSON: [Mic off] Today we have several Norwalk police officers, a couple of Massachusetts police officers and the Roselle family. And I want to thank you for the kindness you showed to the Roselle family today.

We support Senate Bill 566, AN ACT CONCERNING ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR CERTAIN RETIRED PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES. I first want to thank Senator Bob Duff from Norwalk for sponsoring this important
legislation to try to help Officer Roselle and any other consequent officer who finds themselves in this position. This bill was modeled after a Massachusetts law that will ask for a municipality to compensate an officer who may be injured so severely in the line of duty that basically they're permanently disabled for all intents and purposes. I know the question has been asked, how many times would this be used. And I think we can look to Massachusetts and get an idea because 53 police officers have used this in 70 years. So I don't think this is going to apply a lot. Please consider Massachusetts has a higher population than we do.

I disagree with my good friend Mr. Giungi about the fact that you could collectively bargain this. To my knowledge, there is no town in Connecticut where this is collectively bargained. This whole area, and believe me I constantly have to relook this stuff up 'cause it does get very crazy and technical. There are collective bargaining agreements where there is a bridge for Worker's Compensation, not disability, but Worker's Compensation where someone who is out on Worker's Comp, will get 80 percent of their pay from Comp. And some cities, like this city of Norwalk which has been a good employer to deal with, have a bridge policy that covers that 100 percent gap. The 20 percent gap making sure that the officer during the Worker's Comp time gets 100 percent pay, but then when the disability retire, they get cut. And that's what this bill is about. To bridge that cut.

I think by all standards, everybody would agree that Officer Roselle would stay on the job until 65 years of age and this is a financial hit to his family. The tax break was brought up. There is some tax
break, but that does not make Officer Roselle or any officer in that dilemma haul -- Officer Roselle is an outstanding officer, Dave O'Connor the president of Norwalk talked to me about what an outstanding officer Phil Roselle is today. He came up here today also and has submitted testimony. In the interests of your time, we don't want to have everybody testify today. I do urge you to stick around for the testimony for the Massachusetts officers who’ve been working with a similar system for quite some time.

I think I made all my points. I just think it's a humane and decent bill to pass. Happy to answer any questions.


BRIAN ANDERSON: Thank you Senator.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Debbie, did you want to testify? I think your name was already crossed off. Debbie Roselle?

Mario Oliveira and Bob Denapoli.

MARIO OLIVEIRA: Good afternoon members of the committee, Senator Cassano. My name is Mario Oliveira. I'm a retired police detective, an ATF task force officer from Somerville, Massachusetts.

I sit before you today in complete support of bill 556. Allow me to take you back to November 2, 2010. It was a day that I went to work. I thought it was gonna be a normal day for me. I did not make it home that night. I made it home about a month later. I went to work, I got shot in the line of duty, shot six times at point blank range, for doing
my job protecting the citizens of my community by taking illegal firearms off of our streets. That's what the city paid me to do and by gone it that's what I did and I did it well.

What's more alarming is, you know, I was really badly hurt but after I recovered, semi recovered, from my injuries I went back to work in five months only to suffer a heart attack and later a stroke consistent with the injuries that I sustained on November 2. But what's more alarming is the battle that I had with my city to receive 100 percent of my pay. I wasn't asking to be made captain or a sergeant or the chief of police or asking for $1 million dollars, just what I would have earned had I not been hurt at no fault in my own. And I can tell you it took my city a year and a half to make a decision. And there were days that I sat in my room contemplating suicide. [Crying] I didn't know how I was going to take care of my family. My wife was pregnant. I found out my wife was pregnant the day I got out of the hospital. I had a 4-year-old little boy. The world -- the weight of the world was on my shoulders. I didn't know how I was gonna provide for them. That's my responsibility. That's Phil Roselle's responsibility.

You folks don't have an idea of what it's like to be in our shoes. You can imagine, but you have no idea what it's like to be in our shoes, to walk a mile in our shoes with the weight of the world on it. You know, our wives, our children depend on us to be the provider for the family. And when our cities and our departments turn their backs on us, who do we turn to? I took an oath to protect and serve 17 years ago, and I did it and I did it well. But when I got hurt, who was there to protect and serve me?
Nobody. Nobody. I fought on my own with this guy that I love. And I did some research. I advocated for myself and my family. I went and met with city selectman, my mayor and eventually got it. I eventually got it a year and a half later. I'm proud to say. And I'm very grateful to my city and my mayor and the selectmen and women that sat on that board, I really am.

Now let me transition, if I may, to line of duty death benefits. When a police officer in any state gets killed in the line of duty, there are statutory federal and state benefits that are afforded to their loved ones. Federally, let's use Mr. Roselle, Officer Roselle, as an example. If Phil died on September 5, 2017 his wife Debbie would have received a one-time federal payment of $359,316 dollars tax free, one-time payment. This money comes from PSOB, the Public Safety Officers Benefits through Washington D.C. It's funded through the BJA, the Bureau of Justice Assistance. In addition to the one-time federal payment, Mrs. Roselle would have received Phil's base salary as a senior patrolman for the city of Norwalk for the rest of her life. Every raise Norwalk P.D. receives, she would receive. And then her loving children would have in-state college tuition paid for.

In Mass, the state benefits are little different. We also have a tax exemption on your home for real estate. So if Bob Denapoli was killed on September 11, 2011, his wife would be exempt from paying property taxes on their home along with the other benefits that I just mentioned.

Now, let's transition. Phil survived that ordeal, luckily and thankfully. So what the city offers him
is 66 and one-half, well 66 and one-third percent of his pay or 72 percent. He essentially gets a pay cut for surviving. What is the message? The message is, you're all worth more dead than you are alive. If any one of you nice people think that's appropriate, don't talk to me. That is ridiculous and absurd. When an officer is worth more dead than he is alive, there is something wrong with our country in this world. There really is.

And for these reasons, I join forces with this great man and we formed an organization called VIPO, Violently Injured Police Officers, and we advocate now and have been for the last five years in Massachusetts. So that way officers who are permanently injured can retire with dignity and respect without feeling that they're a burden to their families or municipalities. And I hope this happens here in Connecticut because the officers and first responders here in this state deserve such a thing. Thank you. I will turn the floor over to my partner Bob.

BOB DENAPOLI: Thank you. My name is Bob Denapoli, a police officer in Woburn, Mass for 17 years. I got shot in the line of duty September 6, 2011. It was a jewelry store robbery. I got shot six times. So I luckily, I don't know how I did but I did -- when I went through what I went through Mario had already been shot and he had reached out to me knowing what he went through he wanted to see -- you know if I was okay. Random. Never met the guy before. Didn't know him. He came to my house. We talked for a little while. Since then, we've been inseparable because what we saw and what we did, we went through together, through the homemade petitions -- I'm sorry special legislation that our
cities provided for us. At first, you know I don't think they knew how to handle it either because we were -- I was the first -- well we had a police officer that had been killed in the line of duty just nine months prior, but one that survived they didn’t have -- they didn't know what to do.

So one of our state senators came to me and said "look there's special legislation that we can do, since 1948, this is what's been happening; police officers, firefighters, anybody can get this special legislation" but as far as we knew, and I did my homework on this, since 1948 only 53 police officers have ever gotten this out of the many that have been shot and killed. Most of us don't survive when we get shot. We just don't. That's one of the hard facts of this line of work.

So with this special legislation when it was formed, we sat down and we wrote it out, similar to what was seen here in front of you with 556. But the 556 is only giving, like you said, permission for the cities to do this. That's all that is. It's up to the cities to write out what they want for their police officer. Like mine is different than Mario's. As far as a special legislation goes, it's individualized throughout anybody, anything. It could be you know a whole police department -- I mean it could be me. Like it's me the Woburn Police Department represents me in the city of Woburn. So they wrote this -- well Ken Donnelly who was our state senator wrote this all up for me. And it started out with "an act provided for Office Robert Denapoli, shot in the line of duty" but it gives a little synopsis of my story and then breaks down what they would like me to have. What you know -- we sit down and agree. It was kind of like
negotiating, which in my mind couldn't understand why I had to negotiate terms of my contract you know. I just couldn't understand it. It was like -- I thought I was taken care of. That was the assumption. You always think you're being taken care of, you know when you have a job like that. But you're not, you know. Well you are, but you're not at certain levels. There are certain levels of it.

So Senator Donnelly comes to me and we do all this and we present it to the city, because it's essentially the city's job, it's a municipality thing. So the state senator was doing the city a favor, but the mayor didn't appreciate that. So it kinda was like a tug-of-war with us for a little while. But a year and a half later, just like Mario, the mayor came to terms and we kind of had an agreement. We agreed to disagree, let's put it that way. I had no choice.

So with that, the special legislations were something that has -- like I said to everybody it's been going on since 1948. I didn't know that. I've never heard of them until I got shot, you know what I mean. So it was something out there that I wouldn't have even known of it wasn't for the senator, the state senator that brought it to me. And I don't know if my city would have enacted it.

So that's another thing. Does your city know how to do it? I mean I'm sure there's other police officers in Massachusetts that had been disabled that had no idea that there was special legislation out there and they went out at 72 percent. You know what I mean? So this is the stuff that we're trying to educate people on, bring it out there for
everybody to understand that there's stuff out there to help police officers, firefighters, public workers, anybody. I mean these special legislations just individualized laws or bills, and it does not affect anything to do with the [swearing] unions because it's an individual basis. It has nothing to do with the bargaining, you know any bargaining agreements, nothing. It's something that goes constitutionally in the state.

So I just wanted to give you guys a little information on it. I don't know if there's something else you -- the state of Connecticut may call it something different, you know -- I mean we call it homemade petition, we call it special legislation, we call it a bunch of things. But that's how you know we obtained our retirement packages. And it wasn't something that we believed that we were owed. That's not what it was. It was offered to us because of the special circumstances of our situations, getting shot in the line of duty, both of us. It's more than just a twisted knee or a wrenched back, it's catastrophic, something that really has to be catastrophic. That's how we deem what's going on here, you know. So, I think that's all I really have for you. Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): I appreciate both of you coming down and testifying. Are there any questions?

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Just a brief comment, thank you very much for your testifying. I'm sure it's not easy, so thank you very much.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Madam Chair?
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Senator, and thank you both for being here today. I regret that I was not able to hear the entirety of your testimony coming in late, but I understand that both of you have been through just some unbelievably life-changing circumstances that are tragic. And I thank you for coming here to Connecticut today to help us understand what options we might have.

And a couple of questions. Well one in particular. The language in the bill that we have before us is that we would pay any public safety employee who is disabled on duty and my understanding is there might be some other language that's available that’s a little bit more specific to your circumstances, which is where you -- you know there are different types of disabilities right? So is there language that you use in Massachusetts that was a little bit more defined or specific?

MARIO OLIVEIRA: I provided Mr. Anderson with a copy of the most recent legislation that we filed. Would you mind forwarding it over to your folks to review? Certainly you can have a copy or I can e-mail a copy to your office. Mr. Anderson is still here. I actually gave him -- there he is. Sir, would you mind? Thank you. Mr. Anderson has a copy.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Wonderful, and I think that's very helpful because as you probably heard earlier in the discussion we were talking about that broad type of definition and we were talking about volunteer firefighters versus paid and all of that. So I think that having some language is really helpful and I appreciate you sharing that with Mr. Anderson, and I know he will do so with us.

That's is for me for now.
SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): I do want to say that it's a little ironic that maybe two hours ago we had testimony from volunteer firefighters who are having extreme difficulty recruiting and keeping people and everything else. What kind of a message do we send if we don't deal with the kinds of things that are before us? This is a perfect example of the two different ends of the spectrum in the same hearing.

Thank you for coming.

MARIO OLIVEIRA: Thank you. Thank you all. Have a great day.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Is Mary here? Donna Hamzy, and then Kelly Hollister.

Welcome.

DONNA HAMZY: Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Representative Zawistowski and other members of the Planning and Development Committee, thank you so much for having me today before you to testify in strong support of Senate Bill 788.

My name is Donna Hamzy-Carroccia and I'm here representing the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities. Senate Bill 788 would permit municipalities to impose a property tax on such facilities that generate income for hospitals. It is no secret that hospitals across Connecticut have been expanding and buying up properties in our local community for use of these types of facilities.

In Connecticut, there are over 75 types of property that are exempt from local taxation. These mandated exemptions shift a greater share of the property tax burden to local homeowners and businesses. The
state does have a program that does partially reimburse municipalities for this lost property tax revenue. While we appreciate this, the compensation municipalities receive is only a fraction of the revenue that's lost by these tax exemptions.

These outpatient facilities generate income for hospitals that benefit from the property tax exemptions that they are provided. Allowing municipalities to tax such facilities fairly compensates the community for providing services such as public police protection and the use of roads, sidewalks, garbage collection and sewage maintenance to name a few. Seven-eight-eight is a step in the right direction and acknowledges the fiscal strains that towns and cities, as you all know, are facing today and have been facing and will continue to face until the state takes some serious action in helping to mitigate what is a regressive tax in the property tax.

We would also ask that the committee consider taking this bill a step further. Last year you all did consider a bill that would allow municipalities to assess fees on colleges and hospitals. I know that was considered last year in the committee. We're asking that the committee consider that towns and cities be allowed to assess a community public safety and infrastructure fee to tax exempt properties in order to recoup the costs, again for public safety and public works services that these properties enjoy.

It has the same principles and would function in a similar manner as to how water and sewer fees are established and assessed. Again, CCM strongly encourages the committee to consider in the
favorably report Senate Bill 788 and consider again expanding the legislation to allow for municipalities to assess a community public safety and infrastructure fee.

That is all my testimony. I'm happy to take questions.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): I have one quick question. We've made so many changes over the years. Can the local municipality assess property taxes on property value on the hospitals?

DONNA HAMZY: I don't believe so at this point. No, because they are considered exempt.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): So there is no local revenue from the hospitals?

DONNA HAMZY: Yes, that's correct.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Other questions? Representative.

REP. ARNONE (58TH): So this would affect Enfield quite a bit actually. We have a whole zoned area for a lot of these non-profit outpatient facilities. And now we receive maybe one-third of what they're worth from PILT Program, which we talked about earlier. The PILT taxes coming to the towns, and we're using them for wear and tear on our infrastructure just on this one area of town.

So this is definitely could use some expanding I think. I think if a bill like this passed, you would have our town council up in sharing it because this would be an incredible revenue for us. I've seen the numbers that these outpatient facilities are actually giving to the hospitals and they are quite a considerable amount of money that's coming
into the hospitals and really a profit for a non-profit. So I was really excited to see this bill and I will highlight it at our next council meeting when I address our council.

DONNA HAMZY: Great. Thank you Representative.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you Representative Arnone. It's interesting we have the PILT Program, if we were paying the PILT Program in full payments we probably wouldn't have discretion before if we'd be doing our job, but we're not doing our job.

DONNA HAMZY: Thank you for that Senator.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Representative Haines.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Yeah, hi thank you so much for coming in to testify. And thank you Chair for taking me and my question. So this is a very difficult situation for a municipality. I have, in my district, I have a non-profit of major non-profit who makes a lot of money and they you know have a PILT and hopefully that PILT -- they also pay for sewer so that they do have certain fees that they pay to do that. Right now, my understanding, and this is my question; my understanding is that as these hospitals come into communities wherever those communities you know might be they're gobbling up our small town doctors. And our small town doctors are signing on to the big hospitals to be part of that network. Prior to these hospitals coming into your small communities, they were affiliated with the hospital but they weren't involved in the whole chain of the whole COG so to speak of these big hospitals.

So my question is is that the patients are the same, so as these doctors become parts of these big
hospitals, have their tax situation change and are they now non-profits because they'd become involved with these hospitals? And if that is the case and they are not now paying those taxes, how do the patients who will remain the same people not get charged for this new tax that you're imposing on them?

It's involved, I know but it’s the system that's in play right now.

DONNA HAMZY: So to understand your question, just so that I know that I'm answering correctly. So you're asking if these doctors that have now been -- have now entered into this network are no longer paying where they would have been paying before and now -- so your question is if the patients are going to be paying?

REP. HAINES (34TH): Well it's a two-fold question. One is that the case? Is that these doctors are now signed onto these hospital programs, are they now non-profits where before they were paying private tax?

DONNA HAMZY: So to answer that question, I believe that that's correct because if they are housed within the facility I guess that's owned by that hospital, the ones that we're talking about the outpatient facilities that are again like you were saying have been coming into all of the communities, I believe that yes they are not taxed in that building.

REP. HAINES (34TH): So now the municipality is out that tax dollars for that office that now is now taking a bigger place and how is that not gonna translate into seeing their doctor and when they
need to see them and how it's gonna double in price because that tax has to be paid somewhere.

DONNA HAMZY: Yeah, I don’t disagree with you. I think that the system is broken. You know in this case, we're certainly not talking -- we're not talking about the patients and their, you know, the pricing of healthcare 'cause that's a whole another conversation that we could probably have. In this case, you know we are concerned that because of the perforation of these types of facilities across the state really, you know there has to be some give and take. And while we recognize certainly that the hospitals provide a service to our most needy residents, there has to be some again some opportunity for communities to be compensated in order to provide those services that they also provide in terms of emergency management.

REP. HAINES (34TH): I agree. Again, thank you for bringing this to our attention. Thank you Chair.


Kelly, okay. Seeing no others. Oh yes.

KELLY HOLLISTER: Good afternoon. I'm Kelly Hollister. I am here in support of bill 556, not only as a close personal friend of the Roselle family, but I'm also a coworker of Phil. I've been with them throughout the entire journey and I've watched everything transpire. I've helped Debbie along the way being her cheerleader, helping Phil when he was really, really down. I've witnessed things that after serving 30 years in your community you shouldn't have to worry about where your next paycheck is coming from. I never -- I've only been
on the job for seven years and the things that I've witnessed in that seven years multiply that times four that's what he's also witnessed times four. And then to, through no fault of his own, shot on the job and then have to worry about where his family is gonna get the money and the funds to keep them going.

And in all honesty, we did sign up for this job. We put our lives on the line every single day. We do it well. But you don't think about the what-if's. I fractured my tibia on the job and my sergeant called me to see how I was doing and he said "you sure you can go back to work, what happens if you have so much damage you can't go back to work". I didn't think about that. We don't think about those things until you're in that position. That's where they're at. So I think that this is a fantastic way to just give back a little bit to somebody who has given so much of himself to the point where he doesn't even recognize himself anymore when he looks in the mirror.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you Senator. And I would just like to thank you for staying with us here today, but also for staying with your friends and supporting them throughout this ordeal.

KELLY HOLLISTER: Of course. Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): [Mic off]

MARK GOETZ: [Mic off] One more, there ya go. Okay sorry. I am a technology person, but phones and you know voice devices aren't my thing.

Thank you Representative McCarthy Vahey, Senator Cassano, for allowing me to speak here today and the rest of the Planning and Development Committee. I
am Mark Goetz. I'm the GIS Director for the Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments, here to support Senate Bill 550. I am a -- I have 20 years of GIS professional experience working directly with the city of Milford, city of Hartford. I've worked for Northeastern Connecticut Council of Government's NECOG implementing their GIS system several years ago. I've also worked for several engineering and GIS consulting firms within the state. I believe I've worked in several dozen communities directly or indirectly helping them to implement GIS.

You know the question of the cost of GIS software to me is not the larger issue here. It's the cost of the base mapping, the aerial photography, topography, mapping, catch basins, pavement, building footprints and things like that. I see that there's a lot of opportunity to share those costs amongst the state and municipalities, other federal agencies.

And to me the biggest missing partner at the table are the utilities who benefit greatly from these acquisitions that occur at the state or the town level. They use them -- you know this information is used in the planning and development process. We, you know as a consultant, we were using this data to produce the plans that we were proposing for upgrading utility lines and other things. And there's a large effort and large cost for these to collect that information.

So you know, I'm really here to try and continue this discussion and would like to continue supporting that discussion so that we have you know things like consistently acquired aerial photography
to support the needs of all of those different organizations throughout the state. Thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Questions? Representative Delnicki.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you Mr. Chair. Is it safe to say that the maintenance, upkeep, data downloading and continual changes that you have to do to the GIS system to keep it up to date is probably the highest cost point for the GIS system itself and it's really not the cost of the buying the software? It's the cost of maintaining and keeping your records current, accurate and up to date?

MARK GOETZ: That's generally the largest cost. The software is usually a small fraction of that. The 2016 flight, for instance, was approximately $2 million dollars. So for aerials, the LiDAR and the development of contours, that's where the largest costs are. So you know we probably spent about I think somewhere about $25,000 a year on software. But the staff and the consulting to build and maintain that data certainly is going to far exceed those software costs.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): And that $25,000 is probably your licensing fee and whatever software upgrades there'll be and then you probably have -- I'm gonna guess five maybe six times that for staff to maintain it?

MARK GOETZ: It's something like that. You know I don't have those specific numbers, but they're definitely -- yeah I mean we definitely see the data maintenance and the activities that go into that being more considerable than just the software.
REP. DELNICKI (14TH): And one last question. Only knowing how I've seen the DMV work. Who is better off putting their changes in cartography and whatever other data for the particular community; who is better off at doing that? The local GIS department in a town hall or would you want to turn that over to a state entity that wouldn't have the same level of ownership?

MARK GOETZ: What I'm thinking is maybe a public private partnership between all these different organizations to really focus on making sure that we have the information we need to continue conserving, continue developing data, those you know the developers coming into the state or into any area -- this is one of the first things that they are going to be looking for to be able to start planning how to develop in those communities. So if we make it more readily available then those developers may look at Connecticut more favorably, you know without having to put feet on the ground, research, and you know doing a lot of legwork to be able to figure out if they can do these projects or not.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): And just an interesting aside, my community South Windsor, you go on southwindsor.org and literally you can pull up any of the infrastructure, any of the GIS maps. They are updated, literally whenever there's a change in somebody moving in from the property card to a home being built or whatever. Those changes are made seamlessly and all that information I can literally pull up on my cell phone. And that's why I make the comment about who do you entrust to do the updates?

MARK GOETZ: You know, it's sort of a mixed bag because you have some communities like South Windsor
that have invested in the technology and the staffing, and it's really the staffing, the knowledgeable staffing, to be able to manage and curate the data, web applications so it's easier for people to digest that volume of data. It is -- there's a lot of complexities to GIS that I don't think -- I don't have the time here to get into and nor do you probably have the interest to go into the minutia of that.

You know, there are some towns that are doing well in maintaining that GIS data and then there's other towns that don't have the wherewithal to even know where to start to be able to do that.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): And one last question. Is there a one-size-fits-all software package for that?

MARK GOETZ: Well I think, it depends on what you're doing. Maintaining the data the, you know talk about ESRI being the juggernaut, it's in that area where they have the tools to best manage say parcel data and other things. Viewing it, there's a lot of free options out there; QGIS, I don't know. There's a whole bunch of other things out there. But they're not developed to be a tool for maintaining data at a high level. They're great for making printed maps, pushing stuff to the web for people to utilize, but what I've seen in my 20 years is you know data management is usually done in that ESRI environment. And then they can make it available in other web software environments and things like that.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Thank you. Thanks for your testimony. Thank you Mr. Chair.
REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you. I believe you are the last person here today and I know everyone is always anxious to go toward the end; however, I think this is a really important conversation and I just wanted to ask a couple of questions just to clarify from some of the earlier conversation that we had here today.

We heard from one of the first testifiers something about Google Maps versus ESRI, and the availability of those two different options, and I just wanted you to address that, because we also heard later in the day from folks about being able to go out and find different options that are cheaper and that work. You know you heard the Good Representative talking about his own experience in his community and I wondered if you could just help us understand the Google versus ESRI and then how is it that a town would be able to go out, especially a small community and be able to get a better price and possibly a better product? I guess that's a subjective measure, but on a price basis that's not so subjective.

MARK GOETZ: So Google has been a, you know I don't want to call them GIS software because it's really a viewing platform for geographic information data. So you know this is where unfortunately it gets technical [laughing] and Google is you know you go to Google you can look at your house. You see the imagery. It looks great from with nothing else in relationship to that information. So Google is in the business of selling ads and clicks and things like that. And that's what that platform is you know, that's what it's designed to do, is engage people in geography and you know you can put up your store information on there. In my mind, it's not an
enterprise GIS data management platform. That's where ESRI comes into play.

So for my staff and myself, when we're editing data I'm in the ESRI desktop software. They also have web-based software to be able to make that available to a lot larger audience. That's where, you know, Google had the lead on in terms of what offerings they have and making that a GIS data that they provide available. So I'm not aware of any real great tools on Google to maintain data, but it's you know it's a fine product for making some information available. But maybe not necessarily for maintaining -- it's not parcel date, property data, sewer data. You know we are helping the town of Monroe with their MS 4 mapping of the storm water system. There's no Google product that can help us solve that -- map that for the town of Monroe.

In terms of qualifications to maintain data, you know typically when we're looking at parcel data we're looking at survey information, metes and bounds and trying to close the boundary survey. That's where the individual skills, qualifications come into -- are important.

So you know. Representative from Chaplin, you know they brought in a consultant that's making their GIS available on the web. I'm not sure what they're doing inside the town. They may be just using that we application and that's you know what they call the GIS. And that's actually -- that's fine. I'm not [laughing] trying to dismiss you know the value they're getting out of that consultant. But the problem is that it's hard for them to play in the same sandbox with other entities at work in that area, whether it's Army Corps of Engineers who has
property in the Mansfield Hollow area, the Council of Governments or any other organization, the land trusts, whether it's, I think it's Joshua Tract in Chaplin.

So it's, you know, these are tough questions to answer in this.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): And I recognize that, and I would love to have an offline conversation with you, but I'm trying to drive home the point. Last night, I went to a neighborhood meeting where the neighborhood was impacted by severe flooding and a severe rainstorm event. And we had maps out on the table with our town engineer, folks from town engineering and public works and our first selectman. And I'm assuming that those maps came out of the GIS system which had quite a bit of detail on them related to grade, related to the location of catch basins, wetlands, parcels, you know delineation of the property, etc. And when you talk about playing in the same sandbox, this is a neighborhood that never thought they were going to have to be looking at this map and they had this just kind of random event.

What I'm wondering is, are some of my neighboring communities in other places of the state, would they have access because we're part of the METROCOG and you know we have this you know shared ability. Would some of the other communities if they had a situation like that and needed to have a neighborhood meeting, those maps were invaluable to that meeting last night. And to the planning for what our public works folks are able to do for the most effective cost and the most effective bang for the buck. Do other communities then have access to
that kind of information for their own planning purposes?

MARK GOETZ: I don't believe -- I mean I would say that's you know in the METROCOG region we're fortunate to have been -- receive funding from OPM, RPIP Grant, to conduct the flight in 2013, capture, building footprints and all the infrastructure that would be used to evaluate those kinds of situations; contours. You know we were lucky to get that 2016 flight statewide flight through the RPIP Program. The level of work that the town of Fairfield has done over the past 15 years in the engineering department when Juliana [phonetic] and Seral [phonetic] came to Milford when I was in Milford. That's when they were starting out building GIS so they sort of followed some of the work that I was doing in Milford and replicated that in Fairfield.

So it takes a lot of effort and there's a lot of resources that go into maintaining that data. And if there's a small town -- you know if we look at Easton they don’t have that kind of resource internally to be able to respond in that way that Fairfield had.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): So the simple answer to my question is no?

MARK GOETZ: No.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Okay. Thank you so much for your testimony today and for the information. I look forward to a conversation later with you.

REP. GUCKER (138TH): Thank you, and thank you for coming in. City of Danbury did GIS mapping a number of years ago and my only history of it, I am hoping
that the technology has gotten better. They had an error point of 15 to 20 feet from property lines. Is that still the case?

MARK GOETZ: For?

REP. GUCKER (138TH): For say structures and such?

MARK GOETZ: Not in the METROCOG region.

REP. GUCKER (138TH): I'm not sure what Danbury is using, if they're even using the same thing. It came to attention because when this GIS mapping came online, my property itself my house was built in 1966, you look at the map there's no house on the map. So unless I want to go and hire a surveyor, they said "no do the GIS mapping, you'll be better". So when I did it, it showed my property lines going through neighbors houses. So I just wasn't sure if that technology has gotten better. I mean I know this was probably 15 years ago.

MARK GOETZ: And I would say that that's not the technology's fault. That's the fault of whoever contracted for that service. Maybe they didn't have, maybe there wasn't a whole lot of money to put into the building the data to a level detail that actually usable at the site level. That's pretty common though. That, unfortunately, a lot of communities don't put in the right kind of investment to build that data to an accuracy that's gonna stand the test of time. We try to build things that you know in 25 years if no development has occurred, that mapping is still more than adequate. So if they took the assessor's map and rather than the survey map, which you probably would've had from a 1966 subdivision, it just depends on how they build that. You know, having
standards in place that say that "this is how we should be doing it" would be another important thing to incorporate into this process.

REP. GUCKER (138TH): So in other words, it's probably more in their service as far as how they're overlaying over your work instead of what I'm looking at?

MARK GOETZ: That's correct.

REP. GUCKER (138TH): Alright, thank you.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): [Mic off]