

EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE
NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

CHAIRPERSON: Representative Edwin
Vargas

SENATORS: Bergstein, Duff, Formica,
Hartley, Kushner, Moore,
Witkos

REPRESENTATIVES: DiMassa, Godfrey, Perillo,
Phipps, Vargas, Yaccarino

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Nominations coming in for order,
will you please take your chairs?

Welcome to all, this is the first public hearing
held by the Executive and Legislative Nominations
Committee for this session and I'd like to welcome
all.

We have -- our agenda for today, we have one House
resolution. Actually we have a few House
resolutions, one Senate resolution. I'd like to
start by introducing the members of the Committee
but first I'd like to give my Senate coach here the
opportunity to make a few remarks if he'd like.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and
welcome back everybody to our first meeting of the
second session. I'll look forward to hearing the
folks this morning. I just wanted to take a moment
to just make a quick introduction.

I have my trainee intern here today, Colin McKessie
[phonetic] who's here and also I have a visitor from
Norwalk, Matthew O'Callahan who is a senior at
Norwalk High School who has decided he's interested
in the political arena so he's here visiting today

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and welcome him while we do our job here in the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman and let's -- let's get moving.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes, Senator Witkos, like to introduce yourself and the areas you represent?

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator Kevin Witkos from the 8th District, 11 towns in the central northwest corner.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Representative Perillo?

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Jason Perillo, State Representative representing the Town of Shelton.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And our Vice Chair, Representative Phipps.

REP. PHIPPS (100TH): Good morning, everyone, I'm Q Phipps from the great district of the 100th which is the city of Middletown.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE (22ND): Senator Moore, 22nd Senatorial District, Trumbull, Monroe and Bridgeport.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And I'd also like to say we are ably staffed here by Wendy Fritz who is the Committee Clerk. Wendy.

And without further ado, is Mr. Wilfred Blanchette, Junior, present? Please come forward and before you take your seat, would you please raise your right hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

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WILFRED BLANCHETTE: I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): You may be seated and as is customary, we allow all our nominees to make an introductory statement so the floor's yours.

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: Senator Duff, Representative Vargas, members of the Committee, my name is Wilfred Blanchette, Junior. I live in the Village of Baltic in the Town of Sprague and have done so my entire life. I thank Governor Lamont for his confidence in me by virtue of this appointment and I pledge to reward that confidence with a continuing sincere effort to conduct the business of the lottery in a manner which will serve the corporation, the administration and the citizens of Connecticut honorably.

In order for you to evaluate my qualifications to serve in this position, I will describe my prior employment history and my educational background.

I was fortunate enough to spend a career of 27 years with the Connecticut State Police -- seven as a patrol officer and 20 in supervisory or management positions. I commanded three troops, one field division, the Bureau of Support Services and served as a Commissioner's Chief of Staff and Legislative Liaison.

Upon retirement, I became the Operations Manager at the Franklin Mushroom Farm for a period of two years. Following that, I became the Chief of Police in the city of Groton, Connecticut and remained so for eight years. During this time, Governor Rowland appointed me as Chair of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council.

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I then worked as a lobbyist for a private firm for six years followed by two years as the Legislative Liaison for the Connecticut Department of Public Safety. Thereafter a term of 13 years representing the Division of Criminal Justice as their liaison.

Concurrent with most of these pursuits, I served as an officer in the Connecticut Air National Guard for 25 years. All of this service was in command or staff positions. I served as Commander of Security Forces, Commander of Support Services and in staff positions including reigning executive officer.

My educational pursuits began quite humbly by narrowly -- narrowly escaping failure from high school. After securing employment with the State Police, I obtained an Associates' Degree from Manchester Community College, a Bachelors from Eastern Connecticut State University and a Masters in Organizational Management from Eastern Connecticut State University.

Woven into this timeframe, I completed the United States Air Force Squadron Officer's School, the Air Commander Staff School and a masters level course at the National Defense University in Military and Industrial Relationships.

I have served as the Thomas Sprague Board of Finance, a member of the board of directors and president of the Slater-Norton Corporation which was the holding company of the Norwich Free Academy. And I concurrently serve as a board member of -- I'm sorry -- concurrently I also served as a board member of the academy and as Vice President of the Norwich Free Academy Foundation.

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I currently serve on the Board of Directors at St. Bernard High School, [Inaudible 00:05:48] High School in Montville, Connecticut and on the board of Reliance Health Corporation, a nonprofit serving the needs of distressed and needy in New London County.

Of all of these pursuits, I am most proud of a marriage that has endured for six years. The issue of four children, ten grandchildren and two great-grandsons. I am currently serving on the Lottery Board of Directors as an interim appointee, having been of September of 2019.

I serve on the Legislative and Games Committee, the Audit Committee -- I chair the Personnel Committee and I am a member of the Executive Committee. I look forward to continuing this work with your kind approval. I'm happy to answer any questions.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Blanchette and congratulations on your appointment to the Lottery Corporation. And since you mentioned you've been serving there already on an interim basis, can you tell us a little bit about, you know, the challenges facing the Lottery Corporation?

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: The chief challenges are trying to right the ship from the stormy seas that sailed through several years ago. Much of that is coming to a conclusion but it's not things we can talk about right now because the conclusion depends on items that are being litigated right now.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, I know you can't speak about issues that are being litigated so I'll open it up for Committee members that have any concerns.

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SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you and thank you -- well, good to see you in this other new position that you're in.

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you for taking on the responsibility for serving in yet another capacity. We appreciate it.

From your standpoint, especially being an interim member, what do you see as some of your, I guess, top priorities or issues that you're gonna have to deal with going forward? And -- and from your experience, your law enforcement background, how does -- how do some of those things come together to help serve?

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: I think I wanna be the voice asking the question why. When things happen, sometimes that question isn't asked loudly enough and things can go astray. Sometimes that question isn't asked loudly enough and we don't understand why we were successful, you know, in certain areas.

So the issue of sports betting, the relationship with the tribe -- I don't think that's part of our charge. I think our charge is to simply make sure that we meet the needs of the people according to the way you wrote it in statute. A safe fun environment where people can gamble responsibly and the State makes a buck.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you for that, I appreciate it, and do you -- how do you -- the lottery's very important to us in the State. It brings us hundreds of millions of dollars a year in revenue. So it's an important entity for us in how

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we -- and the partnership that we have as a quasi-public state agency. So there's always gonna be tensions there one way or the other.

And how do you see that relationship moving forward because there's been -- while we appreciate what the lottery has done to help our state budget and for revenue here, how do you see -- see the relationship going forward especially in light of some difficult times that the lottery has had over the last couple years?

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: I don't see any difficulty. You people set the stance. You hired us, essentially, to do something for you. That's our job to produce a product that you're happy with. It -- it doesn't get any deeper than that in my mind. We are your employees.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you, well -- and I have confidence in your ability to -- to do -- move forward and be a good voice on the -- on the board. So I thank you again for willing to -- to serve and that ends my questioning, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes, Senator Formica.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, good morning.

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: Good morning, Mr. [crosstalk].

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Thank you for your lifetime of service to this great state and to the people in it. So that's the first thing I think we should say.

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WILFRED BLANCHETTE: Well, the state's been very good to me.

SENATOR FORMICA (20TH): Well, I'm sure it's reciprocal and you kinda get what you give, right? So thank you for -- for what you do and I appreciate your willingness to come out and serve. This has -- as you've said, has been a bit of a troubled -- troubled waters over there a little bit for a while.

And I don't have any other questions of you as to why you wanna do it because I think you really wrapped up why you wanted to do it. And that is to ask the questions why and I know you're good at asking those hard questions and I know through your years of service, you know how to turn those hard questions into positive solutions.

And so I look forward to you hopefully getting approved for this and then being the good voice of all of us on that -- on that Lottery Committee because to good Senator's point, though, it's an important relationship that we have here with, you know, this building and the lottery. So it's time to get that moving forward.

So thank you very much for that [crosstalk]. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you. Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I don't have any questions, I just want to make an observation. I think it's very good that we have someone with a law enforcement and military background in this role and to your point, asking the difficult questions and -- and knowing the

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difference between right and wrong and being willing to stand behind that. So I just -- I appreciate you're here, I thank you for serving.

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Any further questions or remarks? Yes, Representative DiMassa?

REP. DIMASSA (116TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning.

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: Good morning.

REP. DIMASSA (116TH): I certainly echo my colleague's sentiments that I feel your background certainly suits what we need at the lottery. In your interim role, how long have you been serving so far?

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: Since September. Well, the appointment was in September, I didn't really start to participate until October.

REP. DIMASSA (116TH): And how do you feel the morale is there with the employees at the lottery?

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: I think it's improving. I initially got some -- I was initially contacted by people who expressed some distress. The day before yesterday I met a member of the union who expressed a more optimistic view going forward. I think the -- the efforts of the new CEO were starting to become visible. We have to make sure that that doesn't stop or it doesn't get interrupted because the employees are the most important part of that organization.

REP. DIMASSA (116TH): Yeah, I agree with you, I couldn't agree more. As far as our competitiveness

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in the region, how do you see the lottery over the next few years keeping up with obviously the surrounding states and their involvement in sports betting and other things. How do you see the lottery keeping its competitive edge?

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: I think we have the competitive edge. With the pain you've got as a -- as a management team. They're very, very engaged. They're very enthusiastic and they're producing good results and the results, if you look at the results over the last four or five months, they've continued to progress in light of the fact or in spite of the fact that we've been in troubled times. The ship has not tipped over. The ship is still going forward.

REP. DIMASSA (116TH): I would just say that I agree with you, I think that we're trying to right the ship. I think there's been some progress made. There's always further progress that we can make and certainly I happen to be in a unique position because I was involved with the hearings a few years back with the lottery corporation, with public safety and it was concerning to me at the time that there were a number of items that have since come up in the press that I feel were not brought to the committee's cognizance so the only thing I would say to you is hopefully in your role you can help to further that transparency between the legislature and the -- and the Lottery Corporation.

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: I don't think there should be any adversarial position between lottery, the regulators, this body or the Governor's office. We are all playing the same game, we all have the same rules.

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REP. DIMASSA (116TH): I agree. Thank you very much and thank you for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Representative. Representative Phipps, you have the floor.

REP. PHIPPS (100TH): Good morning.

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: Good morning, sir.

REP. PHIPPS (100TH): So first I wanted to thank you for your service to the city of Groton and to the State of Connecticut. I mean your service to our community is exemplary.

I just want to ask a few quick questions about like the future of the lottery and the commission. Where do you think online lottery would play into our -- our state and what -- what do you think the role the commission should have in that expansion or lack thereof?

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: I think legislature should be asking the lottery -- "What are you capable of producing" and then comparing that product with any other product that is available to you. If that means casino gambling does it or we do it or somebody else does it, those are policy decisions and all we can do is tell you we're capable of doing this or that.

REP. PHIPPS (100TH): And if I understood correctly, there isn't a lot of data or statistics that either the lottery itself or the state has compiled just around who's playing, what their use is, their annual income. What role do you think data could play in making wise decisions, especially around

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problematic gambling or excessive gambling. And do you think that data could be and should be collected?

WINFRED BLANCHETTE: I think some of that data is already being collected. I think that was the basis for the introduction of Keno a couple of years ago which has turned out to be a very, very successful product. It's the leading product that we provide right now.

So there are -- there are data that have been used in the past or there is data that has been used in the past and you're right, it's -- it's got to be data-based if we're going to engage in it.

REP. PHIPPS (100TH): Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): We've been joined by Senator Bergstein and any comments, questions you would like to ask the nominee?

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): No, not at this time. Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you. If that's it, no further questions or remarks, I'd like to once again congratulate you on your appointment and there's one question we ask of all nominees so don't take it personally. Is there anything in your background that you feel may prove embarrassing either to the Governor or to the Legislature of this Committee?

WILFRED BLANCHETTE: If there were, my wife would know it already. No, sir.

[Laughter]

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much. That brings us to our second item of business, Victoria

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Chavey of West Hartford to be a member of the
Freedom of Information Commission.

Before you take a seat, would you please raise your
right hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and
nothing but the truth?

VICTORIA CHAVEY: I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much, you may be
seated and as is customary, we allow all our
nominees to make a brief presentation so you have
the floor.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Thank you. I'll just say a few
words about my background and I'd be happy to answer
any questions.

I have lived in the Hartford area most of my adult
life having moved here in 1992 after my husband and
I graduated from law school in Boston. We now live
in West Hartford and have been there since 2002 and
we have two ch -- wonderful children, of course.

I grew up in upstate New York, I graduated from
Dartmouth College in 1988 and then graduated from
Boston University Law School in 1992. That's when
we moved to Connecticut and I was drawn here in
particular because of the opportunity for clerkships
to start my legal career. I first clerked for then
Chief Justice Ellen Ash Peters at the Connecticut
Supreme Court and then served as the Clerk for
another year with Judge Thomas Meskell of the United
States Court of Appeals for the second circuit and
that was a wonderful way to start my legal career.

In the 25 years or so since that time, I've
practiced law in Hartford with two different firms.
First I was with Day, Berry and Howard which became

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the firm Day Pitney and then just about ten years ago I moved to Jackson Lewis, also here in Hartford, and my practice has focused on civil litigation, trial work, all kinds of employment cases primarily. And I've been practicing in state court and federal court here in Connecticut and also in many other jurisdictions around the country. And an extensive primary practice, too, has been at the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities from initial appearances to public hearings there.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve and be considered to serve as a Commissioner on the Freedom of Information Commission which, in my view, maintains one of the fundamental tenants of our democracy which is open government.

I'm also confident that my training as a lawyer and my personal values will allow me to carry out the important duties of the commission and in particular to be fair and patient, careful and a good listener as a Commissioner.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity and look forward to your questions.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, on behalf of the Committee, I'd like to congratulate you on your appointment.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): You know, frankly, it seems like your resume shows you have a lot of experience and I know your role in the Commission is a positive role and we thank you on behalf of the State of Connecticut for your willingness to serve. And really I have no questions and unless my Co-Chair.

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SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you very much and personally I don't have a vote on you but I can ask a question or two, I presume.

But so thank you, first of all, for serving and being part of the Freedom of Information Commission.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Thank you.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): I wanted to just ask a question, I may ask this of Stephen, too. The issue -- obviously we all want a transparent and open government and we find that to be very important and I believe Connecticut was the first state in the nation to have freedom of information.

And however, I think in the age of our digital world, we find ourselves in a position at times where we are -- have an onslaught of FOI requests and almost where they get vexatious. And we passed a law about that a few years ago.

How does the Commission balance that issue with the public's right to know but in a way that does responsibly that is respectful, I guess, of both sides. Somebody's right to know yet sometimes the costs or the time, the staff hours of putting those things together. And in doing it in a way so that it's not one where it's done -- it's done out of spite at times because somebody's a political opponent. One that is truly for openness and transparency.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: I will make a couple of remarks, I don't have enough background to give you a complete answer but what I do know from my exposure to the Commission thus far is that there is a mediation process that the Commission uses extensively to try

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to resolve conflicts between parties over what is discoverable through the act and what may not be necessary or appropriate.

So there is an effort to try to bring parties together and come up with a resolution that everybody can live with so that's a big part of what the Commission staff does, to my understanding.

And then there's also a significant effort by the Commission to provide training to various public agencies and members of the public so that they can understand what -- it's a very complex statutory arrangement, as you know. And many members of the public don't really understand or they misunderstand what is available through the act and what may not be available so through the training efforts of the commission there is a push to try to make sure the people aren't assuming that the statute will provide for something that it really doesn't provide or was intended for something that it isn't.

Having said that, if I might ask your permission, Colleen Murphy is here from the Commission and she may have some other response for you. If you have -- if you'd like [crosstalk].

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): No, that's okay. You're the one on the hot seat.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Okay.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): But I respect your opinion, I appreciate that and the second thing is, do you have an opinion on the lines and how the speech and debate clause of our Constitution and the FOI acts intersect and where they do intersect or not intersect.

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VICTORIA CHAVEY: That is an interesting question.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): For the legislator -- for the legislation. Legislative branch.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Well, the -- as I said, the statutory scheme is very complex and is -- is -- overall has a purpose of open government and allowing people to find out what's happening in their government to educate themselves and also I think to allow the public to have trust in the government, which is important in and of itself.

So it's based in the same fundamental purpose as the constitutional provision. How exactly that intersects with all the statutory provisions, I -- I don't have a complete answer for you now because this is new, I'm getting a learning curve. But I think fundamentally both the first amendment and the constitutional protection of speech and the purpose of the Freedom of Information Act are -- are complementary and driving at the same thing.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Okay, thank you. I appreciate that. I don't mean to put you too much on the spot, it's a little bit of a tough question, I think, but I would say that there is a natural tension there and but the legislative process is one in which we have the ability to debate issues internally and, you know, vote publicly and so we have to have -- the Legislative Branch has to have that ability to do that.

And I think that is extremely important for us in order to do our jobs effectively so that we're not always concerned about somebody looking over our shoulder at every intersection. Now granted, I believe in transparency and openness but the

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legislative process has to remain where we have the ability to review issues and look at issues in a way that provides the best resolution for the people we serve and in a manner that allows us to think through things and not just constantly worry that we'll be subject to complete, I guess, assault of some of the things as we're thinking through various issues that are complex.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Well, and my understanding is that the act itself is designed to allow for exemptions where in just that circumstance at any level of government where there's something that is being discussed -- drafts and like personnel files -- all kinds of things that really wouldn't be appropriate for public view, those are embedded in the exemptions legislatively.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Right. Right, thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you. Do we have any further questions? Yes, Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Good morning.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Often, I mean the state has a lot of vendors with whom we work and they oftentimes have access to specific data that maybe other agencies might want. In its 2019 report, the state's auditors public account reported they had

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difficulty accessing information that vendors have specifically as it related to DSS.

So my question for you is what is the role of the Commission in determining whether or not certain information should be made available from vendors to the public? Where's the line drawn?

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Representative, I -- I don't think I know the answer to that question. What I do know is that the Commission will hear contested cases that have gone through the mediation process, gone through a hearing with a Commission staff member who makes a recommend -- recommended ruling, a written ruling -- that the Commission then considers.

So it's in that context that the Commission would decide on a case or a particular request for public records. Beyond that, I don't think I know enough to answer your question.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): That's fair and I don't necessarily expect the answer but I would assume that the Commission would tend to err in this -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- would tend to err on the side of making information available to the public.

Is the -- does the Commission have a role in ensuring that contracts with vendors ensure that information will be made available to the public in which the case I cited, you know, the vendor saying that the information will not be offered over to the -- to the owners of public accounts.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: I would say the Commission's role and what I would foresee as my role as a Commissioner, would be to honor the particulars of the statute which is very detailed. And to the --

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and what I don't know is -- is where vendors come into that so that's why I'm hesitating in answering your question.

But we really are aiming toward making public records available to those who seek them within the confines of the statute and there are limitations built into the statute and I -- I don't know beyond that.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Okay, thank you.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Thank you.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Representative Perillo. Any further questions or remarks from Committee chairs? Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a quick thank you for offering your time and expertise to serve on this Commission. And I know, I'm sure as a mother and as a lawyer, you're incredibly busy and tasked with many responsibilities so I just want to say I think you're incredibly qualified and your answers show a great respect for the statutes, for the intent of the statutes, but also for the fundamental principle of democracy that you cited which is open, transparent and accountable government. So thank you so much for offering to serve.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): If there's no further remarks, I'd like to congratulate you again on your appointment and I wanna remind all the nominees that before -- before you leave to make sure that the

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clerk has all your pertinent information. Contact information.

And before I let you go, I'm going to ask you the question I ask all nominees. Is there anything in your background that you feel may prove embarrassing either to the Governor, to the Legislature, this Committee, or the State of Connecticut?

VICTORIA CHAVEY: No sir.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much.

VICTORIA CHAVEY: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And that brings us to our next nominee, Stephen Fuzesi, Junior of Greenwich to be a member of the Freedom of Information Commission.

Will you please raise your right hand? Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

STEPHEN FUZESI: I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): You may be seated and at this point, we'll allow you to make your introductory remarks.

STEPHEN FUZESI: Good morning, Senator Duff, Representative Vargas, Representative -- you have a name like mine, hard to pronounce.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Yaccarino.

STEPHEN FUZESI: Fuzesi and Yaccarino. Senator Bergstein and I don't know -- did I miss you, Representative Phipps? I'm familiar with Middletown so nice of you to be here.

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So let me just -- sort of instead of going through my resume, I think you guys have -- you all had my resume -- I'd just like to share a few thoughts. Sort of resume-related but a few thoughts.

I came to the United States at the age of eight with my family as a refugee following the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution by Soviet forces.

We moved to Hamden shortly thereafter where I was welcomed in the spirit and in the reality of Connecticut values. American Democratic values. My first taste of a Hersey bar and freedom happened in Hamden.

We soon became naturalized citizens, taking the oath in US District Court in Hartford. My parents made it possible -- their sacrifice made it possible -- for me and our family to live in our democratic society where destiny and promise resides in We The People. A foundational tour of that promise is open government, free speech and press and an engaged informed citizenry.

My first job after graduating from college, before going to law school, was as a reporter at the New Haven Register. I had lived and worked in three of our eight counties. From 1994 to 2010, I was the Chief Counsel of Newsweek, then owned by the Washington Post Company, in print and in the emerging electronic media in the US and globally.

I thereafter taught a university policy seminar entitled "All the News That's Fit to Post" including a term at Wesleyan in 2013.

I now serve as Vice Chairman of the statewide Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants

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headquartered in Bridgeport and have since 2018 taught a course at Stamford's Ferguson Library for immigrants and refugees preparing for their USCIS American history and civics test which is the final stepping stone to naturalized citizenship.

The mandate of the FOIC is to robustly advance and assure the guarantees set forth in Connecticut law for unencumbered access to public records and public access to open meetings.

I'm honored to have been nominated by Governor Lamont to serve as a Commissioner. I view service on the Commission as a capstone public service challenge to draw upon my personal and professional life experiences.

I promise a high standard of fairness, reasoned balanced judgement and informed advocacy to preserve and advance our state's long commitment to open government as a foundational Connecticut value. Our electronic modes of information and distribution and access have changed at 21st century speed but they serve our public interest only if our core principles remain our guideposts.

I look forward to answering any of your questions and I will look forward to service on the Commission if I get the opportunity.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much.

STEPHEN FUZESI: And it from an appointee fact check. Few meetings since November.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you very much for an introductory statement there. You kinda -- your voice and delivery kind of reminds me of one of my favorite TV characters who's passed on, Andy Rooney.

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STEPHAN FUZESI: Uh-oh.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): He mentioned a little bit on the end of the 60 Minutes, there. I -- I gotta say, with your extensive experience, just like the previous nominee that studied in France and I like people that have that international perspective. It adds something. It adds some value. And of course, coming from the media, you know, it's -- you understand how tough it is to make sure that we have transparency in all aspects of government and you -- if you were here earlier, you probably heard our first nominee that was going onto the lottery commission say that they couldn't speak too much because things were in litigation, right. That seems to be an excuse you hear a lot these days when you try to get information from one of our agencies. Well, you know, it's in litigation. On advice of attorney we can't really speak about this. You know, it's kinda sad in a way because I think that a public agency -- well, I believe in transparency in the private sector, too, but especially in, you know, tax-funded agencies should be open to the public for scrutiny.

I appreciate your perspective on your work with refugees, too, so I think you're -- you're a wonderful -- it's wonderful we have your willingness to serve on this Commission. At this point, I'll open [crosstalk].

STEPHEN FUZESI: I just want to say thank you, Representative Vargas, and I know your commitment to education as a route so I think -- [crosstalk] from my refugee perspective, I'm thinking of all the good work you've done for education.

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REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yeah, when you were talking about, you know, getting people ready -- immigrants ready for their citizenship, it reminded me, I worked with adult education the last five years of my 35-year career as an educator in Hartford and brought back a lot of memories working with immigrants from all over the world.

It was some of the best experiences I had in the Hartford School System, especially when I first walked into one of those adult classes with immigrants and had them all rise to their feet in unison. Never had that experience in Hartford Public Schools before, I thought it was a fire alarm the first time it happened until I realized when I sat down, they all sat down in unison. I said if they're doing this because of faith -- called me professor. And I said, you know, we reserve that term for higher ed and they would tell me, "Thank you for the explanation, Professor", but they wouldn't drop the term.

Anyway, at this point, I'd like to open it to our committee members.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thanks, Stephen. Good to see you again and thank you for your service and send Nancy my best, obviously.

So I just wanted to follow up on the same question I asked Victoria. If you had i.e. comments on that or if you need me to repeat the question which means I have to remember the questions I asked. No, but did you have any answers to those at all?

STEPHEN FUZESI: The question -- I do remember them, I think. I think the first question is from my

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experience, every commission, every public servant should be respectful of people who come and have come before us, who have an argument to make or a request. And I believe the Freedom of Information Commission is very respectful and -- but the question ultimately is balance and resources, too.

So I think where the legislature, on that question, can be most helpful is to give the independent agencies who either like the FOIC sufficient resources for the following reason.

Because to balance respectfulness and good work, it needs to have sufficient resources and a key aspect of the FOIC's ability to do good work is to be prompt. Because the key issue, I think, is make -- giving access to information and advocating for it and information needs to be prompt to be useful.

So I guess and on that point I'd like leave the message of promptness is important and resources -- excellent staff, terrific staff -- the resources affect promptness if at the same time when needs to and should be respectful of [crosstalk] which aren't over the vexatious line, that's a hard line. But are, you know --

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Yeah it's -- I think you'll -- I hear from Ms. Palvey [phonetic] a lot on the, you know, somebody's had at something or somebody or that, you know, politics has become personal now versus based on policy in a lot of ways and so if somebody doesn't like something, conspiracies get thrown up or people FOI every day and it just takes a tremendous amount of resources from taxpayers to fulfill those.

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Now some of those are necessary, I wouldn't suggest they're not, but some of them become -- it slows down the gears of government to a halt at times and takes away, you know, could be hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers that they're not, you know, aware that they're paying because one or two people have a political score to settle and that's on both sides. I'm not saying it's one particular side or not.

But that, you know, I think that is an issue which is why we passed the legislation we passed. Now I don't know if it needs tweaking or not, I'm not an expert in that, that's something for the JE Committee to tackle.

And on the other -- on the speech and debate issue, did you have any thoughts on that?

STEPHEN FUZESI: I mean I think that's a -- again, related somewhat to the same question as to how is one the most effective advocate for transparency and free speech while balancing the need for efficiency and good government.

But I think transparency and free speech are so fundamental to good government that -- I -- I know that you and some others have been focused on this issue of legislatures for right on the first amendment basis to be less subject, let's say, to freedom -- FOIC issue.

And I think it's a really interesting and difficult intellectual question and I have no clear viewpoint on it because I've lived my life advocating for the first amendment but I believe the good information is a critical element of good government.

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So if we're gonna ask the citizenry to vote, they can only vote if there's solid and good information. Where that line is, is a very difficult line [crosstalk]. I know your -- your viewpoint -- not your viewpoint, your concern about that issue.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Yeah and I don't wanna put for a second that I'm not for openness and transparency.

STEPHEN FUZESI: I know you are.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): It's just is -- but it's also having the legislature do its proper role.

STEPHEN FUZESI: And I think some states differ on that. There's a difference of law even as to what the governors are sub -- and there's a difference in law in some states on that issue.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Right and natural tension as we talked about before. Which is we work through those things. So I just wanted to ask your opinion on that as you go on this board that has important responsibilities. While I think both nominees, both you and Victoria are very capable, those are some of the things that come up, I think, when -- when you're in your position as Commissioner.

STEPHEN FUZESI: Thank you.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you Stephen. Thank you for coming [crosstalk].

STEPHEN FUZESI: I sometimes call him Bob.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): That's okay.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, we're not too formal around here. Any further questions or remarks? Senator Bergstein.

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SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe because I'm a -- a new legislator but I don't really see very much tension between the citizens' rights to know how the legislature is reaching their decisions so I -- I have yet to experience that. I think that -- that they do have a right to know about conversations, deals, negotiations that do happen behind closed doors because it's imperative to know what is being treated for what and -- and who is -- and who's really making the decisions.

So I thank you.

STEPHEN FUZESI: Can I just interrupt, I fundamentally agree with you there. I'm just thinking it's because -- it's what this party is trying to say is that information is the essential basis of good government. And unless the voters have extensive rights of transparency, they can't make good -- good decisions. Sorry. [Crosstalk] If I did not know you, I wouldn't have interrupted you, so.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): I am in full agreement so I would always prefer to err on the side of -- of revealing exactly what is going on in the legislative process so that people can understand the many, many, many factors and the many voices and the many considerations and the full complexity of every determination and decision that we do have to make because rarely is there an easy decision.

So I -- so I just want to thank you for -- also for serving and for being so eminently qualified and I, you know, you and I share not only our Hungarian heritage, we also share our hometown of Greenwich, Connecticut but I think your formative experience early in life of living in an authoritarian regime

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where people could not be informed and could therefore reduce empowered and unable to be engaged.

There was so much -- so much loss of life and damage and destruction that resulted for decades after that so I think it's, you know, that formative experience, I'm sure, shapes your views and your passion and dedication to this fundamental principle of democracy and of an open civilized society.

So thank you also for serving.

STEPHEN FUZESI: Thank you, Senator Bergstein, I note -- your views as well, her mom and dad came from Hungary as refugees also.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Thanks.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Senator. Any further remarks? Yes, Representative Yaccarino.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for being here and serving here. I have a good friend that has something in common. They left -- the fled, had to flee Hungary in the 50's. Kathy and her mother and father. And they actually opened up a restaurant in New Haven, I don't remember the name of it because I wasn't born yet but you might have eat there.

But I'm a strong believer in the First Amendment and freedom of speech and FOI-able and it be that somebody in government, nonprofit donating money to the state of Connecticut or for different agencies, all that -- everything should be open and transparent. And especially if you work for the Washington Post, I don't know if you've ever met Ben Bradley, the past editor-in-chief that showed why

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it's important to have information and freedom of information.

So I want to thank you for serving and for your take on nonprofits donating to the State of Connecticut or anywhere if that money should be FOI-able. Or that -- those transactions.

STEPHEN FUZESI: Thank you very much for saying that. I did have the honor a number of times working with Ben Bradley and again, I would just add to that from a journalist perspective, why is -- what's -- why is the FOIC so important? Why is FOI so important for journalists?

Because journalists are the representatives of the people and again, it goes back to what makes for good journalism is sources. It's all -- people think it's about how it's written, how it's delivered. It's really all about the sources and there's no better source than the actual original source that get the documents, get the facts, be there at the meeting. And that's why the Freedom of Information Act is so important federally and in the state and that's why I think we should be very proud. Governor Grasso and since Connecticut has been the leader in that regard. So thank you very much for coming.

REP. YACCARINO (87TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Thank you, Representative. If there are no further questions or remarks, I'd like to thank you for coming before us, thank you for your willingness to serve and congratulate you once again on your appointment. Then I'd just like to make a little aside comment that when I was growing

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up, there were those that preferred Time, I was one of the ones that preferred Newsweek.

STEPHEN FUZESI: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And that's how I kept abreast of the world around me. However -- and that's it, right -- it was a very well -- well-written magazine. Now it seems like everything comes out of the internet, right, instead of paper publications which is a pity.

The -- I'd like to remind you that before you leave, check with the clerk to make sure the information -- contact information we have on you -- is correct and I also wanted to say to both you and the previous nominees that following this public hearing we have a committee meeting where we act on the nominees and you're welcome to stay for that. All these meetings are public meetings so you're welcome to stay.

Before I let you go there's one question I have to ask of all nominees and that is in your background do you believe there's anything that might prove embarrassing to the state, to the Governor, to this committee, to the legislature in general?

STEPHEN FUZESI: I'm confident. I've lead a very boring life.

[Laughter]

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much.

STEPHEN FUZESI: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And that brings us to our last nominee, the Honorable Owen Eagan of West Hartford who will be a -- has now been nominated to be a member of the Freedom of Information Commission and

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before you take a seat, please raise your right hand. Do you promise to tell us the truth and nothing but the truth?

OWEN EAGAN: I do.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Please be seated.

OWEN EAGAN: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And the floor's yours for your opening statement.

OWEN EAGAN: Thank you, Representative Vargas. Senator Duff, Representative Vargas, Representative Phipps. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

As you know, my name is Owen Eagan, I am honored to be here, I was nominated by Governor Lamont to serve again on this Commission. I'm also honored to be before you.

I understand that you've received my resume and my application and I will therefore be brief. I am a lifelong resident of West Hartford where my wife -- my wonderful wife and I raised our three children. They've all -- they're all grown now and they've left. Well, one's in law school so he'll be coming back, hopefully.

But it's been a wonderful -- wonderful time. I'm also a graduate of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. I'm a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center in Washington DC. After graduating from law school, I came back to Connecticut to begin my career as a lawyer. I have practiced here in Connecticut for 33 years. Thirty of those years I practiced in West Hartford at my

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own firm, Eagan and Donahue. I am a trial lawyer and a general practitioner. I concentrate on litigation, probate and estate planning and I also do real estate closings.

I am presently the Probate Judge in the town of West Hartford. I also do criminal and civil litigation. I represent both plaintiffs and defendants in civil matters and in some of those civil matters I've used -- I haven't done it recently but I used to use the FOI as a place to obtain some discovery so I understand -- I understood before I sat on this Commission how to -- how the FOI works.

I have been in many courts, I've been in probate court where I've litigated. I've litigated in Superior Court. I've litigated in -- I've argued in appellate court and I've also litigated in the Federal District Court and also have argued in the second circuit in New York.

I've acted as an arbitrator and a mediator on many cases. I served on a West Hartford Town Council for two terms and during my second term I served as Deputy Mayor and as a Chairman of the Public Safety Committee so I'm quite aware of government and what requests upon government can cause as far as concern and time.

I have also served on the Freedom of Information Commission since 2009. In 2013, Governor Malloy appointed me as Chairman of the Commission. My fellow Commissioners and I are dedicated along with the staff at the FOI which is a wonderful staff. They really make -- make us dedicated to enforcing the Freedom of Information Act fairly and without bias in the public's interest.

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Transparency in government is important to us all, as you've heard from everyone who's come here before you who's been related to the FOI. In my opinion, open government is as valuable as freedom of speech, freedom of press, the right to assemble, the right to petition government, all of which are -- all of which are granted to each of us in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

If appointed, I will be proud to serve the State of Connecticut as the Commissioner of -- on the Freedom of Information Commission and I'm happy to take any questions.

Thank you very much.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you for your statement and thank you for your willingness to serve and congratulations on your reappointment by Governor Lamont to the Freedom of Information Commission.

OWEN EAGAN: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And at this point, I'll open it up for committee members, have any questions or remarks? Yes, Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I'll pose to you the question that I posed previously about, the role of vendors who have access and control over public information and where you draw that line as to what they should or should not have to provide as a vendor again, not as a government organization, government agency. And whether or not the Commission and/or the legislature needs to take action to determine and -- and mandate

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that information be provided. If that makes any sense.

OWEN EAGAN: Well, there's presently a test that's applied with regard to contracts. Number one, is it in the contract that the information has to be disclosed. Number two, we apply the test that's created by the legislature which is are they a public agency performing a public function. And we look at those things. Is the agency entitled to it? We ask those questions and then we would analyze each of the answers and apply the law as created by you.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you so in a situation where perhaps the Commission would determine that indeed it was public information, the vendor's providing a public function but it's not in the contract that the vendor has to provide the information. How do you reconcile that or is that even something for the Commission to rule on?

OWEN EAGAN: I can't predetermine any -- any matter but I know that the Commission would apply the law to each case on a case-by-case basis and they would analyze the information that comes back through the -- after the tests are applied.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you. Shifting gears ever slightly, in my experience, especially at the municipal level, issues -- situations where the public is requesting access to information and it's not granted, it often tends to be a function of manpower on the part of the municipality to generate the information.

How does the Commission, or can the Commission even balance that use of manpower -- and I'll call it as

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an excuse -- not to provide information versus what could legitimately be a reason why there's a delay. How do you ensure that the public gets what they need in a timely manner and maybe not prohibit but at least minimize the risk that municipalities use that manpower excuse to hold information back. And have you seen those situations and ruled them?

OWEN EAGAN: We have.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): I assumed so.

OWEN EAGAN: There are promptness violations that can be imposed but you have to look at each situation on a case-by-case basis.

I understand what you're saying, is the body that's being asked for the records using that as an excuse not to give the records up. If they're legitimate FOI-able records then they have to be disclosed. You'd have to balance how urgent is it that the person who's asking for those records, how urgent is it for them to receive them against what's happening.

But it is difficult when people are inundated -- when agencies are inundated with requests and we do give that careful consideration and the promptness provision is applied on a case-by-case basis.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thank you. What -- and I'm not gonna hold you to it but what percentage of the time would you say you receive complaints that you would define as frivolous, politically motivated, not -- not really focused on the need to access information but just quite frankly to be difficult. Is that often?

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OWEN EAGAN: I don't know if I could assign a percentage. I know that we have an ability to deal with frivolous complaints. We don't even hear some of them. Our Executive Director handles those and we vote on them and dispose of them if they're frivolous and there are -- there had been -- there had been more that we've disposed of.

If someone is being abusive, it's not -- it's not appropriate to -- some of Senator Duff's comments, so it's not appropriate if they're abusing the system because it hurts us all. When we're all trying to get information and someone is abusing the system, they weigh it down with things that aren't necessary. So all of that has to be considered.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Thanks. Again, talking about municipalities -- I use them as examples because oftentimes they tend not to be as sophisticated and aware of the rules. What -- what actions or programs does the Commission have in place to educate rather than just come down with a hammer?

OWEN EAGAN: We have an individual named Tom Hennick who goes out and trains. Training is free. And sometimes in some of our decisions, we impose training, not to -- not to make them feel bad or belittle them in any way but to say, "Look, you need to -- you need to learn and understand under the FOI what you have to do." And some -- some are not sophisticated. Other towns are very sophisticated and understand.

And generally, and I think it was mentioned earlier, when you're able to talk, when you get the parties to talk, you go through our ombudsman program or if they can just talk on their own, you generally can -- if you have somebody reasonable on each side reach

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a balance and come up with a way to get the information in a timely fashion and give the person what they want.

So oftentimes you encourage the municipality to say, "Exactly what are you looking for, sir?" Or ma'am. What is it so that we can provide it. What you're asking for is this big, maybe it's just this big. And this is something much smaller and it might be easier for us to provide that in a more efficient and quick manner.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): So if somebody's requesting reams and reams and reams of --

OWEN EAGAN: Sometimes -- yeah, sometimes the individuals don't know what they're requesting. They ask for something in emails and it might be so huge and voluminous that they really only want specific emails and if they can narrow the scope of their request and we encourage that. You do that as a lawyer, you try and talk to the other side and narrow -- narrow your wishes.

If you can get people to talk, generally everybody's trying to reach the same end, we're trying to get you the information from the government's standpoint and the individual is just trying to get this piece of information but they don't necessarily know what they want.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): They're looking for a piece of paper but they ask for 10,000.

OWEN EAGAN: Exactly. Exactly.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Well, thank you very much and thank you for your service, we do appreciate it.

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OWEN EAGAN: Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Senator Duff?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you. Good morning and I won't repeat the questions because you touched on them a little bit before but I appreciate it. If you have any comments on what I've asked previously, feel free to weigh in or we'll just thank you for your time.

OWEN EAGAN: You talked about the vexatious litigation. We haven't -- we haven't articulated on that but we have our very first case coming before us so stand by, you'll -- stay tuned, you'll receive a decision in the near future.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Thank you. Thank you for your service.

OWEN EAGAN: Thank you.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Appreciate you doing this.

OWEN EAGAN: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Any further comments, questions or remarks from committee members? If not, you know when Representative Perillo was speaking, it brought to my mind, you know, what -- what balance there is between what is legitimate request for information and what is just harassment of public officials. You know and some towns only have like part-time registrars of voters that work maybe twice a week or whatever.

I know how limited, you know, the staff is but on the other hand, I've had experiences that make me question whether people are really being cooperative

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or not. Especially when they say, "Well, can I photocopy this page?" And you know it's gonna cost you a dollar a page when across the street at the library I can do it for five cents a page.

And I say, "Well, why? Well, can I take it across the street?" "No, it can't leave the office. You have to do it here." And you wonder why this is done by some officials, right? And I don't know if those kinds of matters ever get before the FOI but the fact is that sometimes -- I know people sometimes ask for reams and reams of information just as a way to -- to harass local officials but there's other times when you wonder whether people really are forth coming with the information. Like one of the previous nominees said in a timely fashion when the information is still useful.

You know, it's difficult to answer these questions because Representative Perillo's right, sometimes in -- you know, the resources aren't there in these municipalities or the sophistication of understanding of the law is not there but it seems that we still have a lot of educating to do regarding freedom of information.

We've been joined by Representative Godfrey. Any remarks or questions? If not, we thank you again for your service and we have to ask you the question we ask all of our nominees and that is in your background, do you think there's anything that might prove embarrassing to the Governor or the Legislature or this committee?

OWEN EAGAN: No sir.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, thank you very much.

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OWEN EAGAN: Thank you.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): That's it.

OWEN EAGAN: Thank you very much.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Now we open it up for any member of the public. This is a public hearing so if there's any member of the public that would like to come forward on any of the nominees, either for or against. If not, is there -- I'll ask the Clerk, is there any correspondence regarding any of the nominees? All right, there's no correspondence so that basically brings us to the conclusion.

I would like to announce that there will be another public hearing followed by a Committee meeting on February 18th. Tuesday, February 18th.

Madam Clerk.

We will then close the public hearing and call into order the meeting of the Committee.

The first item on the agenda is the nomination of Wilfred Blanchette, Junior of Baltic to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Lottery Corporation. Is there a motion to that effect?

It's been properly moved by Senator Duff and seconded by Representative Godfrey. So at this point I'll ask Madam Clerk to take the roll.

THE CLERK: Duff?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Yeah.

THE CLERK: Vargas.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes.

THE CLERK: Looney. Phipps.

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REP. PHIPPS (100TH): Yes.

THE CLERK: Fasano. Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Yes.

THE CLERK: Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Yes.

THE CLERK: Davis. D'Agostino. DiMassa. Formica.
Godfrey.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): Yes.

THE CLERK: Hartley. Kushner. Moore. Verrengia.
Whitkos. Yaccarino.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): And we'll keep the votes open
until 4:00 p.m. at the --

THE CLERK: In room 1000.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Room 1000, right?

THE CLERK: Yes.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Very good. So that brings us to
our second nominee. Victoria Chavey of West
Hartford to be a member of the Freedom of
Information Commission. Is there a motion to that
effect?

REP. GODFREY (110TH): So moved.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Representative Godfrey has
moved, is there a second?

REP. PHIPPS (100TH): Second.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): It's been seconded by
Representative Phipps. Will the Clerk please take
the roll?

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THE CLERK: Vargas.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Yes.

THE CLERK: Phipps.

REP. PHIPPS (100TH): Yes.

THE CLERK: Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113TH): Yes.

THE CLERK: Davis. D'Agostino. DiMassa. Godfrey.

REP. GODFREY (110TH): Yes.

THE CLERK: Verrangia. Yaccarino.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Again, the votes will be held open till 4:00 p.m. The next nominee is Stephen Fuzesi, Junior of Greenwich to be a member of the Freedom of Information Commission. Do we have a motion?

REP. GODFREY (110TH): I move.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Representative Godfrey has moved, is there a second?

REP. PHIPPS (100TH): Second.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Seconded by Representative Phipps. All right. Rather than take the roll, is there -- does anybody present wish to change their vote on this motion from their previous votes? If not, then we can reflect all votes in the affirmative and we'll keep the votes open till 4:00 p.m.

That brings us to our last resolution which is a Senate Resolution appointing the Honorable Owen Eagan of West Hartford to a member of the FOIC.

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SENATOR DUFF (25TH): I move.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): It's been moved by Senator Duff.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Second.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Seconded by Senator Bergstein.
Any variation on the previous votes?

THE CLERK: This is a Senate resolution.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Well, we've lost represent --
we've lost -- oh, it's just Senators, right? It's a
Senate resolution so just the Senators present,
would you please take the roll?

THE CLERK: Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH): Yep.

THE CLERK: Looney. Fasano. Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Yep.

THE CLERK: Formica. Hartley. Kushner. Moore.
Witkos.

REP. VARGAS (6TH): Okay. Again, the votes will be
held open till 4:00 p.m. and again we have a busy
schedule through March 12th so we have a hearing on
March 12th on some interim appointments so I
encourage our Committee members to try to make some
time.

Thank you very much.