



***GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND  
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE***  
March 10, 2021

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members representing 168 towns and cities.

**H.B. 5011 An Act Decreasing Fees for Copying Public Records Under the Freedom of Information Act**

CCM **Opposes** HB 5011 which would reduce or eliminate the fees municipalities may charge for the copying of public records and resulting in lost revenue to towns and cities. The revenue impact will vary throughout the state but a similar proposal in previous years was estimated to cost the City of Waterbury in excess of \$100,000 and the Town of West Hartford more than \$40,000.

Towns and cities have consistently raised the issue of the need for municipal revenue diversification to alleviate the stress on our overburdened property tax structure. This bill would move us in the opposite direction. Outside of the property tax, options for municipal revenue are largely limited to fees and fines. Any bill that would reduce already limited sources of municipal revenue will simply force towns and cities to choose between increasing property taxes on residents and business or reducing current services.

While these fees may not amount to a large percentage of municipalities overall budgets they do help to offset the cost of staffing and equipping the offices where many of these public records are maintained.

Reducing the price of copies from \$.50 to \$.15 per page to make it comparable to Staples is not a fair comparison. Municipalities are not in the business of making money and a corporation like Staples may view offering \$.15 copies as a loss leader hoping that once a customer is in the store they will purchase additional good or services. Municipalities do not set or charge fees as a loss leader.

CCM would urge the Committee to reject HB 5011 and rather continue to work with local leaders to implement meaningful revenue diversification which can reduce the overreliance on the property tax and the need to charge fees for the copying of public records.

If you have any questions, please contact Randy Collins, Advocacy Manager of CCM at [rcollins@ccm-ct.org](mailto:rcollins@ccm-ct.org) or (860) 707-6446.