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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Testimony on Raised Bill No. 966: An Act Concerning the Procurement of Standard Service Electricity and the Regulation of Public Utilities
Energy & Technology Committee
Tuesday, February 14th, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Raised Bill No. 966, *An Act Concerning the Procurement of Standard Service Electricity and the Regulation of Public Utilities*.

I commend your continued leadership in protecting Connecticut ratepayers. Connecticut families pay far too much for utility bills and utility shareholders are reaping the benefits. Oppressive utility rates impose unreasonable economic burdens on Connecticut families, who are more home-centric in their work, educational, and leisure pursuits consequent to the societal shifts from the COVID-19 public health and economic crises. I also commend the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (“PURA”) for taking steps to hold the utilities accountable and protect ratepayers.

Section 3 appropriately eliminates ratepayer funding of public service companies’ costs associated with: (1) membership, dues, sponsorships, or contributions to a business or industry trade association, group, or related entity; (2) lobbying or legislative action; and (3) advertising and marketing not specifically approved or ordered by PURA. I strongly support this section requiring that these costs be paid for by those they benefit—the utilities and their shareholders. Ratepayers derive little to no benefit from funding such utility expenses.

I also take this opportunity to provide additional considerations for Section 4 related to PURA settlements. The Office of the Attorney General appreciates this Committee’s interest in PURA settlements and wishes to be included in the conversation. I would caution the Committee against limiting the ability of the State, acting through the Attorney General, to investigate, litigate, prosecute, and settle cases, as doing so raises serious constitutional and statutory questions.

In addition, it is well-settled public policy that settlements of contested matters be encouraged by adjudicatory bodies—to discourage protracted litigation and its attendant resource and monetary costs to all involved. The supplemental language in Section 4 relates specifically to settlements of public service company rate amendment proceedings. The Office of the Attorney General underscores that such proceedings are contested cases under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act, thereby already providing parties and intervenors due process protections to examine, oppose, or comment on settlements. The restrictions on such settlements proposed here are unduly limiting and may have the effect of stifling creative solutions that benefit ratepayers.

In sum, I support many of the important ratepayer protections in Raised Bill No. 966 and appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this testimony. Thank you once again for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

For additional information, please contact Cara Passaro, Chief of Staff to the Attorney General, at cara.passaro@ct.gov.