

## **Spending Cap Commission - Testimony of Mr. Justin Higgins**

My name is Justin Higgins. I am a small business owner and a serial entrepreneur. I advise, manage and invest in multiple small business ventures and I am a resident of Orange, Connecticut. My partners and I recently launched a new business here in Bridgeport, so I felt today's venue would be appropriate to offer this testimony. I appreciate this opportunity and I would like to thank all the members of the Spending Cap Commission for your public service.

I support the commission's current definitions for "increase in personal income" and "increase in inflation". These definitions are relatively easy to understand and easily explained. The third item "general budget expenditures" is more difficult to define, not because of language, but because of our budget deficits and future contractual obligations.

In my opinion, in 1992, the State of Connecticut failed to properly implement a constitutional amendment that would limit government spending. The spending cap was a "compromise agreement" because of the state's extremely unpopular income tax. Citizens clearly understood that government spending would grow without these limits; their intent in voting for a spending cap was clear.

Predictably, even with those limits supposedly then in place, government began searching for and creating loopholes to avoid these limits, ultimately spending far more than we could actually afford. We have the opportunity to stop this behavior but to do that we need language that everyone can clearly understand. For this reason, I believe the definition of "general budget expenditures," should reflect **all government spending** excluding debt service.

These definitions may seem overly simplistic to some of you on this commission, however that is exactly the point. Keep it simple, so all our citizens will always know where we stand financially without loopholes and political gamesmanship.

These simple definitions serve a dual purpose. They also promote trust between business leaders and government. It is business, not government, that will create wealth required to prosper in the State of Connecticut but only government can make our state more competitive, without more trust neither of these things will happen.

Thank You.  
Justin Higgins  
Concerned Citizen.