

ISSUES

Rep. David McClusky

Parking Despite some improvements in the last year or so, parking is still inadequate for the public. If there are any remaining state agencies which have vehicles in the LOB garage, they should be removed if possible. In addition, the Legislative Branch should take control over the empty lot at the corner of Broad and Capitol and make it a completely secured paved lot for LOB visitors. Explore whether the Legislative Branch can take over the parking lot at Capitol Avenue and Oak Street. When the LOB Garage is full, just having a sign saying so is not useful. There should be signage directly the public to any free lots they can use first and then any nearby paid sites with the hourly rates posted.

Legislative Website This needs to be upgrades on several levels. There should be a Frequently Asked Questions section where commonly asked questions/concerns can be answered – maybe including an interactive feature with the LWV answering the questions. The website should have an icon so it can be readily translatable into Spanish or any other language that is used by a major segment of CT's population. The website needs to have an audio module so that the Blind and Visually Impaired Community can have better access to the website. Both the Spanish and Audio features are available on the market.

LOB & State Capitol Buildings We should ask for input from the Blind, Deaf, Handicapped and Spanish-Speaking communities to identify any physical obstacles and challenges they have with our buildings. For example, if you are in a wheelchair it is next to impossible to get to the House or Senate Galleries. If we had very unobtrusive TV monitors (with plugs in for the Deaf/Hearing Impaired) people could know what issues are being voted on in the House and Senate outside the chambers.

Public Hearing Process There are many issues. Many times, residents who wish to testify don't know about the pre-signup sheets/waiting lines and end up testifying hours later to a room with only the Committee Chairs/Rankings and the rest of the Committee is absent. We may wish to do some pilots to experiment. Such as: a lottery system to determine one's slot to testify; obtaining testimony from off site locations such as our public colleges/universities; receiving testimony through webcast/internet; receiving testimony by e-mail in such a fashion that Committee members can have access to it; having a flexible state official/agency segment so that the public knows with more certainty when they will actually be able to testify (e.g. if Blumenthal or Ryan are expected to testify at a hearing, in advance the state official segment is lengthen and noticed so that the public is not cooling their heels); seeing whether we can encourage/incentivize/require a certain number of legislators to be present when members of the public testify.

OLM should continue to pursue closed captioning of public hearings and meetings using voice recognition software/equipment.

Committees in General CT residents should be able to know and understand how each committee is doing its business – it shouldn't be insider baseball depending on knowing how particular committees/chairs operate. Perhaps committee leadership and staff need more regular and standardized training (a manual?). Not all Committees JF reports are accurate. Sometimes the public testimony is on the original bill and has no connection to the JFS language. Perhaps we should consider aligning Legislative Committees more closely to state agencies so there is no overlap or gaps in committees responsibilities - some state agencies are accountable to multiple committees.

General Observation We should use this SubCommittee / time before the next two year General Assembly session as an opportunity to make the Legislative Process more accessible and user-friendly to the public – in particular those members of the public who have barriers to the process. We are the People's Branch and its their State Capitol and LOB.