



CCM 2022 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Below are legislative proposals adopted by the CCM Legislative Committee as part of CCM's 2022 State Legislative Program. They are grouped according to the CCM issue-area committee in which they originated.

EDUCATION

1. Make state bond funds available for local and regional school districts through the school construction grant program for HVAC repairs and air filtration improvements. The quality of indoor air in public schools is critical to the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff.
2. Fully fund the state's Special Education Excess Cost Grant. Currently the Excess Cost Grant is capped, which is negatively impacting local and regional school districts' ability to address the rising cost of special education.
 - a. Provide full state special education funding for DCF 603 placements who are enrolled in the school district since the cost of educating the student(s) and providing services have not been budgeted by school districts.
3. Provide additional state aid and support for students' social and emotional learning, including early intervention and youth employment initiatives.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

1. Extended Producer Responsibility for Gas Cylinders
 - a. Require the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to review and recommend a stewardship program for gas cylinders.
2. One-Touch Make Ready
 - a. Establish a One-Touch-Make-Ready (OTMR) process to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of broadband services to better meet underserved and unserved areas across the state.
3. Removal of the Virtual Net Metering Cap

- a. Eliminate the Virtual Net Metering Credit Cap (CGS 16-244u). Such change should include the requirement that electric distribution companies allow “unassigned” VNM credits to be applied to future bills on a month-to-month basis, known as “banking,” as expressed in CGS 16-244u(c).

LAND USE, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. Tax Assessment Appeal Proceedings:
 - a. Prohibit contingency fee arrangements and/or agreements,
 - b. Amend CGS Section 12-117a and Section 12-119 to require persons representing property owners or lessors in certain appeals concerning real property assessments to be either attorneys, certified public accountants, or certified or provisionally licensed real estate appraisers and to prohibit them from entering into contingency fee agreements in such appeals, and
 - c. Amend CGS Section 12-117a to require that within ninety days of filing an appeal, the plaintiffs shall file an appraisal of the subject property completed by a person or a firm licensed to perform appraisals in the State of Connecticut. Failure to file such an appraisal within such time period shall be grounds for dismissal of the appeal.
 - d. Committee should consider alternative resolution mechanisms for these appeals, such as the dispute resolution process the state of Massachusetts has established.
2. Motor Vehicle Dealer and Repairer Facility Verification Process
Remove the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) from the verification process of a motor vehicle dealer or repairer facility siting in CGA Section 14-54 and instead simply require Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) sign off.
3. Transit Oriented Development
 - a. Specifically for *Primary Transit Station*, CGS Section 8-2 shall allow, as of right, parking requirements not to exceed one parking spot for studio and one bedroom and two parking spots for two bedroom or more dwelling units, mixed-use developments with at least four dwelling units, mixed-use developments with at least four live work units, or multi-family housing with at least four dwelling units at a minimum density of fifteen units per acre in at least fifty per cent of the lot area served by water and sewer infrastructure and within a one-half mile radius of that or any municipality’s primary transit station.

MUNICIPAL LABOR RELATIONS

1. Help prevent unreasonably contested workers’ compensation claims by allowing municipal employers a 45-day period to review workers’ compensation claims from the date at which the municipal employer receives notice of such claim being filed.
2. Promote and eliminate barriers to shared services. Allow for towns and cities to more efficiently allocate resources by:

- a. Exempting the establishment of such service sharing agreements from the definition of “change in working conditions” for purposes of collective bargaining and
 - b. When service sharing arrangements affect two or more collective bargaining units, the interests of all employees affected by the new arrangements may be represented by either a coalition of bargaining units or a new bargaining unit will be created to represent all affected employees.
 - c. Allow municipalities to repeal or amend any municipal charter provision that prohibits or limits a municipality from sharing services with other towns or cities provided each participating municipality’s legislative body approves a resolution with the specific charter provision they are repealing or amending.
3. Increase the thresholds that trigger the prevailing wage mandate for remodeling, refinishing, refurbishing, rehabilitation, alteration or repair of any public works project from \$100,000 to \$500,000.

MUNICIPAL LAW, LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

1. Reduce municipal liability through:
 - a. Limiting the scope of the “reckless disregard” exception to municipal immunity statute found in CGS §52-557n(b)(8). Recent Supreme Court decision in *Williams v. Housing Auth. of the City of Bridgeport, et al.* broadened the scope of reckless disregard. This would be accomplished by deleting “under all the relevant circumstances” from the end of 52-557n(b)(8).
 - b. Applying a new defense that would protect municipalities from liability against those seeking damages as a result of engaging in activities in municipal recreational areas.
2. Amend CGS 8-2 to remove the word “advertising” from the type of signs that a municipal zoning commissions may regulate. The State Supreme Court decision in *Kuchta v. Arisian*, ruled zoning commissions, under that statute, cannot regulate signs that merely express a personal opinion.
3. Support a constitutional amendment to authorize no-excuse absentee voting.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

1. Ensure adequate equitable funding for local public health efforts by:
 - a. Develop a metric to provide supplemental state financial support for local public health departments and districts using either poverty levels, Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) report or Equalized Net Grand List.
2. Enhance oversight and regulation of sober homes by requiring all sober homes be registered with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).
3. Enhance efforts to combat the State’s opioid epidemic by:

- b. Requiring DMHAS, the Governor's office, and the Department of Public Health to better allocate funding and resources towards substance abuse prevention and recovery. This may include designating the Chief Operating Officer of Connecticut or other official as Connecticut's Drug Abuse and Control Ombudsman tasked with coordinating efforts to enhance and examine sustainable funding streams to support substance abuse prevention, education and recovery efforts.
- c. Providing greater clarity in the recently enacted law regarding recreational use of cannabis by clarifying:
 - What programs can be funded through the municipal tax revenue from recreational marijuana sales, and
 - Ensure a greater portion of State funds be designated towards local substance abuse prevention and response efforts.

PUBLIC SAFETY, CRIME PREVENTION AND CODE COMPLIANCE

1. Modify provisions of PA 20-1 regarding Police Accountability Reform by:
 - a. Allowing police departments to acquire POST accreditation in lieu of CALEA. POST accreditation offers a comparable tiered accreditation process for departments to acquire and tailors their accreditation to Connecticut state statutes and regulations. The CALEA process requires substantial costs for assessment, staffing, record keeping and facility upgrades – which may not be practical for some departments and runs counter to efforts to collaborate or share resources between police departments. In addition, unlike CALEA which requires accreditation and assessment fees, the State accreditation and assessment has no costs.
 - b. Reduce ambiguity by clarifying which police vehicles need to employ dash cameras. There remains uncertainty whether particular police vehicles such as bicycles, ATV's, or non-police vehicles such as animal control vehicles, need dash cameras.
 - c. Encouraging the state to offer greater financial support for the acquisition of police body and vehicle cameras, in particular allowing the funding to be used for data storage. In addition, encourage the State to develop a central deposit for camera data.
2. Update existing blasting regulations which are outdated and do not reflect current advances in technology. Updating the regulations can also reduce administrative burden on local officials.
3. Work with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to reduce the financial and administrative costs associated with the Resident State Trooper (RST) program by eliminating the requirement that municipalities that employ RST and constables under the program be responsible for the storage and related costs of body camera data. The RST program is a great example of successful state-local cooperation and greater efforts need to occur to utilize existing operations (i.e. the State's body

camera data storage system) rather than burdening individual municipalities with the requirement.

TAXES AND FINANCE

1. Reduce the current over-reliance on a regressive property tax system through municipal revenue diversification and providing incentives for municipalities to expand shared and regional services.
2. Provide taxpayer relief by allowing for a phase-in of the current property tax revaluations and provide a local option to delay property tax revaluation for one year.
3. Review the current PA 490 Program and ensure that the program still meets its original goals to provide tax relief to open space, forested and working lands and that municipalities are adequately compensated for lands within the program.
4. Review and clarify CGS 21-81(57) regarding the assessment and taxation of renewable energy systems including but not limited to solar and fuel cells.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Support the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI) in order to a) provide sustainable funding to maintain and improve state and local transportation infrastructure; b) improve the process by which additional funding raised by the TCI and provided to municipalities, by supplementing existing programs like TAR, LOCIP and Local Bridge Program rather than creating new programs.
2. Enhance safety for pedestrians and vehicular traffic through a) the creation a pilot program that will allow municipalities to utilize automated traffic enforcement technology in identified high risk areas such as school zones and b) increased funding for sidewalks and bike paths.
3. Increase opportunities to allow for the expansion of needed electric vehicle infrastructure and develop grant or loan programs that will incentivize and assist municipalities in converting existing fleets into green fleets with a priority on school transportation fleets.