Effective Advocacy 101: CCM Lobbying Guide for Municipal Officials

Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

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“A mayor is a symbol and a public face of what a city bureaucracy provides its citizens.”

- John Hickenlooper
Introduction

What is effective advocacy?

Your first step to becoming an effective advocate can be defined in three words...relationships, relationships, relationships.

Developing any relationship – personal or professional – is an ongoing process. With few exceptions, they don’t happen overnight. It takes time and a continued effort to forge a bond of friendship and trust. Building a relationship with your state legislators is no different. You have to be willing to work at it with open, honest communication, and occasionally be willing to compromise to reach a solution. But perhaps more importantly, you have to realize that, as in any meaningful relationship, you must offer help as well as ask for it.

This advocacy guide will give you an in-depth look at what it takes to develop that relationship and why it is so important. We’ll also provide you with several proven, successful advocacy strategies that take very little time or money to incorporate into your daily routine. These strategies will lead to a strong, healthy relationship with your state legislators built on mutual trust and respect.

Included in the guide are several Effective Advocacy Strategies worksheets to help you develop an advocacy plan that fits into your schedule and lifestyle (see pages 8-14). Also included is sample testimony that illustrates how to effectively communicate with legislators (beginning on page 48).

And for the experienced advocate, you’ll find suggestions on how to take your advocacy efforts to the next level.

Throughout the advocacy guide, you’ll hear from several Connecticut state municipal officials who are strong advocates for their communities. They’ll share their thoughts on why effective communication is so critical to building a strong relationship between state and local leaders.
To start building the relationship with your legislators, it's important to understand what they really want to know and how you should communicate your message. Effective communication is key to ensuring your legislators are fully aware of the impact their decisions will have on the citizens in your municipality. More often than not, legislation is born out of the need or desire to correct a perceived problem or address a citizen grievance.

Three of the most persuasive messages to legislators include:
- Personal story related to a bill,
- Localized information and fiscal impact, and
- Specific constituent concerns.

So, when it's time to communicate your key message, be prepared to answer the following questions and your legislators will pay attention:
- Who in my district will be impacted by this legislation?
- How will they be effected?
- How many will be effected?
- Who is the opponent of this legislation, and what are their positions.
Chapter 1

CCM and You... Working Together for Advocacy Success

CCM is the voice of local government. As the statewide association of towns and cities, CCM can help you on your path to advocacy success.

Since effective advocacy is an ongoing, consistent process, CCM has designed advocacy activities to amplify the municipal voice -- and help you develop your personal advocacy plan, before, during and after session:

**Before Session**

- **Advocacy Training in Your Town/City with a Member of CCM’s Advocacy Team:** Learn why advocacy is so important, how to prepare for the upcoming session and how to effectively communicate and build a relationship with your legislators.
- **Roundtable Discussions between Your Town/City and the State Legislators Elected to Serve Your Town/City:** An open, candid conversation between state legislators and the municipal officials from your town/city.
- **Legislative Preview at Your Council Meetings with a Member of CCM’s Advocacy Team:** Learn about anticipated legislation in the upcoming legislative session and its impact on local government.

**During Session**

- **CCM’s Legislative Action Center (LAC):** [advocacy.ccm-ct.org](http://advocacy.ccm-ct.org)
- **Legislative Updates through CCM’s “Legislative Alert”:** CCM staff will provide timely bulletins with in-depth summaries of current, high priority legislation affecting towns and cities, including public hearings and the status of bills.
- **Capitol Report:** A brief weekly summary of the legislative activities on high-priority legislation affecting municipalities and Capitol on-goings.
- **CCM Policy Briefs:** Provide background information and status on many of the CCM’s legislative priorities.
After Session

- **Legislative Wrap-Up Webinar:** CCM’s lobbying team will provide detailed information following the conclusion of the legislative session via a webinar to summarize the major issues that passed/failed and additional briefings at our annual Convention/Business Meeting. CCM’s lobbying staff may also travel to your municipality to provide an overview of the recent session.

- **Legislative Final Report:** Mailed to all CCM members, this document summarizes key issues that CCM tracked during the legislative session, including the 2016 State Legislative Program established by CCM’s policy committees prior to the start of session. The document also highlights major bills that passed and failed affecting municipal governments.

How Can You Help CCM Help You?

- Attend CCM’s Annual Conference each October.
- Sign up to serve on one of CCM legislative policy committees to help establish the legislative agenda. Meetings are held in September, October and November. Committees include:
  - Education
  - Environmental Management and Energy
  - Land Use, Housing and Community Development
  - Labor Relations
  - Municipal Law, Liability and Insurance
  - Public Health and Human Services
  - Public Safety, Crime Prevention and Code Enforcement
  - Taxes and Finance
  - Task Force on Children, Youth and Families
  - Task Force on Sustainability
  - Transportation and Infrastructure

For The Experienced Advocate

- Work with CCM lobbying team on bill language or proposed amendments.
- Volunteer to serve as an issue expert for testimony at committee hearings before and during session.
- Provide CCM advocacy staff with copies of letters, reports, data, emails, etc. that you have sent to your legislators.
- Recruit other municipal officials to be a part of CCM’s advocacy team.
- Volunteer to provide legislative updates at civic and business organizations regarding pending legislation affecting your community and their business.
Our Challenges, Our Opportunities

During the next decade, Connecticut’s towns and cities will face tremendous challenges as we work to get to strengthen our economy and ensure the continuation of key services. As municipal officials, you understand we can’t meet these challenges alone and will need the support of our state elected partners. Effective advocacy is the foundation for building these relationships.

Municipal leaders statewide have an opportunity right now to start building a bridge that will lead to good public policy and legislators who respect and protect Home Rule authority. The next several chapters will help you start your advocacy plan today and become part of the team that will help shape Connecticut’s future.

169 Towns and Cities, 9 Regions, 1 Municipal Voice!
CCM Legislative Handbook App

CCM is excited to announce the "CCM Connecticut Legislator Guidebook" mobile app. The Guidebook -- similar to the CCM General Assembly Handbook -- provides the same features as the hardcopy, but in an easy-to-use mobile version for your phone or tablet. CCM's new mobile app will also update changes to the General Assembly membership throughout the year, so you'll always have the latest information!

The new mobile app is a user-friendly product that includes a directory and contact information for all 187 members of the General Assembly, committee assignments, important deadlines, and leadership positions. Information is also provided regarding Executive Branch officials and State Agencies. The mobile app design enhances advocacy efforts and helps you navigate the halls of the Capitol and gain greater insights into Connecticut state and federal officials.

A new feature -- exclusive to the mobile app -- is detailed information on Connecticut's Congressional Delegation, the White House and selected federal agencies!

The mobile app is available and can be found by searching "Connecticut Conference of Municipalities". The app is only $9.99!
Chapter 2
Overcoming Advocacy Obstacles

Advocacy isn't difficult. Advocacy doesn't take much time or money. So why don't more municipal officials choose to do it? In this chapter, we'll look at some of the most common obstacles and address how they can be overcome.

Obstacle 1: No One Asked Me to Advocate.
Consider this manual as your invitation to get involved in advocacy! We encourage you to call or email the advocacy team at CCM, and we'll quickly address your concern. (See page 73 for contact information)

As we've stressed, the key to advocacy is building relationships with state legislators. No one municipal official or CCM staff member can do it alone. This is a team effort that requires the involvement of all of our town and cities and their elected leaders. Join the team today.

Obstacle 2: I Feel Inadequate.
This is an understandable objection, because nobody really wants to say the wrong thing – especially when talking to their legislators. However, you are obviously passionate about your municipality, right? That passion is the key to overcoming this objection. No one – not even a professional lobbyist – can tell your community's story better than you can. After all, no one cares about it more than you do. So, focus on telling your story to your state legislators, and be sure to explain in detail the ways in which their decisions will impact your community. If you do this effectively, you definitely will make a favorable impression.

Why Lobby?

“Your voice is important as you are partners in governing. You understand the needs of your municipality and the services that your town or city provides. Your understanding of the how critical services are not only delivered, but paid for make your input critical to the legislative process. If you don’t tell legislators how an issue will impact your community for good or bad, they may assume it will not have an impact.”

Mark Boughton
Mayor
Danbury
In addition to sharing your municipality's story, here are a few more tips that will help you speak with your legislators with more confidence:

- **Advocate on an issue related to your educational or business background and expertise.**
- **Educate yourself on the issue you're going to address.**
  - Meet with your staff prior to contacting your legislators.
  - Contact the CCM advocacy staff member who lobbies that issue before you contact your legislator to review what you're going to talk about and to get the latest information. CCM staff can also assist by providing you with the political landscape concerning an issue.
- **Attend CCM's Legislative Committee meetings.** The Committee meets monthly, from October thru June, each year. At the meetings, you'll gain valuable insight into what is happening on municipal issues statewide and help develop CCM's legislative agenda for the upcoming legislative session.
- **Volunteer to serve on a local task force convened by your legislator or the Governor to expand your knowledge base.**

**Obstacle 3: I Don't Know What to Say to My Legislator.**

Remember, advocacy starts at home, not in Hartford. Building a relationship with your legislators is like building any other relationship. It starts with a simple "Hello," or "I would like to introduce myself." You go from there.

- **Before session, send your legislators a note to say “looking forward to working with you.”** Whether you agree or disagree with their politics or policies is irrelevant. As a public official, you are one of the few people who understands the commitment it takes to be a public servant.
- **Spend some time researching your legislators before you meet or call them.** The Connecticut House and Connecticut Senate websites have information about each legislator, and all have a website. Do an Internet search of their names and you'll probably be surprised how much information you can find. CCM’s advocacy staff can assist you by providing background material on your legislators.
- **Read and follow the same news sources as your legislators.** In addition to local newspapers, many state legislators get their news from sites such as The Capitol Report, CT News Junkie, The CT Mirror, The Hartford Courant’s Capitol Watch blog.
- **Take advantage of social media—become their friend on Facebook, follow them on Twitter, and get connected on LinkedIn, or at least preview their profile.**
- **Now that you've learned about your legislators, determine what you have in common and start a conversation talking about these commonalities.**
- **Invite your legislators on a tour of your community.** Remember, you can tell your municipality’s story better than anyone. This is an excellent time to tell them how you have met the challenges of a struggling economy and what you're doing for your residents. While on the tour, give them an opportunity to ask questions. Be sure to invite your local media to come and take pictures. Tours are an excellent photo opportunity for both you and your legislators.
House and Senate members are up for re-election in 2016 and they are always eager to talk about their campaign platform. Urge them to place issues like unfunded state mandates relief to municipalities in their platform.

What’s happening in your municipality related to the issues they care about? Be sure to share this with them and offer to keep them informed if and when the situation changes.

For the experienced advocate – Offer to serve as an advocacy mentor to a newly elected municipal official from your city/town or area. Sometimes having a respected and experienced colleague who is willing to offer guidance is just the “push” a newly elected official needs to get involved in advocacy.

Let’s admit it: sometimes starting the conversation can be a challenge. By utilizing the tips listed above, you’ll find getting started is easier and more enjoyable than you think!

Obstacle 4: The Legislator Is an Expert on the Issue and I’m not.

In most instances, you’ll find this really isn’t true, particularly if your legislator is newly elected or has never before served in public office. However, what they are good at is talking to the people who are the experts. This is especially true if they’ve agreed to sponsor specific legislation that will impact a special interest group or group of concerned citizens.

Here are some techniques to help you overcome this objection:

- **Do your homework.** Be prepared before meeting with your legislators to discuss an issue. Know who or what groups are opposing your position, and what they are telling the legislators.
- **You are the expert on your municipality, so focus on telling your story.** Remember, you know and care more about your community than anyone. Your legislators want to know the local impact of legislation.
- **Meet or talk with CCM’s advocacy team** before meeting with your legislators to develop talking points to prepare for your conversation.

Building a Relationship with Your Legislator is Important?

“Your delegation is there to assist your community and its residents, regardless of whether they are Republican, Democratic or Independent. Developing a relationship with them will build trust and allow for a meaningful working relationship and enable information to flow from your town or city to Hartford, but also from the Capitol to your town. Begin to develop a relationship with your delegation now--don’t wait until you need them to vote for or against a proposal. It’s easier to ask for something from someone you know and whom you have worked with. Remember you represent the same constituents and are working for their best interests.”

Toni Harp
Mayor
New Haven
If possible, ask CCM advocacy staff to attend the meeting with you to provide technical expertise, if needed.

If you don't understand your legislator's position or reasons for supporting/opposing an issue, be sure to ask questions for clarification. You should not conclude the conversation until you fully understand the "why" for his or her decision to support or oppose your position.

There are many times when a legislator is "hungry" for more information to further educate himself or herself on an issue. If this is your area of expertise, offer to be a resource, and then you become the expert!

Obstacle 5: The Legislator Doesn't Care What We Say Anyway.
Yes, they do, if you communicate your message effectively.
If you understand what they care about and why – if you can answer the following questions – they will pay attention:

- Who in my district will be impacted by this legislation?
- How will they be impacted?
- How many will be impacted?
- How many care that they will be impacted?

Here are suggestions to make sure your legislator does care about what you say:

- Put a face on your community. Get your residents (voters) to support you and help communicate your message.
  Legislators do care what voters think. See Chapter 5, Building Your Advocacy Team, for more details.

- As a municipal official, you want to make informed decisions. And to do so, you have to hear and know both sides of every issue. Your legislator is no different. Don't let them make decisions without hearing from you and how your community will be affected.
Obstacle 6: Negative Impression of State Capitol Politics.
Do you feel this way because of what you see on television or read on the Internet or in the print media? If that's the case, remember you're only getting a very brief synopsis of an incident or quote designed to make headlines that grab the audience's attention. As a public official, you know there's usually much more to a story than the hype, so don't make judgments based upon a one-minute or one-article story.

Maybe you believe Hartford politics is highly questionable based upon a perception of how the "political chess game" is played in Hartford. If that's the case, there's only one way to change the situation -- get involved and help change the rules of the game. This starts by always being a statesman. Publicly "bashing" your legislators only serves to further the perception that state politics is problematic. If you disagree with them, talk with them privately and, hopefully, they will extend this same courtesy to you.

Honesty, trust, good moral values and ethics do exist in the political arena. By focusing on building a positive relationship with your legislators based on these characteristics, you'll soon discover that politicians at all levels of government are committed, passionate individuals working for the benefit of their communities.

Obstacle 7: I Don't Have the Time or Resources to Go to Hartford.
Advocacy is most effective when done at home, in the district, before and after the legislative session, so you don't have to be in Hartford to make a difference. CCM always encourages and appreciates visits from municipal officials during session, although we do understand that time constraints may prevent these visits from happening.

Why it is important to take time to testify in-person?

"Taking the time to testify in person shows that a particular bill is important, and that you want your legislators and members of a particular committee to take note. By testifying in person you will not only be able to submit written testimony on a particular bill, but will be in a position to answer questions directly from legislators or rebut testimony that has been offered and may be inaccurate. You have a unique perspective as a municipal CEO and your testimony is highly valued by legislators."
Local officials must be strong advocates

“I rely on my local officials to provide me with the direct impact that proposed legislation may have on the towns I represent. Mayors and First Selectman have first-hand experience of how the different municipal services like education, public works, and first responders interact and how a particular bill, while well intentioned, may adversely impact current services and local budgets. My local officials can provide the needed information that allows me to make a thoughtful and informed vote.”

Paul Formica
State Senator
20th District

In fact, legislators repeatedly say that they are readily available to meet municipal officials from their districts. And they emphasize that they are able to devote much more of their time and attention to these local meetings than they are to meetings held during session. Here are some tactics to help you get started on advocacy right at home in your municipality. As you review these tactics, remember: if you make advocacy a part of your routine, you’ll only stick with it if it fits into your lifestyle, so design a plan that works for you!

- **Make a commitment to advocacy and building a relationship with your legislators.** If you commit only 30 minutes each week to advocacy, you will have done 48 hours of advocacy in one year without ever going to Hartford!
- If you do this consistently, over time you will build an effective relationship with your legislators and become a key contact for your municipality without ever having to leave town.
- Make advocacy a part of your daily routine, and you'll find it won't take any more time than reading your daily news or responding to emails.
- Use today's technology to communicate. Sending a quick email, forwarding a link to a website or information you know your legislators will find interesting is a simple way to stay in touch, and it takes almost no time at all.

**Visit Hartford During Session**

CCM always encourages and appreciates visits from municipal officials during session. So, if you do plan to visit your legislators in Hartford during session, below are some suggestions to maximize your time and resources:

- **Visit your legislators early during the session, rather than at the end.** Although their schedules are busy, they will have more time to talk with you and you still have the opportunity to impact their decisions.
Visit during CCM’s Day on the Hill. You’ll have the opportunity to network with municipal colleagues, hear from key legislative leaders and schedule appointments with legislators to address municipal concerns. You’ll get the latest information on current issues so you can have timely, effective conversations with your legislators.

- If you are meeting with your legislators to discuss specific issues, have information you can leave with them and/or their staff at the conclusion of your meeting. CCM’s staff can assist you (contact information on page 73).
- Even if they aren’t in your district, take time to stop by and drop off information to all legislators who will hear the issue(s) in an upcoming committee meeting.
- Take plenty of pictures to post on social media to demonstrate to your constituents that you are working hard on their behalf.

Obstacle 8: Other Advocates in the Community Lobby.
Others can assist, but no one is more effective at telling your municipality’s story than you are. In fact, your message has much more impact on your legislator if you are the one sharing it, because you live and represent constituents in their district.

Here are a few more reasons why you and only you need to share your municipality’s story:
- You have the contacts in your municipality (part of your legislators’ district) that others do not have.
- You put a face on your community and care about it more than anyone else.
- You have spent the time and effort to develop a relationship with your legislators that is built on honesty and trust.
- You live in the legislator’s community, you vote in the area and the legislators know this. Remember what your legislator wants to know:
  - Who in my district will be impacted by this legislation?
  - How will they be impacted?
  - How many will be impacted?
  - How many care that they will be impacted?
No one can answer these questions better than you!

WHY SHOULD I LOBBY?

The reality is that you cannot be an effective municipal leader if you ignore the significant role played by the General Assembly and Executive Branch in regulating and funding the activities of towns and cities. It is very important that legislators hear from their local elected officials so they are clear about what the municipality wants and what is in the best interest of their mutual constituents. When legislators don’t hear from you, they assume that your municipality doesn’t care, that it’s a “CCM issue,” not a municipal one. It is vital that you speak out.

Your participation in the process adds credibility and clout to the efforts of the CCM staff. You will have an opportunity to influence state actions that have a direct impact on your municipality’s quality of life.
Chapter 3
Building a Relationship with Your Legislator

We cannot accomplish all that we need to do without working together.

~ Bill Richardson

In this chapter, you will find a comprehensive list of proven, effective strategies that work for the advocacy novice or the official who is ready to take his or her advocacy efforts to the next level. As you read through the list, space is provided for you to include your own ideas. One of the best parts about advocacy...you are only limited by your own imagination. So, let the creative juices flow!

**Strategy 1: Learn What You Have in Common.**

Relationships often start because of commonalities, so knowing what you have in common with your legislators is an excellent way to open a conversation and get to know one another.

Commonalities include:

- Political affiliation
- Political and social views
- Occupation
- Hobbies
- Family
- Civic involvement
- Industry
- Church and religious affiliation
- Education
- Credentials
- Military or local EMS Service
- Fraternity/Sorority
- Other
Strategy 2: Meetings
Before and after the legislative session, legislators are more readily available and anxious to meet with municipal officials. Capitalize on this and plan to meet with your legislators at least once before, once during and once after session. (See meetings worksheet on page 74) Here is a list of ideas to get you started:

- Invite them to coffee just to talk.
- Invite them to municipal events as your personal guest.
- Arrange a meeting with the editor of your local newspaper if they’ve never met.
- Invite them to council meetings – especially when you are discussing your budget or intergovernmental policy issues.
- Invite them to meet with your senior staff and take a tour of your municipality.
- Invite them to be your guest at a civic organization meeting (if they are not already a member).
- Arrange a “meet-n-greet” with key business leaders and/or invite them to join you when you meet with homeowners association groups.
- Attend events they sponsor or when they invite you.
- Go to events you know they will be attending, just to say “Hi.”
- Sponsor a Roundtable Discussion with your legislators. CCM staff can attend and participate. These events are excellent opportunities to get to know them better and talk candidly about municipal and state issues.
- Immediately after session, schedule a one-on-one visit so you can talk privately about their voting record and the impact of new legislation on your community.
  - Share with them your disappointment when they didn’t support issues like meaningful mandates relief.
- Many legislators schedule town hall meetings in their districts after session. Offer to help promote them by using social media and posting the event on your municipality’s website – and make sure you attend. This demonstrates good will between state and local government. It also gets your face in front of your legislators as well as your constituents. Furthermore, you’ll be available to address any questions about the local impact of new legislation.

How to Keep Your Legislator’s Attention

“As a municipal CEO, you know how full an elected officials’ schedule is. When reaching out to a legislator, be polite, but be concise. Understand what you want your legislator to do or how you want them to vote on a bill, and have a few key bullet points to strengthen your argument. Legislators are reviewing hundreds of bills at any given time, so be prepared to make a follow up email or phone call to reinforce your position and to say thank you for their support.”

Mark Walter
First Selectman
East Haddam
Get to know their staff. Remember: they can be your greatest allies when it’s time to ask for your legislators’ support or opposition on a bill!

**Strategy 3: Information**

As mentioned earlier, legislators want and need information to make decisions. Providing them with specific information about your community is an excellent way to keep your legislators engaged and become a valuable resource. (See *information worksheet* on page 76)

Here is a list of resources to provide your legislators to help them make informed decisions:

- You know what makes your town/city unique. But do your legislators? Summer is an excellent time to educate them on who and what you really are. Prepare and present this information as if you were trying to recruit a new business to your municipality:
  - Share what type of businesses and industry are in your community and why.
  - Share the demographics of your residents and what they are saying about your municipality.
  - Share the challenges and opportunities you’re facing related to growth, fiscal shortfalls, crime, public safety, transportation, infrastructure, redevelopment, water supply, etc.
  - Share your greatest accomplishments and how you were able to achieve them.
  - Create a list of strategies your municipality is using to stimulate the local economy and give that list to your legislators. Make sure they are well informed of your efforts and that they understand how further unfunded mandates will affect your ability to continue these efforts.

- Personally give them a copy of your municipality’s annual budget or, at the very least, a budget summary. Schedule visits to do this in lieu of sending it through the mail or having your staff deliver them. This is one of the best opportunities you’ll have to meet with them and talk again about your community before session. Be sure to highlight items that relate to potential legislation so your legislators will fully understand how a loss or reduction of that revenue source will affect your community.

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**Meeting with Legislators In-Person**

“Sitting down with your legislator or with legislative leaders builds a relationship that email, or phone call never will. It allows you to develop a stronger and more personal relationship that will in the end provide the greatest benefit to our mutual constituents. Meeting face to face will create an opportunity to discuss not only a particular piece of legislation, but other issues that may be on the horizon.”

---

Scott Shanley
Town Manager
Manchester
If your municipality has a “Welcome Guide” for new residents, make sure your legislators have a copy.

Prior to the start of session, provide your legislators with an issue packet detailing your municipality’s legislative priorities, and CCM’s legislative priorities. This will allow your legislators to learn which issues are important to your municipality, and the state.

Offer to provide your legislators with data related to an issue they are working on. Send them links to copies of articles that give them more information on that issue or other issues you have discussed with them.

During session, provide your legislators with specific and fiscal data illustrating the impact of pending legislation.

Preempt a preemption by promoting transparency in government spending and operations in your municipality and make sure your legislators know you’re doing so. This is one of the greatest concerns legislators focus on during session, so the more they know how transparent you are in your municipality, the less likely it is to become an issue at the state level resulting in a mandate or preemption.

The following tips are for the experienced advocate:

- Talk with the publisher of your local newspaper and offer to write op-ed articles to keep residents informed about pending legislation that will affect your community. Consider writing an article on your town/city website or newsletter on pending legislation. CCM staff can assist you.
- Use Social Media such as Twitter, Facebook page or e-newsletter to inform residents about pending legislation affecting their community.

**Strategy 4: Communication**

One of the keys to a successful relationship is keeping the lines of communication open with your legislators. This doesn’t mean you have to talk with them every day, but the key is consistency. If they see and hear from you on a regular basis, and you’re not asking them for something during every conversation, they will be willing to listen to your concerns if and when that time arises. A good “rule of thumb” is to commit to communicating with your legislators at least twice a month. This can include a simple “hello” at an event, sending them a quick email or link, posting a comment on their Facebook page, wishing them a happy birthday or anniversary.
Following is some advice on how to effectively communicate with your legislators. (See communication worksheet on page 62):

› **Thank them for their service.** After the session, send them a note (handwritten gets the most attention) saying, “Welcome back to the district. Thank you for your hard work and I look forward to seeing you soon.” If you met or worked with their staff, make sure to mention how much you appreciated them in your note as well. Their hard work is just as important and your recognition of their efforts will get noticed by their boss.

› **Send them an email during session to say “thank you”** when they vote in support of local government.

› **If they vote against municipalities, make sure they hear from you as well.** They need to be aware that you are paying attention to how they are voting! But remember, publicly calling a legislator to task is not always the best approach. A private conversation may better serve your purposes.

› **Be sure they are on your email distribution list to receive your municipality’s newsletter, and make sure you are on their list.**

› **If your municipality supports a bill your legislators are sponsoring, pass a resolution and present it to them publicly** before session with the media present for photos and a possible quote from you and/or your legislators. You might be surprised by how much they appreciate and remember this during session.

› **Offer to write a letter to the editor or op-ed column for your local paper if you support their legislation, and make sure they receive a copy.**

› **Send them articles of interest or articles in which they are quoted.** Include a brief handwritten note sharing your thoughts on their comments.

› **Strategy 3 suggests giving your legislators a copy of your annual budget.** Schedule visits to do this in lieu of sending them through the mail or having your staff deliver them. This is one of the best opportunities you’ll have to meet with them and talk again about your community before session.

**Strategy 5: How Can I Help You?**

As a public official, you know how good – and somewhat surprising – it is to hear this question. Your legislators are no different. Remember, building a strong relationship means you have to offer help and support as well as ask for it. This is especially true if you are building a new relationship. (See how can I help worksheet on page 68) Following are some effective strategies that will help you to help your legislators:

› **Send them a congratulatory note (or give them a call) after their successful election or re-election** (even if you did not support them during their campaign). Many legislators have told us this doesn't happen very often, so it will definitely have a positive impact when they hear from you.

› It’s never too early to start talking about your legislators’ priorities for 2015. Then, help facilitate meetings or share contacts with people you know that can help them achieve those priorities, if they don’t negatively affect municipalities in general or your community.
› Volunteer to serve on a task force, committee or working group initiated by your legislators or one where they are also serving.
› Get their contact information (work and cell phone, email) and give them yours.
› Make yourself available (when feasible) when asked to help.
› Publicly recognize legislators for good deeds at council meetings or when you are speaking to groups of people in your community.
› Send them articles related to their goals and/or legislative priorities.
› When they invite you to an event, make sure to send a response. Even if you’re unable to attend, it is professional courtesy and they will respect this.
› If you become aware of how they’ve helped one of your constituents, be sure to say “thank you.”
› Above all: Treat your legislator as you would like to be treated by your constituents!

As you can see, building a relationship with your legislators is just like building a relationship with a friend. It doesn't happen overnight. But with effort, consistency and the right intentions, you'll find this relationship will go beyond politics and you'll have a friend you can count on well after both of you are no longer in office.

**Strategy 6: Initiate a Grassroots Home Rule Campaign in Your Community – For the Advanced Advocate**

As we’ve stressed in earlier chapters, the key to success in advocacy is relationship. Often we think of advocacy as only building relationships with legislators; however, effective advocacy must go beyond politics and reach into your community. Some of your most valuable advocates are the residents and business owners in your municipality. Many times, they can capture the attention of your legislators better than you can as an elected or appointed official. So don’t overlook how significant they are to your efforts.

Getting citizens involved will require some effort, but a well-timed and well-executed grassroots advocacy campaign can create a team of local advocates that will not only understand but eagerly support your position on important legislative issues.

Grassroots advocacy is very similar to running a political campaign. But in lieu of promoting a candidate, you’re promoting your community, what you’re doing for your citizens and businesses, and the importance of Home Rule. Below are some tips on how to have a successful campaign:

› Identify the influential leaders (both business and civic) in your community who would make great advocates and invite them to a roundtable discussion.

Structure your comments to address the following questions:
- How will the issues impact their daily lives (and the lives of their children)?
- How will the issues impact the taxes they pay?
- How will the issues impact the services you provide them?
- If they own a business in your municipality, how will their business be affected?
- Share with them information about bills that passed (or failed) and what that means to your municipality’s bottom line.
Reintroduce your citizens to their community by hosting a tour or open house of municipal facilities. This is your opportunity to educate them on how their tax dollars are being spent wisely and the multitude of services you provide.

Communicate with residents why their municipality is unique. Is it your great parks and trails, athletic programs, extensive shopping and dining options, public safety, etc.? As with legislators, your residents need to know and understand why this uniqueness means “one-size-fits-all” government doesn’t work.

Spend some time visiting local business owners and discuss what new legislation means to their business and how it will affect their bottom line.

Each month, send out an email or newsletter or submit an article to your local paper about Home Rule and what it means to your residents.

Create a mail piece, palm card or even a business card that gives a brief description of Home Rule and what it means (a.k.a. a campaign brochure). Hand this out at every opportunity. The goal is to get your residents talking about Home Rule and why it’s so important.

Spend time hosting small group meetings or get residents to host meetings (similar to “candidate coffees”), speak at homeowners association meetings, and civic and business organizations, and talk about Home Rule and why it’s so important.

- Be sure to capture the contact information of people you meet or speak with for on-going communications. This is now your advocacy network!

Create an ally of your local news media. Invite reporters for an exclusive tour of your municipality and make sure they know the good things you’re doing for your residents. Also, keep them abreast of your advocacy campaign. Reporters are always looking for human interest stories for their viewers or readers. There’s nothing better than citizens and businesses coming together to support their community.

Strategy 7 – Working with Difficult Legislators

On rare occasions, some legislators may be unresponsive to your advocacy attempts or be unwilling to meet with you. This presents a unique and somewhat challenging set of circumstances. While we hope this is not the case, there are tactics to continue your advocacy outreach and communicate your message with your legislators.

If you’ve made attempts to contact them to no avail, take heart. Below is a list of alternatives you can use:

- First and foremost always take the “high road.” Even if they are unresponsive, be sure to always keep them informed and abreast of your advocacy efforts and keep records of this communication so you can provide them with copies if they call your efforts into question.
Develop a network of community advocates that will support your municipality’s position and are willing to communicate with their legislators on your behalf. While this method may take longer to develop, you’ll find it is well worth the time and effort, not only during the forthcoming session but for sessions to come. And as a bonus, you’ll have a well-informed group of constituents that will be willing to hold their legislators accountable for their decisions and votes in Hartford. While your legislators may not respond to you, they are usually very responsive to their voters!

Don’t hesitate to include people (the legislators’ voters) who live outside your municipal boundaries when you build your network. As you know, some legislation has far-reaching consequences that go beyond municipality borders, so including these constituents demonstrates that you care about what happens to people in and around your community, especially if they own a business or work in your municipality.

Build a rapport with the legislator’s staff. Treating them with courtesy and respect will go a long way when they talk with the legislator. Once you’ve developed that rapport, schedule a meeting with the legislative assistant to share your message and ask him or her to pass it along to the legislator.

Assess who is being uncooperative. If it’s the House member, concentrate on building a relationship with your Senate member or vice versa. Select legislative issues, make a list of the legislators who are chairpersons and members of the committees where their bills will be heard. You can always make contact with their offices, even if you are not part of their districts.

Contact an elected friend or colleague in the committee member’s district and ask them to speak to their representative on your behalf. Once again, this is useful if you’re focused on specific issues and want to make sure all committee members have as much information as possible to make informed decisions.

Difficult or unresponsive legislators are one of the greatest challenges to effective advocacy, but you’re a municipal elected official, so no one understands better than you how to deal with difficult people. Focus on the passion and commitment you have for your community and you’ll find the spirit and determination to persevere. And who knows, you may eventually convert an adversary into a friend!
Chapter 4

Communicating Your Message

“Communication works for those who work at it.”
~ John Powell

Once you have developed a solid relationship with your legislators, you’re ready to begin communicating your message and talking about potential legislation that will affect your community. But before you reach for the phone or start typing away on the computer, it’s important to be prepared. It’s important to understand when it is the right time to communicate, how to do it effectively and what to say. In this chapter, we’ll review these important strategies so when you communicate with your legislators... they will listen!

Here are some very important points for you to keep in mind:

- When communicating with your legislators, be accurate, be brief and tell them something new.
- Legislators care about a bill when:
  - They are the sponsor/co-sponsor.
  - Leadership tells them to care.
  - They are going to hear the bill in committee.
  - There are enough people in their district who show they care about the bill.

Preparing to Communicate

Being prepared ensures that you will communicate your message much more effectively. Below is a list of strategies to help you get ready:

- Know where the legislation is in the legislative process (what committees it has been through, where it’s going next, etc.).
- Know who the bill’s sponsor/co-sponsors is/are.
- Know how other legislators have voted on the bill in their respective committees.
- If possible, find out the position of other committee members on the issue. If it’s going to be a controversial vote, your legislators may ask you who else is going to support/oppose their positions. You’ll score some points if you have this information readily available.
- Know your legislators’ position on the issue before you contact them.
- Become familiar with CCM’s position on the issue.
- Meet or call CCM’s advocacy staff working on the issue to get an update.
Provide examples of how the legislation will affect your community. Here are a few very important points on this strategy:

- Be specific.
- Don’t exaggerate; you will lose the trust you worked so hard to build with your legislators.
- If you find out that you’ve given your legislators incorrect information, contact them or their staff immediately. Apologize and give them the correct facts.

Know what you want to accomplish before you contact your legislators.

Know the names and titles of the legislators’ staff. You may be meeting with staff more frequently than with the legislators, so it’s important to spend time getting to know them, and always respect the role they play in helping the legislators do their job.

How to Communicate

Knowing how to communicate your message to your legislators is the key to getting their attention and their support. With the use of today’s technology, you can send your message very quickly when necessary, but is quickly always the best way? In his book *Personal Political Power, How Ordinary People Can Get What They Want From Government*, author Joel Blackwell states, “I still think typed or handwritten notes on nice paper have more impact, if only because they are increasingly rare.”

However, when time is of the essence, sending your message via “snail mail” won’t get it there quick enough, so emails, faxes or phone calls are your best option. (Text messages will be covered later in this chapter.) If you choose to communicate by any of these options, it’s important to know what to include in your message.

Here are some rules that apply, no matter which method you choose to use:

- Be sure to include your name, title, address, phone number(s), email address, and district number on all communication. Including the district number is very rare and so it gets the reader’s attention quickly. It also tells them you are an informed constituent because you know your legislative district. Your elected title gets their respect, or at the very least, their attention as well.
- Get to the point quickly and effectively. Remember…be brief, be accurate and tell them something new.
- Include your municipality’s story and the ways in which the potential legislation will affect your community, especially if it will have a fiscal impact or create a loss of jobs or public programs for your residents (voters).
- Mention that you are readily available to talk with them about your position at any time, and then be available!
- Ask for what you want.
- Reference the bill number and sponsor(s) and when they are expected to vote on the legislation. Legislators see hundreds of bills during session, so this information helps give them a frame of reference for when they need to make a decision.
Frame your comments to appeal to the legislator's professional career or prior public service as a former local elected official. Below are some examples:

**IF LEGISLATOR IS A FORMER TOWN/CITY COUNCILMEMBER**
- Representative__________, as a former local official, you understand the importance of local self-governance. SB/HB (bill number) goes against everything that Home Rule stands for. We are asking you to join your local leaders in upholding Home Rule and safeguarding local tax dollars by voting “no” on SB/HB (bill number).

**IF LEGISLATOR IS A BUSINESS OWNER:**
- Representative__________, as a business owner, you understand how important it is to provide a competitive salary and benefit package for your employees. It would be difficult for you to remain profitable or stay in business long if you were subjected to strict, unsustainable mandates on what these benefits must be, even if you are unable to afford them. Municipalities are no different. That is why we are asking you to support your local communities and taxpayers and vote “no” on SB/HB (bill number).
Specific Methods of Communication

Emails
Many of the letter writing and faxing rules apply to emails. You can create a letterhead template in your computer, which is not that difficult to do. Be sure to reference the issue clearly in your email so they'll know what it is and will open it. Otherwise, if the legislators or staff doesn't know you, they may be hesitant to open the email, or it may automatically go to the spam folder.

Another word of advice about emails – most legislators expect them to be brief and succinct. So it's very important to get right to the point, quickly and effectively. And unless you know the legislator very well, be sure to include all of your contact information at the end of the email, including a return email address. This may seem redundant, but the easier you make it for your legislators or their staff to respond to your email, the more likely you are to get a response.

Phone Calls
Whether it's before, during or after the legislative session, it's important to understand how to communicate with your legislators on the phone. Like so many people in government, legislators have very busy schedules (even when they're not in session), so a phone call that's effective and to the point is always appreciated. Follow these tips to make certain your phone call does not waste your time or your legislators’ time:

► Before the call is made, know what you want to say and accomplish so you'll remain focused while speaking with the legislator.
► It will help to have a sheet of paper in front of you with the information the legislator needs:
  • Who in their district will be impacted by this legislation?
  • How will they be effected?
  • How many will be effected?
► Get to the point quickly and communicate how the legislation will affect your municipality, fiscally and/or in any other way. We can't emphasize this point enough. Legislators repeatedly tell our lobbyists they need to know how and how much legislation will affect their voters, not just that there will be an impact. In other words, you must tell them a lot more than “It’s a bad bill, so vote no,” or “It a good bill, so vote yes.”
► If CCM has sent out a Legislative Alert on the issue, be sure to review it and have it in front of you for reference and talking points during your call. (CCM sends out a host of Legislative Alerts during session urging municipality officials to communicate with their legislators on important issues affecting municipalities.)
► Ask for their support or opposition during the call, if that's your goal.
► Know how you will respond if they are in agreement or disagreement with your position. Below are some examples:
• If they disagree, your response should be: “What other information can I provide you that might help you change your mind?” or, “Is there someone else you would like to talk to who might help you change your mind?”
• If they agree, your response should be: “Thank you for your support of (your municipality) and municipalities throughout Connecticut.”
• If they tell you they are not voting immediately, call back or text to reconfirm their vote.

▶ If the legislator is busy and can’t talk with you, communicate your message to a senior staff member. Be sure to write down his or her name and title and the date and time you spoke for future reference and follow up.
▶ Follow up with a letter (mailed, emailed or faxed to their office) reinforcing what you said and heard during the conversation using the tips provided above.

Letters
Even if you don’t write letters anymore, Joel Blackwell’s advice is quite valid. So consider following up your email or phone call with a typed letter to create a permanent record of your communication and reinforce the message you both shared and heard during the conversation. This is very important if you talked on the phone. A follow-up letter summarizing the conversation helps both parties reaffirm what was discussed during the call.

If possible, keep your letter to one page, particularly if you’re sending it during the legislative session. Legislators and staff rarely have the time or the interest to read more than that, so follow the strategy about being brief and accurate to capture and keep their attention.

Send your letter on your personal or your municipality’s letterhead to reaffirm who the sender is. Too many people use a blank piece of paper, which makes it harder (and less likely to have the desired impact) for your legislators to know who is writing and whether that person is a constituent in their legislative district. Legislators and their staff don’t have the time or desire to do research in order to find out who is sending them a letter, so unidentifiable correspondence will likely receive very little attention.

Be sure to sign the letter. If the letter is typewritten, include a one-sentence personal note such as “good luck on_____” (fill in the blank) or “I appreciate your support on________” (fill in the blank) or “I look forward to seeing you back in the district.” This reinforces the fact that you at least reviewed and commented on the letter before it was mailed, even if it was written by someone on your staff.
Text Messages
Sending text messages to your legislators has one very distinct advantage. If you’re sending texts, it means you have their cell phone numbers, which means you’ve committed the time and effort to build a strong relationship with them. Good for you! So now that you’ve developed that relationship, here are some quick tips on when it is and is not appropriate to send a text message and how to do it effectively:

- **Don’t send a text message as your first or primary form of communication with your legislators about an issue.** Text messages are designed to be very brief, so it’s important to communicate with them in depth about the issue before you send one.
- **Don’t abbreviate word such as BTW, BFF, OMG, B/4, etc. in your text message.** These abbreviations may have different meanings to different people, or your legislators may not know what they mean. You don’t want your message to be misconstrued.
- **Don’t send a text message in lieu of a phone call or face-to-face visit.** Personal contact is still the most effective form of communication.

**Send a text message to:**
- Reaffirm their commitment to vote in support of your position.
- Thank them for their vote on an issue.
- Confirm an appointment.
- Thank them for meeting with you. However, this should not take the place of a personal note or follow-up letter.
- Congratulate them on a special event such as a birthday, anniversary, committee appointment, etc.
- Ask if you can stop by to say “hello” if you’re unexpectedly near their office.
- Say “Sorry I missed you,” if you stopped by and they were unavailable.

- **Acknowledge their call and let them know you’ll call them back as soon as possible if they left you a voicemail and you’re unable to call them right back.** If you send your legislators a text message regarding a specific bill, be sure to include the bill number and title. Remember to include your name in the text in case they don’t have your name and cell number together in their telephone contacts list.

Face-to-Face Meetings
*Even with the convenience of today’s technology, there’s still no better way to have a meeting with your legislators than face-to-face. That’s why it is so important to meet while they are back in the district, especially if you can’t travel to Hartford during session. It’s important to schedule a minimum of three meetings during the year with them. Once before session, once during session and once after session. And as any good salesperson will tell you, it’s always harder for someone to say “no” if they have to say it to you in person versus through an email or on the telephone.*
Here are some tips to help you have a productive and successful face-to-face meeting:

- **Make an appointment to meet with your legislators.** Don’t expect to be able to just drop in. Remember, their schedules are as jam-packed as yours.
- If you do “drop in,” be prepared to meet with a staff member instead.
- If you have time (and you should make time), **send your legislators a one-page summary prior to your meeting.** The summary should highlight what you want to talk about and your position on the issue.
- **Write down your goals for the meeting**, so you can remain focused on accomplishing them.
- Be prepared to **present an example of how the legislation will directly affect your municipality.** In other words, tell your story. Be specific.
- If you are meeting to ask for their vote, then ask for it. Don’t assume they are going to support you because they were nice and you had a pleasant conversation.
- Have your 3-minute “elevator speech” in mind. If you are meeting with them during session, you’ll probably get only a few minutes to talk with them and it may be in the hallway as they’re walking from one meeting to the next. Don’t mistake the brevity as rudeness. Their schedules are very, very busy. They don’t have the luxury of spending the same amount of time with you as they could before and after session. So it’s important to get to the point quickly and succinctly.
- **Be nice to their staff when you arrive and when you leave.** Legislators rely heavily on their staff and, more importantly, their staff’s opinions.
- Don’t be disappointed if the legislator is not available when you arrive and you have to meet with staff members instead (this is especially true during session). Continue with the meeting as planned, and be sure to thank them for their time when your meeting concludes. Remember: their impression of you is just as important as the legislator’s!
- If your legislators do not support your position, **ask them to reconsider** (if appropriate) and offer to provide them with additional information that might change their mind.
- If they are firm in their opposition, **thank them for their time and their honesty and leave the meeting on a positive note.** The fact that they disagree with you on some issues doesn’t mean they will on all issues. A memorable way to conclude your meeting is with a “How can I help you?” question. They may respond with “There’s nothing right now.” But they won’t forget that you asked.
- **Send a follow-up thank you letter or email reiterating what you talked about and heard and/or agreed to during the conversation.** You should follow this same advice whether you talked with the staff or the legislator.
- **Keep CCM staff apprised of your conversations/communications** by copying us on emails or sending a follow-up meeting summary. This will help CCM staff know when they meet with the legislator what has transpired during your communications.
Faxes
Most people choose not to send faxes anymore, and that’s okay. If you plan to send a follow-up letter (which you should), you can send a fax instead. And if you have a fax machine at your office, you can save the cost of postage and get your message to your legislator immediately. When sending faxes, follow the same rules as you would for sending a letter, with one additional suggestion. If you send a fax, particularly during session, make sure to get a confirmation that it’s been received by the legislator or his or her staff. After receiving confirmation that the fax was successfully transmitted, follow up with a phone call to make certain it was received in their office. Faxes can be misplaced or forgotten. And it’s not unusual for one fax machine to serve several offices, so you should always call to confirm that your fax arrived at the proper destination.

Ineffective Methods of Communication
This chapter has been about strategies to communicate effectively with your legislators. Now it’s time to talk about what doesn’t work. Legislators (and their staff) have repeatedly stated that the following forms of communication are ineffective or, worse, completely ignored by them:

- Petitions
- Robocalls
- Letters or postcards with the exact same impersonal message.
- Mass emails or letters.
- Any form of communication without contact information.
- Forwarding CCM Legislative Alerts verbatim.
- Any form of communication that threatens the legislator.
- Text messages or tweets from people outside of their legislative district.
  Exceptions to this would be if you know and have a good relationship with a legislator who is not in your district.
- Any form of communication that doesn’t answer the following questions:
  - Who in my district will be impacted by the legislation?
  - How will they be impacted?
  - How many will be impacted?
  - How many care that they will be impacted?

When communicating with your legislators, you want your message to get their attention, and more importantly their support. Communicating effectively greatly increases your chances that your legislators will listen and you will achieve your goal!
Chapter 5
Building Your Advocacy Team

“Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.”

~ Mattie Stepanek

Building a strong relationship with your legislators is the cornerstone of effective advocacy. But when you're advocating on behalf of the constituents in your municipality, getting your residents involved and supporting your position increases your level of effectiveness, because your legislators always want to know how many of them care that they will be affected.

- For the experienced advocate – building an advocacy team in your community not only addresses this issue, but also puts a very real "face" on your municipality and tells your legislators that it's not just a few, but many that care about an issue!

You know that having the right players on a sports team can mean the difference between winning and losing. Your advocacy team is no different. You need to select "players" that are committed and willing to do what's needed, "players" that understand how important certain issues are to the health and well-being of the municipality; in other words, people who are influential in your community. A word of caution about choosing team members: do it carefully and make sure there is a complete understanding by all parties of the team's position on the issue.

Here is a list of suggestions concerning whom to choose as team members to help you build a strong, winning advocacy team:

- **Government**
  - Council colleagues
  - Senior staff members in your town/city
  - Citizen advisory board members
  - CCM advocacy team

- **Residents**
  - Homeowners association presidents
  - Neighborhood Watch coordinators
  - Citizens who have been the beneficiaries of excellent public safety services
  - Citizens you have helped with an issue
- Residents within a neighborhood improvement project
- Civic club presidents
- Youth athletic coaches and parents of the athletes

**Business**
- New business owners
- Business owners that have utilized local incentives or public safety services
- Religious Institutions
- Directors/presidents of local Chambers of Commerce
- Newspaper editors
- Economic development advisory board members

For some of your advocacy team members, it will take only a phone call or email inviting them to participate. As long as you are up front with the expectations for each member, they can commit fully aware of their responsibilities.

Before you ask, however, be prepared to address the following issues:

- **Purpose (or mission) of the advocacy team.** Will you be advocating on one issue or multiple issues? What is/are the issue(s) and why are you asking for support?
- **Time commitment.** One of the primary reasons someone says "no" or ceases to participate is if they believe the activity takes more time than they were originally told it would. So, be very clear about this!
- **Length of project.** Is this a short-term, long-term or permanent project?
- **When and where the team will meet.** One way to decide is to ask the team members to share when they are available, and then meet where and when it's best for the majority.
- **The method of communication you will use.** Face-to-face, phone calls, conference calls, email, social media or a combination.
- **Which team members will be part of the decision-making process?**

Most people want their opinion and ideas to be considered meaningful, so be open-minded and respectful of everyone's ideas, even if the group decides not to pursue them.

Having excited and passionate team members advocating for a cause is much more likely to have an impact on your legislators' decision than having you work alone. So it's important to get and keep team members deeply involved until the legislation either passes or fails. As the team captain, the responsibility to keep your team informed and engaged for as long as necessary is yours and yours alone. Here are some techniques for building a winning strategy:

- Plan to communicate with team members (via email) or a regular basis, to keep them updated on any changes on the legislation/issue...no matter how minute.
- If you read an article, find a link or website, or hear a story on the news about your issue/legislation, share it with your team members.
- Like any good coach, give your team members constant encouragement and a pat on the back. Thanking them for their work shows you are paying attention and appreciate what they are doing to help.
Following are specific tactics to help get members of your local legislative body (LLB) involved:

- **Hold a public workshop prior to the start of session to specifically address the impact of state legislation on your town/city.**
- **Invite your legislator(s) to address your LLB before the start of session or early in the session.**
- For the experienced advocate – **Prepare a report for all councilmembers of potential legislation and its impact on your municipality.**
- For the experienced advocate – **During session, offer to provide legislative updates on issues affecting towns and cities.**
- **Invite a member of CCM’s advocacy staff to address your LLB on advocacy or key legislative issues prior to session or early in the session.**
- **Provide each member of your LLB with a copy of your local priorities and CCM’s 2016 State Legislative Program (Appendix A).**
- **Sign up to serve on a CCM legislative policy committee.**

You know the makeup of your community better than anyone, so communicate your message and reach out to potential team members in ways you know they will respond. The following are some methods for sharing your message and reaching out to the people you want on your advocacy team:

- **Write letters to the editor and/or op-eds in your local paper to educate the public about how legislation that affects their municipality will impact them.**
- **Start a blog or Facebook page about the issue, but post with caution. Use this only to provide educational, factual information about how the legislation will affect your community, in a respectful manner.**
- **Share information about the issue (legislation) through your municipality’s newsletter or your own personal newsletter or blog if your municipality doesn’t have one.**
- **Send out letters to key leaders in your community about the issue(s) and why they should care about them.**
- **Offer to speak at civic and business meetings to share how the legislation will affect your municipality.**
- **Make sure you speak out about the legislation at each councilmember meeting.**
- **If you support legislation sponsored by your state representatives, invite them to speak on the issue at a LLB meeting.**
Once they have responded to the "call to action" and are part of your team, then it's time to focus on your team goals and strategy. First, the goals:

- Team members will fully understand the local impact of legislation on their municipality and on them personally.
- Team members will support the municipality's position on the issue.
- Team members will get involved and take action.

Now that you have a team that's ready to help, what do you want them to do? Here are some ideas that will assist you and your team in spreading your message throughout the community:

- Have team members call, email and/or write letters to their legislators stating that they support the municipality's position on an issue, and asking the legislators to support it too. Provide team members with a sample letter to help them get started.
- Have team members write op-eds for local newspapers in support of the town/city position on the issue.
- Have team members use social media to invite their friends, neighbors and colleagues to join your Facebook page (if you've decided to create one) and show their support.
- Have team members share information with their neighbors, colleagues, employees, clients, etc. in support of the municipality's position on an issue. Or volunteer to speak at their business, or civic meetings so that you can share information and your position on the issue.

It's important that the team understand when they've achieved victory. Know when:

- You have successfully addressed the following questions for the legislators:
  - Who in my district will be impacted by this legislation?
  - How will they be impacted?
  - How many will be impacted?
  - How many care they will be impacted?
- You have "put a face" on your community.
- Your legislators are willing to consider or reconsider their position on the issue in support of the residents (voters) in their district.

If you accomplish these goals and your team's mission, then you truly have achieved success!
Information Worksheet

General Information
Legislator Name: ____________________________________________________________
District Address: ____________________________________________________________

Telephone: __________________________ Fax: ________________________________
Mobile Phone: ______________________ Email Address: _________________________

Hartford Address
Address: _________________________________________________________________

Telephone: __________________________________ Fax: _________________________
Email Address: __________________________ Website: __________________________
Preferred mode of communication: ________________________________________

Legislative Information
Year Elected: __________________________ Committees Appointments: __________
Bills Sponsored/Co-Sponsored: ________________________
Top Legislative Priorities: ______________________________
Staff Member Names, Titles: __________________________

Vote History on: (This could be changed each session, so it is time sensitive)
State Aid to Towns: ______________________________ Municipal Revenue Sharing Account:
Mandates Relief: ______________________________

Political Information
Party Affiliation: __________________________
Percent of Votes in most Recent Election: _______________________________
Campaign Platform (if different from legislative priorities): ______________________

Legislative Outreach Notes
Previous contacts with Legislator: ______________________________
How, when, why, outcome, follow-up: ______________________________

Misc. Information (Could repeat the list of commonalities here)
Occupation: ______________________________________________________________
Spouse/Partner: __________________________________________________________
Appendix A
2016 State Legislative Program
CCM’s 2016 State Legislative Program

RE-INVIGORATING THE STATE-LOCAL PARTNERSHIP: WORKING TOGETHER FOR CONNECTICUT’S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FUTURE

Connecticut’s challenging times present opportunities for significant changes that will improve the quality-of-life of our state. This is the time to reinvigorate the State-Local partnership – because our hometowns and the State now need each other more than ever. Municipalities and state leaders can work together to make government more efficient at all levels and ensure the continuity of local public services. CCM stands at the ready to work with the Governor and General Assembly to address our state’s pressing issues.

Increase Fiscal Sustainability

(a) Enact a statutory prohibition against new unfunded mandates.
(b) Amend the Municipal Employee Retirement System (MERS) to establish an additional retirement plan within MERS, for new hires, that would: (i) maintain a defined benefit plan modeled after the State Employee Retirement System’s Tier III; and (ii) change the plan for new employees hired after a certain time period to be part of a town plan instead of the existing plan.

Improve the Quality of Life in Communities Through Anti-Blight Efforts

(a) Allow a municipality to place blight liens on any interest in a one-to-six family residential property for unpaid blight fines. Liens may be assessed on any property of such owner outside of the municipality, as long as impacted municipalities enter into an inter-local agreement regarding the lien.
(b) Establish additional requirements for banks to maintain foreclosed properties.
(c) Expand mental health programs to address hoarding.
(d) Eliminate the requirement for towns to store the possessions of evicted tenants.
(e) Establish a revolving loan fund for property owners for the remediation of blighted properties.
(f) Dedicate a “Blight Court” or docket within Housing Court to expedite municipal actions to combat blight.
Add Reason and Clarity to the Municipal Spending Cap

CCM opposes the municipal spending cap imposed by the 2015 General Assembly, as it unnecessarily and unfairly ties the hands of local government. However, if the cap is not outright repealed, CCM seeks the following modifications in order to add reason and clarity:

(a) **Delay implementation of the municipal spending cap** enacted in PA 15-5, until FY 20.

(b) **Amend the list of exemptions to the municipal spending cap** to include (i) increased fees for state services, regulations and permits, (ii) state aid reductions from the previous year (in case the State cuts non-education aid or ECS, or a reduction in sales tax revenue, etc.), (iii) costs associated with new unfunded state mandates, and (iv) municipalities with town meeting forms of government.

(c) Allow municipalities the option to request a **waiver from OPM for exceeding the spending cap in the event that unforeseen circumstances require an increase in municipal spending.**

(d) Allow municipalities to **override the spending cap with a 2/3 vote of local legislative bodies** -- without a reduction of funds.

(e) **Exclude arbitration awards from the list of exemptions to the cap.**
ADDITIONAL 2016 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM ITEMS
(Listed by likely General Assembly committee of cognizance.)

Appropriations

1. Assist local law enforcement in addressing mental health issues by earmarking specific state funding for local police departments to expand and improve crisis intervention training to deal with individuals suffering with mental health illness.

2. Provide law enforcement with advanced resources to combat illegal drug activity by:
   a) Repealing the law that will require 100% of asset forfeitures funds go to the state general fund, effective FY16. Towns and cities would lose this funding that help supplement law enforcement efforts.
   b) Amending state funding stream for the Statewide Narcotics Task Force from a grant to a direct line item in the budget.

3. Enhance local public safety efforts by:
   a) Amending current state statute (CGS Section 29-5) regarding the Resident State Trooper Program cost allocation by reducing and capping the municipal contribution rate to 75% for regular, overtime and fringe benefit costs.
   b) Developing a sustainable funding stream to support the annual operational expenses of Connecticut Regional Fire Schools.
   c) Maintaining funding for the School Security Grant program, and permitting other municipal buildings to be eligible for the funding.
   d) Providing additional funding for the Statewide Narcotics Task Force by expanding the percentage of asset forfeitures funds allocated to the Task Force.

Children

1. Protect needed services for vulnerable, at-risk and/or underprivileged young people by maintaining funding to youth service bureaus and juvenile diversion programs.

2. Promote healthy alternatives and nutritional education for children and families by providing incentives for local Farmer’s Markets, which stimulate local economies, and increase the use of Connecticut-grown food.
Education

1. Provide needed relief to municipalities by the State adopting the federal standards pertaining to the “burden of proof” for special education services, as is current procedure in almost all other states.

2. Provide a substantive early childhood education investments to help close the Achievement Gap. In addition, provide merit-based incentives for municipalities that have already made efforts and investments to do so.

3. Require the Department of Education to conduct a statewide assessment of the number of students within the State in comparison to the number of available classrooms.

4. Provide dependability of state funding of local special education services by (i) contributing a guaranteed level of funding that does not change during the course of the fiscal year; (ii) decreasing the Excess Cost reimbursement threshold to at most 2.0 times the district’s average per pupil expenditure or $25,000, whichever is less; and (iii) fully funding the state’s portion.

Energy And Technology

1. Reclassify electricity generated by trash-to-energy facilities in the state as either a Class I renewable energy source, or create a new Class 1-A standard, in order to preserve the current municipal trash-to-energy market until new solid waste management treatment programs are developed and become economically viable.

2. Encourage the development and siting of municipally-owned net metering facilities by increasing the current 10MW limit, easing restrictions on the siting of new facilities, and provide additional consideration for applications of net metering projects that would be located on identified and remediated brownfield sites.

3. Foster greater participation in sustainability efforts in communities by:
   a) Encouraging DEEP to expand use of combined sewer overflow funding for green infrastructure.
   b) Providing incentives for municipalities to create Energy Improvement Districts with bonding authority, and allow customers to opt out of the program rather than opting in.

Environment

1. Re-establish the Pesticide Advisory Council under CGS 22a-65 within the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, to develop a science-based approach to regulation and use of synthetic and organic pesticides on municipal lands.

2. Require the State to develop stringent regulations on mattress stewardship centers to ensure compliance with local zoning and fire code standards.

3. Support efforts to increase funding for the identification and remediation of municipal brownfields.

4. Develop a process to expedite the remediation of decommissioned or abandoned electric generating facilities, and require any remediation costs to be paid when applicable by the owner of the electrical generating facility.
Finance, Revenue and Bonding

1. **Provide a local option to increase the municipal portion of the real estate conveyance tax, to up to 1% of the sale price.** Currently, with exception of 17 municipalities, the municipal tax rate is .25% of the sale price. [The state conveyance tax is .75% of the sales price up to $800,000, and 1.25% of the sales price above $800,000.]

2. Require the Program Review and Investigations Committee to **examine the impact of nonprofits on the municipal tax base**, and whether such entities should be assessed and at what level.

3. **Support the findings of the State Tax Panel to ensure recommendations related to local-state taxing structures are directly linked to public policy objectives**, specifically regarding tax-exempt property, revenue diversification, and intergovernmental transfers.

4. Provide local tax relief and reduce municipal dependency on the property tax by (a) examining opportunities for **municipal revenue diversification**, and (b) maintaining LoCIP, TAR and STEAP funding at current levels.

Government Administration and Elections

1. **Provide relief to municipalities from unfunded mandates** by requiring that the State fund the Registrar of Voters training that was developed as a result of PA 15-224, or provide that such training be available in an online format.

2. **Provide towns and cities the authority to collect fees from for-profit companies filing requests for local information that they will then sell** (commonly referred to as “data mining”).

Housing

1. **Amend CGS 8-30g (the affordable housing land use appeals law)** to allow for senior and supportive housing to be eligible in meeting municipal affordable housing goals.

Human Services

1. **Combat recidivism by expanding treatment and re-entry programs for individuals treated for substance abuse.**

2. **Assist local law enforcement in addressing mental health issues** by modifying and strengthening the evaluation process for individuals suspected of mental illness.
Judiciary

1. **Allow municipalities that are self-insured the right of subrogation against a tort-feasor**, consistent with the Workers’ Compensation Act. (Currently, self-insured municipalities do not have such opportunity, thereby making it a punitive statute on these municipalities.)

Labor and Public Employees

1. Amend State statutes to **adjust the thresholds that trigger the prevailing wage mandate for public construction projects** for (a) renovation construction projects, from $100,000 to $400,000; and (b) new construction projects, from $400,000 to $1 million. Both thresholds should then be indexed for inflation thereafter. (State prevailing wage mandate thresholds have not been amended since 1991.)

2. **Modify state-mandated compulsory binding arbitration laws** to require that grievance arbitration and unfair labor practice awards be issued no later than 60 days following the date post-hearing briefs are filed. This would establish timelines for the issuance of decisions in cases before both the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration, and the State Board of Labor Relations.

3. **Amend the Municipal Employee Retirement System (MERS)** to establish an additional retirement plan within MERS, for new hires, that would:
   a. Maintain a defined benefit plan. Such new tier would be modeled after the State’s tier III, which currently exists within the State Employee Retirement System. There has only been one tier within MERS since the system was established in 1947.
   b. Change the plan for new employees hired after a certain time period to be part of a town plan, instead of the existing plan.

Planning and Development

1. **Provide relief to municipalities from unfunded mandates** by:
   a) Modifying the requirements for posting legal notices in newspapers to allow municipalities to publish a summary of the notice in the newspaper, with reference to the availability of the full notice on the town website and the town offices, instead of having to publish the entire notice in the newspaper;
   b) **Allowing operating costs, including rent and office supplies, of Probate Courts to come out of State Probate fees**; and
   c) Enacting a Constitutional amendment or statutory prohibition to prohibit the passage of unfunded or underfunded state mandates without a 2/3 vote of both chambers of the General Assembly.

2. **Increase municipal authority to require a developer to post a maintenance or performance bond** by:
   a) Increasing the cap on the bond a zoning commission may require for site plan modifications; and
   b) Allowing towns and cities to **require a bond or other surety to secure the maintenance of roads, streets, or other matters** associated with project maintenance, after a municipality has accepted improvements.

3. **Require the State to adhere to the Program Review & Investigation study requiring an assessment of group homes throughout Connecticut** to examine, among other things, criteria used to determine location of facilities.
4. Ensure public safety and adherence to zoning, housing and building codes requiring all sober homes to:
   a) Register with the municipality; and
   b) Designate an on-site manager.

5. **Modify Public Act 4-90 (490 program)** by:
   a) **Allowing towns and cities the right to refusal** to purchase properties being removed from the program.
   b) **Expanding from the time period which land must be maintained as open space**, from 10 to 15 years.
   c) **Allowing towns to remove land from the program if it has been zoned for subdivision.**
   d) **Increasing the penalties for early withdrawal of 490 land.**
   e) **Providing financial incentives to towns to examine local zoning based on soil conditions**, and promote building on soil that isn’t suitable for farming.

**Public Health**

1. Enhance public health and spur economic growth by requiring the Department of Public Health to **streamline the process for the permitting of public drinking water systems.**

2. Ensure proper functioning of public health districts by **maintaining state aid for local public health initiatives.**

3. Require the State to establish a **one-stop clearinghouse for information on opioid abuse prevention strategies.** (Currently, there are various opioid prevention task forces across the state, but the information they are compiling is not accessible in one place.)

**Public Safety and Security**

1. **Provide municipalities with state resources and incentives** to consolidate Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) with neighboring communities, rather than forced regionalism, whereas sanctions can be imposed on municipalities that do not comply.

**Transportation**

1. Develop a procedure to **increase the authority of municipalities and COGs to plan, approve and implement local infrastructure improvement projects** that meet Department of Transportation (DOT) design standards, allowing DOT to focus staff and resources on large-scale state and regional transportation improvement projects.

2. **Ensure adherence to state motor vehicle laws by requiring mopeds be registered with the Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV).**
3. **Ensure that revenue and funding designated for transportation and infrastructure improvements** (i.e., Special transportation Fund and TAR) are expressly used for those purposes.

4. **Develop a state plan to ensure that state and local roads and bridges are brought up to standards by a specific date.** The State must also develop an enhanced process to avoid bureaucratic red tape and redundancies between state and local efforts.

5. **Make needed improvements to Connecticut's infrastructure** by:
   
a) Increasing state funding to **maintain and improve local roads**.

b) Encouraging the **consolidation and enhancement of existing public transit networks.**

   Provide grant funding to COGs to study and develop recommendations for enhanced regional coordination.

c) Finalizing consolidation of **Metropolitan Planning Organizations** (MPOs).
Appendix B
Legislative Deadlines for the 2016 General Assembly
Legislative Deadlines for the 2016 General Assembly

- **February 3:** Session Convenes - Governor’s "State of the State" address.

- **February 5:** Proposed Bill Deadline - For submission by individual legislators.

- **February 17-18:** Committee Bill Deadlines: Initial deadline for submission to Legislative Commissioners Office (LCO) for drafting.

- **February 18:** Raised Bill Deadline - *Group B, Legislative Management and Select Committees*: Submission to LCO for drafting.

- **February 19:** Raised Bill Deadline - *Group A Committees and Program Review & Investigations*: Submission to LCO for drafting.

- **March 10-April 1:** Committee Favorable and Unfavorable ("JF") Reports.

- **March 31:** Favorable and Unfavorable Reports due by the Appropriations Committee.

- **April 1:** *Favorable and Unfavorable Reports due by the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee.*

- **May 4:** Session Adjourns
Appendix C
Sample Letters and Testimony
Senator Osten, Representative Miller and members of the Planning & Development Committee, my name is Marcia Leclerc, and I am the Mayor of the Town of East Hartford. I would like to submit to the record the following testimony regarding the three components of SB 1 and the potential impact to the community of East Hartford.

As a first ring suburb of our capital city, East Hartford faces similar challenges to our urban core. We are facing climbing mill rates, increased amounts of non-taxable properties, ever-rising education budgets, and more demands on our social services, veterans, senior and disabled Tax Relief, transportation costs for Dial-a-Ride, and ADA Transportation. Urban municipalities face similar issues and are searching for solutions to ease the constant stress on our resources and the balancing of our ever-tightening budgets.

East Hartford is a community with limited raw land for new development and little opportunity for significant Grand List growth as a means to relieve the burgeoning tax burden on our residents and businesses. When coupled with limited resources for our schools, and an inadequate and aging housing stock, a community like East Hartford is vulnerable to a disproportionate share of concentrated poverty, property wealth, and the decline and stagnation of business development. The concept of establishing a regional tax base sharing initiative, much like those in the Minneapolis Saint Paul area, may be beneficial to “Distressed” communities like East Hartford and warrants a deeper and broader discussion on how communities can benefit and not be harmed in transition.

East Hartford is supportive of the legislation that would “improve the state’s system of providing financial compensation to towns for property tax revenue lost due to state-mandated property tax exemptions.” Our community remains over burdened with state mandated exemption totaling over $300M and places an additional burden on our local tax payers. Additional relief and reimbursement would help to level the playing field and help to make our community a more desirable place to reside or build a business.

The third component of this bill is to reform the property tax on motor vehicles in order to establish more uniform rates of taxation across all Connecticut municipalities. Establishing a uniform tax on motor vehicles in a community like East Hartford where the mill rate is 45.4 and the cumulative revenue generated is $9.5M would see taxes on vehicle drop substantially. Doing a quick mathematical calculation the implementation would place a significant and disproportionate tax burden onto already tax stressed homeowners and businesses and further exacerbate our taxpayer flight to communities with lower real estate taxation. Without implementation of all three components of this bill I believe there will be further unintended consequences on vulnerable communities like East Hartford.

###
Testimony
Leo Paul
First Selectman, Town of Litchfield
Environment Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
February 27, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB-5709 which would ensure that DEEP’s MS4 General Permit does not impose considerable unfunded mandates on 49 smaller communities that are not required to be regulated under EPA’s stormwater rules.

Our community supports efforts to protect water resources and provide a healthy and safe environment for our residents. However, DEEP’s MS4 General Permit unnecessarily extends the permit requirements to small, rural communities without regard for cost or whether the permit requirements will address stormwater issues to improve water quality.

Complying with DEEP’s MS4 General Permit will require a substantial investment of our town’s limited resources. We would need to retain legal counsel to update land use regulations and draft new ordinances, hold town meetings, complete extensive reports, budget for new signs and facilities regarding pet waste and waterfowl management and develop a public education and outreach campaign.

All of these measures will be mandated under DEEP’s MS4 General Permit even though the U.S. EPA does not require the state to cover non-urbanized areas such as Litchfield where stormwater runoff is not a significant issue. Given Connecticut’s ongoing fiscal challenges, the state is in no position to assist municipalities in funding or providing guidance to towns in implementing the permit requirements. Once again, local property taxpayers will bear the burden.

Moreover, DEEP has indicated that it has not analyzed data to determine whether the requirements under the existing MS4 General Permit have been successful in addressing water quality concerns associated with stormwater runoff. Before moving ahead with efforts to significantly expand the reach and requirements of the existing General Permit, DEEP should be required to step back and figure out what’s working and what isn’t working.

Instead, DEEP is looking to aggressively expand the scope of the General Permit to cover small towns - at considerable cost to property taxpayers - without conducting any cost-benefit analysis or even analyzing their own data. Given the fiscal challenges facing the state and municipalities, does this approach make any sense?

I urge your support for HB-5709 which will ensure that DEEP does not impose overreaching unfunded mandates on Connecticut’s smaller communities.
March 19, 2015

Dear Chairman, Vice Chairmen, Ranking Members and Members of the Committee on Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today on behalf of the citizens of Redding in support of Raised Bill 7019, an Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement.

The Town of Redding is among an increasing number of communities with well-funded, high quality public education that are grappling with the circumstance of rapidly declining enrollment – a circumstance that is projected to continue throughout the decade. The current Minimum Budget Requirement legislation provides insufficient flexibility to well-funded districts seeking to appropriately adjust to declining enrollments, yet in a manner that is in keeping State’s interests to ensure that Connecticut remains a state with access to high quality public education for all students.

The current $3K per pupil allowance falls substantially short of meaningful savings from enrollment decline in many communities that have well-funded schools. For instance, in a community spending $20K per student, the allowance permits only a 15% reduction per student, an amount well below typical estimates of variable costs. Similarly, the current -0.5% maximum reduction in appropriations for education falls short of realizable saving in many communities facing rapid enrollment decline. In a community that encounters a 5% annual enrollment decline, even a 50% variable cost estimate suggests realizable savings of 2.5% without having an impact on service quality.

Exempting any part of government from being reviewed for efficiencies and savings is inappropriate. Modest adjustments to the MBR made in recent years were steps in the right direction; however, Connecticut’s property taxpayers need bolder moves.

I therefore respectfully ask that you support the changes set forth in Raised Bill 7019, and Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement.

Sincerely,

Julia Pemberton
First Selectman

100 Hill Road, PO Box 1028, Redding, CT 06875
www.townofreddingct.org
April 20, 2015

Connecticut General Assembly
Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding
Legislative Office Building, Room 3700
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: S.B. No. 1136  AN ACT CONCERNING PROPERTY TAX REFORM
S.B. No. 1131  AN ACT CONCERNING GRAND LIST GROWTH
S.B. No. 1  AN ACT CONCERNING TAX FAIRNESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Dear Committee Members:


As a member of the Western Connecticut Council of Government (WestCOG), Westport supports regional collaboration. However, any laws being considered to foster such collaboration must be equitable. I cannot fully support any legislation that sets a regional tax rate or which establishes a statewide mill rate for motor vehicles. This legislation would eliminate a municipality’s authority to set its own tax rate and impose and collect its own personal property taxes.

I commend the legislature as it attempts to address complex regional issues. However, I feel strongly that the ramifications of these referenced bills would serve to alienate and further disenfranchise municipalities at a time when the focus and effort should be on working together on a cohesive plan for the betterment of all Connecticut taxpayers.

I urge you to reconsider these proposed bills.

Sincerely,

James S. Marpe
First Selectman
Town of Westport
February 27, 2015

Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT

Reference: SB 970 AN ACT CONCERNING THE TAXATION OF GOLF COURSES

Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Senate Bill 970 “An Act Concerning the Taxation of Golf Courses”.

SB 970 was introduced by the P & D committee requiring municipalities to remove all golf course land off their tax rolls including private golf courses and exclusive country clubs. Golf course land would be treated like PA 490 land that has been preserved and not improved. Golf courses are not similar to PA 490 land as they have massive improvements in their greens, fairways, bunkers, irrigation and sprinkler systems. Furthermore, they are for profit businesses.

If this bill were to pass the impact on the town of East Haddam would be a tax dollar loss of a total of $89,067 between the two golf courses in town.

The town of East Haddam requests that you oppose this bill. Please don’t hesitate to contact me at 860-873-5021 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Mark B. Walter
First Selectman

Equal Opportunity Employer
March 20, 2015

RE: Raised Bill No. 7002, “An Act Concerning Recovery of Payments from Collateral Sources by a Municipality with a Self- insured Health Plan”


On behalf of the City of Waterbury, I submit the following in support of Raised Bill No. 7002, “An Act Concerning Recovery of Payments from Collateral Sources by a Municipality with a Self- insured Health Plan”.

Under current state law, recovery of collateral source benefits – expenses for medical/health/dental treatment paid by another, are not recoverable against the person causing harm necessitating the medical treatment. However, federal law authorizes recovery of the health costs. Therefore, if the benefits are paid pursuant to a health plan that plan conforms to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), recovery is allowed.

Therefore under current Connecticut statutes, only commercial health insurers with plans that comply with federal ERISA are allowed to recover, or “subrogate” medical costs from the person causing the harm.
Similarly, the Connecticut Workers Compensation Act grants specific statutory authority for recovery of health benefits paid under a Workers Compensation claim pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §38a-470(b).

The proposed legislation would permit a self-insured municipality, such as Waterbury and other self-insured towns and municipalities, to subrogate and recover health benefits paid consistent with the authority under federal law afforded to commercial insurance carriers and allowed by Statue in a Worker's Compensation claim.

By way of example, if an employee of the City was involved in an accident or circumstance that caused injury to the employee and the City paid the employee’s medical expenses, and the employee later recovers against the responsible party, the responsible party would not be obligated to reimburse the City what it paid in medical expenses simply because the City is self-insured. However, if the City instead maintained a health benefits plan that conformed to federal law, the City would be authorized to recover its paid medical expenses.

As a self-insured municipality, under current law, the taxpayers pay for the medical expenses of an injured employee or retiree when the wrongful conduct of another caused the injury simply because the City is self-insured. The proposed legislation would allow the City to recover paid medical expenses when another party is responsible for the injury.

The City’s third party health benefits administrator has opined that recovery of approximately 1% of total medical benefits paid would be recoverable if the Legislation was approved based upon data from other states that are allow subrogation. The City of Waterbury would potentially recover $930,000 per year of its paid medical benefits based upon the $93 million per year it pays in health benefit claims.

The recovery of benefits would occur only when another party is liable for the medical costs. The City would continue to provide the medical benefits upfront, and recovery of funds, as is appropriate would be pursued against the responsible party.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you concerning proposed Bill No. 7002.

Linda T. Wihbey
Corporation Counsel
Appendix D
Effective Advocacy Strategies Worksheets
### EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY
### STRATEGIES - MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>WHEN TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>I WILL MAKE THIS PART OF MY ADVOCACY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invite your legislators to have coffee or lunch or meet them at their office (minimum three times each year).</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite your legislators to municipal events as your personal guest.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange a meeting between your legislators and the editor of your local newspaper.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite your legislators to a council meeting – especially when you are discussing your budget or intergovernmental policy issues.</td>
<td>According to Council Schedule</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite your legislators to meet with your senior staff to discuss in-depth what’s happening in your town/city and specific challenges facing your community or to discuss project funding.</td>
<td>Before/After Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>If CCM is sponsoring a roundtable discussion with your legislators, make sure to attend with your town/city manager.</td>
<td>Before/After Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange a “meet’n-greet” with key business leaders and/or community leaders in your town/city or when you meet with homeowners associations.</td>
<td>Before/After Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrange a tour of thriving businesses in your town/city that have utilized any local business incentives.</td>
<td>Before/After Session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Immediately after session, schedule a one-on-one visit as soon as possible to talk privately about their voting record and the impact new legislation will have on your municipality.</td>
<td>After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend events state legislator sponsors or when they invite you.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite your legislators to take a tour of your town/city – water treatment plants, community redevelopment areas, parks, public safety facilities, public works department, etc.</td>
<td>Before/After Session</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Arrange for your legislators to meet with business owners who appreciate municipal concerns.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sign up to serve on one of CCM’s legislative policy committees.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host an advocacy training workshop for your council and invite neighboring towns/cities to join you. CCM will assist you.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend the CCM’s Annual Conference and Legislative Committees meetings.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite your legislators to ribbon cuttings and grand openings for new businesses.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you give citizen awards, invite your legislators to attend the award presentation.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend town hall meetings or legislative updates hosted by your legislators.</td>
<td>During/After Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange a meeting with your legislators’ staffs if you don’t know them or if they’ve hired a new employee. Staff members can be your greatest allies when it’s time to ask for your legislators’ support or opposition on a bill.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY STRATEGIES - INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>WHEN TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>I WILL MAKE THIS PART OF MY ADVOCACY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personally give your legislators a copy of your annual budget, or at minimum a budget summary with line items highlighted that relate to potential legislation.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If you offer incentives for new businesses, give your legislators a copy of what they are and make sure they know how they are/have been used and by whom.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer to be a resource (or a member of your staff) for data and research of specific topics related to local government.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your municipality just completing a major project? Make sure to keep your legislators informed of the status and give them a tour when it’s completed.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer to testify as an expert or write an opinion on a specific piece of legislation. CCM can assist you.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide your legislators with an issue packet or report that highlights your municipality’s legislative priorities.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your municipality getting ready to undertake a major infrastructure or redevelopment project and you need funding assistance? Keep your legislators apprised so they can assist you, if necessary.</td>
<td>Before/After Session or as needed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide your legislators with statistics of potential legislative impact.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide data and research to CCM’s advocacy team regarding known and potential legislation impacting your community.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If your town/city has a welcome guide for new residents, make sure to give your legislators a copy.</td>
<td>Before/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s happening in your community related to issues they care about? Be sure to share this information with your legislators and offer to keep them informed if and when the situation changes.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare data for your legislators that highlight what makes your town/city unique.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preempt a preemption. Promote transparency in government spending and operations in your municipality and make sure your legislators know you’re</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY STRATEGIES - COMMUNICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>WHEN TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>I WILL MAKE THIS PART OF MY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send a handwritten note to say “The Town/City of _____________ is ready to assist you in your legislative endeavors ”</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to say “Hello” or “How can I help you” and introduce yourself to their staff.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be sure your legislators are on your email distribution list to receive your town’s/city’s (or your) newsletter and you are on theirs.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank your legislators when they vote in support of municipalities and discreetly let them know you are aware of when they don’t.</td>
<td>During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If your town/city supports one of their bills, pass a resolution and present it to them.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer to write an article, op-ed or blog for your local paper if you support a bill they’ve sponsored and make sure they get a copy of what you have written.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send state legislators articles of interest or links to websites when they are quoted and include a brief note.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send them a congratulatory note (or call them) after their successful election or re-election (even if you did not support them during the campaign).</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) to keep up-to-date on their activities and post comments or “like” their status.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact your legislators when you receive Legislative Alerts from CCM regarding upcoming votes on legislation.</td>
<td>During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively communicate with your legislators your town/city story about how potential legislation will impact your community.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer to speak at business and/or civic organization meetings to give a legislative update and share how potential legislation will impact their business/organization and community.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start a dialogue with local elected officials in neighboring communities to learn how you can work together on specific municipal legislative issues.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY STRATEGIES –
# HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>WHEN TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>I WILL MAKE THIS PART OF MY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer to serve as a municipal resource for data or review of legislation they are sponsoring or will be vetting in committee.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to serve on a task force or panel initiated by your legislators or volunteer to serve on the same if you know they are serving also.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get your legislators’ contact information and give them yours. Make yourself available when needed.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly recognize your legislators for good deeds.</td>
<td>During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send your legislators articles or links to articles or websites you know they would be interested in related to their goals and/or legislative priorities.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you become aware of how your legislators have helped one of your constituents, be sure to tell them “thank you.”</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you meet or talk with your legislators, no matter the discussion, always ask “How can I help you?”</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When legislators contact you for your opinion on an issue...RESPOND!</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ADVANCE ADVOCACY STRATEGIES FOR THE EXPERIENCED ADVOCATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>WHEN TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>I WILL MAKE THIS PART OF MY ADVOCACY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to have your Finance Director serve on CCM’s “Rapid Response Team”, to provide a quick fiscal impact statements on bills.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to serve as an issue expert for testimony at committee hearings.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to serve as the municipal expert on an issue task force authorized by the Legislature or the Governor.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write an Advocacy Tip of the Month for CCM’s website.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide CCM legislative staff with copies of letters, reports, data, emails, etc. that you have sent to your legislators.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to serve on one of CCM’s policy committees.</td>
<td>Before Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit other municipal officials to actively advocate for municipal positions.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to serve as an advocacy mentor to a newly elected local official.</td>
<td>Before/During/After Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk with the publisher of your local newspaper and offer to write op-ed articles to keep citizens up-to-date on legislation affecting their community.</td>
<td>During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start a blog or Facebook page to inform citizens about pending legislation affecting their community.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to speak to civic and business organizations regarding pending legislation affecting your community and businesses.</td>
<td>Before/During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to be the “point person” on your local legislative body to provide regular legislative updates during session.</td>
<td>During Session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E
Social Media and
CCM’s Legislative Action Center
CCM on Facebook and Twitter: DON’T MISS OUT!

CCM’s new and improved presence on Facebook and Twitter as part of an ongoing effort to more effectively and quickly communicate key state-local issues to member municipal officials, state leaders, and the public.

With over 4,000 “likes,” CCM’s Facebook page attracts thousands of people who regularly visit the page during any one week. CCM’s Twitter page has over 1,700 followers.

Recent upgrades to both sites give officials and those interested in state-local public policy issues additional easy-to-use online resources. CCM on Twitter provides daily, sometimes hourly, updates on events, issues, reports, and news affecting Connecticut’s communities.

CCM’s bigger presence on social networking sites means more access for more people about important state and local issues and events. Key aspects of the CCM Facebook and Twitter pages include:

- A sharper focus on real-time news and updates from legislative hearings, events, and more.
- Expanded interactive ways to encourage discussion and debate.
- A redesigned and rebranded homepage that provides easier navigation and interactivity.
- Simultaneous updates to CCM’s Facebook and Twitter pages on critical state-local issues.

These key social media tools help CCM provide more policy information in real-time and help increase civic involvement in state-local issues.

In addition, CCM’s online communications with local and state officials and overall advocacy efforts are more efficient. If you are a member of Facebook, we encourage you to go the CCM Facebook site ASAP and “like” us and then check your newsfeed for updates on key state-local issues.

Visit CCM’s Legislative Action Center
For up-to-date information on state and federal issues affecting cities and towns.

ccm-ct.org/legislative-action-center

IMPORTANT BILLS
Key bills affecting local governments that are currently being considered by the General Assembly.

TESTIMONY
Testimony on key bills provided by CCM members and staff to the General Assembly.

TODAY’S GENERAL ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE
A listing of all events taking place today at the State Capitol and Legislative Office Building.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BULLETIN
The daily publication of the General Assembly with detailed information on meetings, public hearings, and other events at the State Capitol and Legislative Office Building.

CONTACT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Convenient mechanism to contact members of the General Assembly and Executive Branch.

LEGISLATIVE DEADLINES
Important deadlines for committees, bills, and the legislative session.

Follow Us @CCMAdvocacy

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Appendix F
CCM Wants You to Testify
You have developed the CCM 2016 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM.

Your efforts are still needed! State legislators need to hear the direct municipal voice as it is vital to advance CCM's Legislative Program. Our efforts will not be as strong without your personal testimony.

CCM staff will:

- Inform you of when public hearings are scheduled.
- Draft testimony for you to personalize, and provide key talking points on specific legislation.
- Submit your written testimony to the proper committees on your behalf.

Sign you up to speak for public hearings!
1. Complete the information below.
2. Indicate the issue-area(s) you are interested to testify on.
3. Return this document to: publicpolicy@ccm-ct.org or fax: (203) 498-5825.

NAME/TITLE: ____________________________________________________________

MUNICIPALITY: ________________________________

ISSUE Area(s): __________________________________________________________

PHONE: ______________________________________________________________

E-MAIL: _______________________________________________________________

RETURN TO: publicpolicy@ccm-ct.org or fax: (203) 498-5825
Appendix G
How a Bill Becomes a Law in Connecticut
Appendix H
CCM Public Policy & Advocacy Staff
CCM Public Policy & Advocacy Staff

Ron Thomas
Deputy Director CCM
rthomas@ccm-ct.org
phone (203) 498-3022
cell (203) 430-5537
fax (203) 562-6314

Overall responsibility for policy development, advocacy, and messaging. Manages Appropriations and Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committees in addition to maintain key federal-state-local relationships.

Mike Muszynski
Advocacy Manager
mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org
phone (203) 498-3064
cell (203) 500-7556
fax (203) 498-5832


M. Randall Collins, Jr.
Advocacy Manager
rcollins@ccm-ct.org
phone (203) 498-3023
cell (860) 707-6446
fax (203) 498-5822

Committees: Planning and Development, Commerce, Housing, Transportation and Veterans’ Affairs.

George Rafael
Director of Government Relations and Research
grafael@ccm-ct.org
phone (203) 498-3063
cell (203) 928-9077
fax (203) 498-5830

Oversees CCM's Government Finance, Research and Municipal Labor Relations Programs.
Daniel Giungi  
Senior Legislative Associate  
dgiungi@ccm-ct.org  
phone (203) 498-3023  
cell (860) 305-6842  
fax (203) 498-5825  


Alexandra Beaudoin  
Legislative Associate  
abeaudoin@ccm-ct.org  
phone (203) 946-3755  
cell (860) 670-4021  
fax (203) 497-2476  

 Committees: Environment, Energy & Technology, Banks, Children, Aging and Regulations Review

Kevin Maloney  
Director of Communications and Member Relations  
Kmaloney@ccm-ct.org  
phone (203) 498-3025  
fax (203) 498-5827

Sandra Amado  
Public Policy & Advocacy Administrative Associate  
samado@ccm-ct.org  
phone (203) 498-3045  
fax (203) 498-5838

Zackary McKeown  
Legislative Analyst  
zmckeown@ccm-ct.org  
phone (203) 498-3709  
cell (860) 462-9556