

For Immediate Release  
Contact: Kevin Maloney  
(203) 710-3486

## **More than 60 municipal leaders from across CT assembled for CCM Day on the Hill and urged General Assembly to address issues of concern regarding state aid and mandates**

Municipal leaders from across the state, all member of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM), the statewide association of towns and cities, assembled for a CCM “Day on the Hill” on March 26. CCM-member mayors, first selectmen, and town/city managers conducted a news conference this morning in advance of the approaching deadlines for the Appropriations and Finance Committees regarding their changes to Governor Malloy’s proposed state budget revisions.

Key speakers at the news conference were:

- **Bill Finch, Mayor of Bridgeport and President of CCM**
- **Leo Paul, First Selectman of Litchfield and a member of the CCM Board of Directors**
- **John Elsesser, Town Manager of Coventry and a member of the CCM Board of Directors**
- **Lisa Pellegrini, First Selectman of Somers and a member of the CCM Board of Directors**

Here are the key issues presented at the news conference:

## **Healthy Towns & Cities Are Key to Connecticut’s Recovery**

***There are many big issues of concern to towns and cities before the General Assembly.***

***CCM urges legislators to:***

### **◆ Maintain State Aid Commitments**

*The proposed revisions to the State Budget maintain promised education (ECS) funding and increase state aid (PILOT) for local revenues lost from tax exempt colleges and hospitals, among several other beneficial proposals.*

*The Proposal would also decrease funding to some towns and cities through shifting state aid. CCM urges the Legislature to ensure that the Municipal Aid Adjustment account is sufficient to cover such decreases, to ensure that all 169 towns and cities are held harmless.*

*Enact legislation to send at least \$12.7 million to municipalities to hold them harmless for the last quarter payment of the Municipal Revenue Sharing Account*

*(MRSA). The current state budget inadvertently limited the state revenue due to be paid to MRSA, thereby short-changing towns and cities.*

*Ensure that SB 21 does not remove from state statute the dollar amount allocated for the Pequot-Mohegan grant. Although the grant has not been allocated at that amount since FY 02, it is an important goal and commitment for the State to remember.*

### ◆ **Increase PILOTs for State Property & Colleges and Hospitals: target state aid increases to needy communities**

*Given the current budget surplus, CCM urges the General Assembly to further reinvest in our towns and cities by increasing state aid for payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for state property and private colleges and hospitals – to provide critical new state aid to struggling core communities and restoring the groundbreaking revenue sharing program. This is much-needed revenue that provides necessary flexibility in funding critical municipal services.*

### ◆ **Properly Fund the ECS Formula and Special Education**

*Use the current formula to fund the increase in the ECS grant. Not using the formula reduces funding by \$6 million. Especially impacted are Alliance school districts.*

*The primary state grant for special education is the Excess Cost-Student Based grant. It has not been increased since FY 09. CCM urges the General Assembly to fully fund the Excess Cost-Student Based grant.*

*Modest adjustments to the MBR made in recent years were steps in the right direction. However, property taxpayers need bolder moves: (a) increase the amount that school districts with lower enrollment can reduce expenditures from the current \$3,000 per pupil to \$5,000 per pupil or 40 percent of net current expenditures per pupil, (b) increase the total allowable reduction for all expenditures, from 0.5 percent to 1.0 percent, and (c) clarify that towns and cities can be credited for in-kind services such as building maintenance, snow removal, etc., when calculating the MBR.*

### ◆ **Enact Meaningful Mandates Relief**

*Meaningful mandates relief goes beyond proposing eliminating smaller administrative mandates. The General Assembly must act on the mandates that cost towns and cities – and often the State – millions of dollars.*

*Mandate Relief Highlight: Legal Notices*

*In 2014, Connecticut's hometowns can only post legal notices in the back pages of printed newspapers – putting them online doesn't count. This is an antiquated state law that has out-lived its purpose. The General Assembly should amend this archaic mandate by restoring SB 40 to its original form – to reflect the realities of today's world and to allow towns and their boards and commissions the option of an alternate means of publishing such notices. Legal notices reform would save towns millions of dollars.*

*Please see CCM's publication, "The List", for other meaningful mandates relief measures.*

### ◆ **No New State Mandates**

*There are over 1,200 state mandates imposed on Hometown Connecticut and their residential and business property taxpayers. Unfunded and under-funded state mandates are corrosive elements that deteriorate critical municipal programs and services – and the bottom-line of municipal budgets. They are burdensome requirements and standards imposed by the State on towns and cities that affect residential and business property taxpayers by imposing significant costs.*

#### *Proposed Unfunded State Mandate Highlight: Mental Stress Benefits*

*SB 56 and HB 5533 would mandate workers' compensation for municipal employees having witnessed a death or maiming, or the aftermath of a death or maiming (up to 6 hours), under certain circumstances. HB 5533 would be both prospective and retrospective, as it would give benefits to public employees diagnosed with PTSD that were involved in the Sandy Hook elementary school shooting. SB 56 would cover public and private employees, and would mandate benefits for "mental or emotional impairments." "Visually witnessing" "serious bodily injury" and "maiming" are all terms within these proposals that could be subject to broad interpretation and compound the costs of this mandate. Towns and cities offer employees generous benefit packages, including disability leave, and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) for counseling, therapy, and other essential services. The costs of an individual "mental-stress" claim for either partial disability or a permanent total claim could reach \$1 million per claim.*