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CCM POLICY REPORTS CONTINUE:

Election-season advocacy campaign releases NEW mandates candidate bulletin *Unfunded State Mandates = Higher Property Taxes* brings candidates up to speed on critical local issues

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) today (Friday, October 19) released the second report of its 2012 election-season advocacy campaign that is designed to educate and influence state legislative candidates and candidates for CT's Congressional and U.S. Senate Seats.

Unfunded State Mandates = Higher Property Taxes details key unfunded and underfunded state mandates on towns and cities; and the level and adequacy of state policies now in place to reduce the burden of onerous unfunded state mandates on Connecticut local governments. See attachment for full report.

"Relief for towns and cities from unfunded and under-funded state mandates continues to be a CCM legislative priority," said Jim Finley, CCM Executive Director and CEO. "In this new public policy report designed to bring local, state and federal elective officeholders up to speed on this critical issue, CCM outlines the worst offenders among the state mandates and offers fair and equitable solutions to provide much-needed relief for municipalities and their property taxpayers."

There are currently over 1,200 state mandates on municipalities which burden residential and business property taxpayers with significant costs. State mandates that are not accompanied by state funds to implement them represent a fiscal shell game that strains local budgets and hampers delivery of local services.

CCM's bulletin points out that the federal government has already taken steps to "curb the practice of imposing unfunded federal mandates on state and local governments." CCM suggests that the starting point for addressing the 1,200 state mandates on the books should be targeting and tackling the "worst of the worst" and urges that the following common-sense reforms be adopted to save money and make government more efficient:

- ✓ **Make permanent the Manufacturing Transition Grant** and fully fund the private colleges and hospitals, and state-owned property payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOTS) reimbursements.
- ✓ **Eliminate or modify the minimum budget requirement (MBR)** mandate on local education spending.

- ✓ **Adjust (*not repeal*) the thresholds that trigger the prevailing wage mandate for public construction projects.** A modest adjustment would free-up state and local dollars and jumpstart and expand public construction projects.
- ✓ **Adjust (*not repeal*) binding arbitration by creating timelines** so that the process would be completed no later than one year from the date binding arbitration is imposed by the State.
- ✓ **Allow towns and their boards and commissions the option to publish legal notices online.** It is common sense and will improve citizens' involvement in the operation of local government.
- ✓ **Adjust the mandated employee contribution rates, over time, under the municipal employee retirement system (MERS)** to address the mismatch between employer and employee rates.
Get hometowns out of the business of storing evicted tenants' possessions. They no longer have to transport them – and should no longer be forced to store these items.
- ✓ **Allow towns the option of consolidating polling places, when appropriate.** This could provide local savings and allow for a more efficient use of Election Day resources.
- ✓ **More accurately identify proposed state mandates, and their potential costs,** and ensure that municipal fiscal impact statements are prominently displayed on all legislative bills and amendments.

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Attachment (1)