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**CCM publishes third report in its "Election Campaign 2014" series,  
Unfunded State Mandates:  
The Corrosive Impact and Reasonable Relief Measures**

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) today (Monday, September 29) released the third report of CCM's "Election Campaign 2014" series -- Unfunded State Mandates: The Corrosive Impact and Reasonable Relief Measures -- which includes, among other key findings, **(1) that there are over 1,200 statutorily-required state mandates on Connecticut local governments in FY 2014-15; and (2) that fiscal relief from 12 of the most egregious unfunded or underfunded state mandates would provide real fiscal relief from the excessive burden of property taxes on local governments and their residents and businesses.**

CCM's "Election Campaign 2014" series is designed to educate and influence state legislative candidates and candidates for CT's U.S. Representative on the key state-local issues affecting Connecticut local governments.

This new CCM report *assesses, in detail, the major issues regarding unfunded state mandates on towns and cities; as well as discusses the adequacy of state policies now in place -- and those proposed -- that are designed to provide sufficient fiscal relief from these mandates on Connecticut local governments.*

"There are currently over 1,200 state mandates on towns and cities in Connecticut," said Matthew Galligan, Town Manager of South Windsor and CCM President. "Most of these state mandates are unfunded. They burden residential and business property taxpayers with significant costs and siphon precious resources from local services.

"If the State believes an existing or new mandate is appropriate public policy, then the State should be prepared to pay for it," Galligan emphasized. "Enacting mandates is one thing, but to simply pass the buck to towns and cities to pay for it is Old Guard lawmaking -- that should have no place in today's political and economic climates. Each mandate that is unfunded, or only partially funded, adds to the burden of the property tax, and further reduces local discretionary authority."

“Local officials are on the frontlines of service delivery and accept the objectives of many well-intended mandates,” noted Ron Thomas, CCM Director of Public Policy and Advocacy. “However, towns object when the State chooses not to pay for them.

“The solutions proposed by CCM are attainable -- and such solutions should be addressed by detailing the most egregious offenders in desperate need of repair,” said Thomas. “This report outlines the difficulty with specific mandates, as they relate to municipalities, and more importantly, provides considerable means of compromise in order to jumpstart meaningful property tax relief in our communities.”

Key proposals from the CCM report on unfunded state mandates in Connecticut include:

- **Ensure new DEEP MS4 permits are not unrealistic and another unfunded mandate.**
- **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.
- **Eliminate or modify the minimum budget requirement (MBR) mandate** on local education spending.
  - **Enact law that ensures** special-education costs are borne collectively by the State and not by individual school districts.
  - **Update 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 projects.
  - **Update local grievance arbitration laws by creating timelines similar to the rules already established under the Teacher Negotiation Act (TNA).**
  - **Prohibit municipal fund balances** (essentially “emergency contingency funds”) **from inclusion when determining municipalities’ ability to pay.**
  - **Eliminate the premium tax on municipal health insurance.**
  - **Adjust the mandated employee contribution rates, under MERS** – and establish an additional tier, modeled after the State’s, for new hires only.
  - **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 undesirable items.
  - **Allow towns the option of consolidating polling places, when appropriate,** that could provide local savings and allow for a more efficient use of Election Day resources.
  - **More accurately estimate and identify proposed state mandates,** and ensure that municipal fiscal impact statements are prominently displayed on all legislative bills and amendments.

**As the 2014 campaign season continues to unfold, CCM will issue additional public policy candidate bulletins highlighting key state-local issues** for candidates to address in the thick of the election battle. The bulletins are relied upon by incumbent lawmakers and challengers alike, municipal chief executives, and other state and federal leaders and are designed to educate policy-makers on solutions to key state and local issues.

Here are the other major issues CCM will analyze and provide key information on to educate state legislators, state officials, federal office seekers, local leaders, and the general public:

- **Property Taxes in Connecticut (published Sept. 9)**
- **Major Issues in Financing PreK-12 Local Public Education (published Sept. 22)**
- **Infrastructure and Transportation Reform (to be released)**
- **The State of CT's Distressed Municipalities (to be released)**

In addition to these important issue reports, CCM will also undertake a series of other actions to get information to and from the candidates:

- A comprehensive federal questionnaire to all candidates for U.S. Representative -- with the candidates' responses on key local issues -- will be published online, in key conference publications, and provided to all Connecticut news media;
- A "2014 Election Campaign" page is on our website, consisting of contact information and other information regarding fall elections;
- Municipal chief executive officials have been provided with a sample list of questions to ask candidates for state office; and
- Gubernatorial candidate forum at the annual CCM Convention on October 21.