



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATE CONTRACTING STANDARDS BOARD

## Appropriations Committee

### Testimony

Lawrence Fox, Chair of the State Contracting Standards Board

February 16, 2023

Good morning, Senate Chair Osten, House Chair Walker, General Government A. Subcommittee Chair Anwar, and Chair Ryan, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Lawrence Fox and I am the Chair of the State Contracting Standards Board (CSB).

I am unable to join you today and I am offering this written testimony.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding Governor Lamont's recommended FY 2024 and FY 2025 Biennial Budget. The Board is grateful for Governor Lamont's continued support of the Board in this next biennium.

Thanks to the Appropriations Committee's past support of the Board and, the five (5) new positions, our budget has changed over the past fiscal year. The Board had the difficult task of identifying and securing talented professionals to fill the vacant Chief Procurement Officer position and four new positions that this body has so graciously funded.

The Board has assembled an exceptional team, all of whom come with decades of expertise in their respective areas. I'd like to briefly acknowledge our new Team:

- Jonathan Longman – Chief Procurement Officer; spent a decade working for the Defense Contract Management Agency overseeing critical, high-risk procurements for all military branches.
- Samson Anderson – Research Analyst; with extensive experience across multiple states; he brings an in-depth knowledge of budgeting as well.
- Carmen Hufcut – Trainer; with extensive experience building training modules and classes.
- Paul Netland Jr. – Accounts Examiner; joins us from Defense Contract Audit Agency, where he spent years examining proposals and validating incurred costs on flexibly priced contracts. He brings a great deal of expertise to one of our critical functions. His skill set will be instrumental in continuing our investigations and identifying risk areas across all state procurements.
- Christopher Weishaupt – Investigative Attorney a former FBI agent and lawyer, filling our investigative attorney position. He's spent years leading teams in anti-corruption

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efforts, where he brings a unique perspective and understanding of legal matters.

The Governor also appointed Gregory F. Daniels, Esq. as the new Executive Director, who also comes with an outstanding background as an Attorney and former Chief Procurement Officer for UCONN.

In addition to filling the CSB vacancies, CSB Members devoted over 106 days of Board work to manage a breadth of important, yet complicated and sensitive procurement and contracting matters. CSB accomplishments in FY 2023 include:

- Pending Procurement and Contracting Matters:
  - Audits of agency procurement and contracting
  - Two important University of Connecticut Privatization Matters
  - Mr. Respler – *proposed developer of the Mystic Oral School (we are proceeding with the suspension process).*
  - Continued procurement review of the Connecticut Port Authority

The information gleaned from the CSB’s preliminary analysis of audit information informs the Board’s priorities for 2023. Broadly, they are as follows:

Function	Task/Action
Training, Outreach, and Education	Start the Vendor and Citizen Advisory Council
	Start the Contracting Standards Advisory Council
Data / Auditing	Resuming Triennial Audits (with some procedural/process improvements)
	Define the universe of state procurement (understand size by instrument i.e., Contract, PSA, MOA, etc.)
	Gain Access to the various procurement databases (CORE, STARS, etc.)
	Investigate MOA and MOU use
	Streamline the audit process (Reference Self-Assessment Summarization Report for Fiscal Years 2018-2020)
Privatization	Realigning the review of CEEs from OPM to the SCSB
	Raise awareness of the CBA and CEE requirements and develop training
	Look at obstacles to implementing bridge safety
Legislative Fixes	Work with DAS/OPM to raise awareness for bidder appeal rights
	Expand background checks to include other states
	Define MOAs and MOUs
	Make changes so all quasi-publics are subject to CSB oversight
	The long-term goal would be to push to centralize procurement functions across the entire state
	Tighten the Privatization Statute, and push for accountability when rules are not followed
	Clarify the applicability of Public / Private Partnerships

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<b>Function</b>	<b>Task/Action</b>
<b>Training</b>	Develop training to deliver to Agency Procurement Officers on bidder appeal rights
	Developing a standardized training program by collaborating with OPM and DAS to first build a framework with updated procurement/contracting content and targeting executive branch agency officers to participate in such training. We will also consider our capacity to offer such training to other branches upon request.
<b>Other</b>	Investigate the size and scope of contracting that was performed under emergency powers
	Collect follow-ups to AG Opinions
	Presence on social media
	Generalized Legislative Outreach

In conclusion, the Board was established to shield and protect the State from the type of contracting scandals of the past. We firmly believe that with the new resources the Board can help Connecticut take major steps forward in building a more transparent, fair, and efficient procurement system.

Thank you for your continued support.