

Recommendations of the
Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
to the

Task Force to Promote Municipal Shared Services

Section 366 of Public Act 19-117

Made January 29, 2020

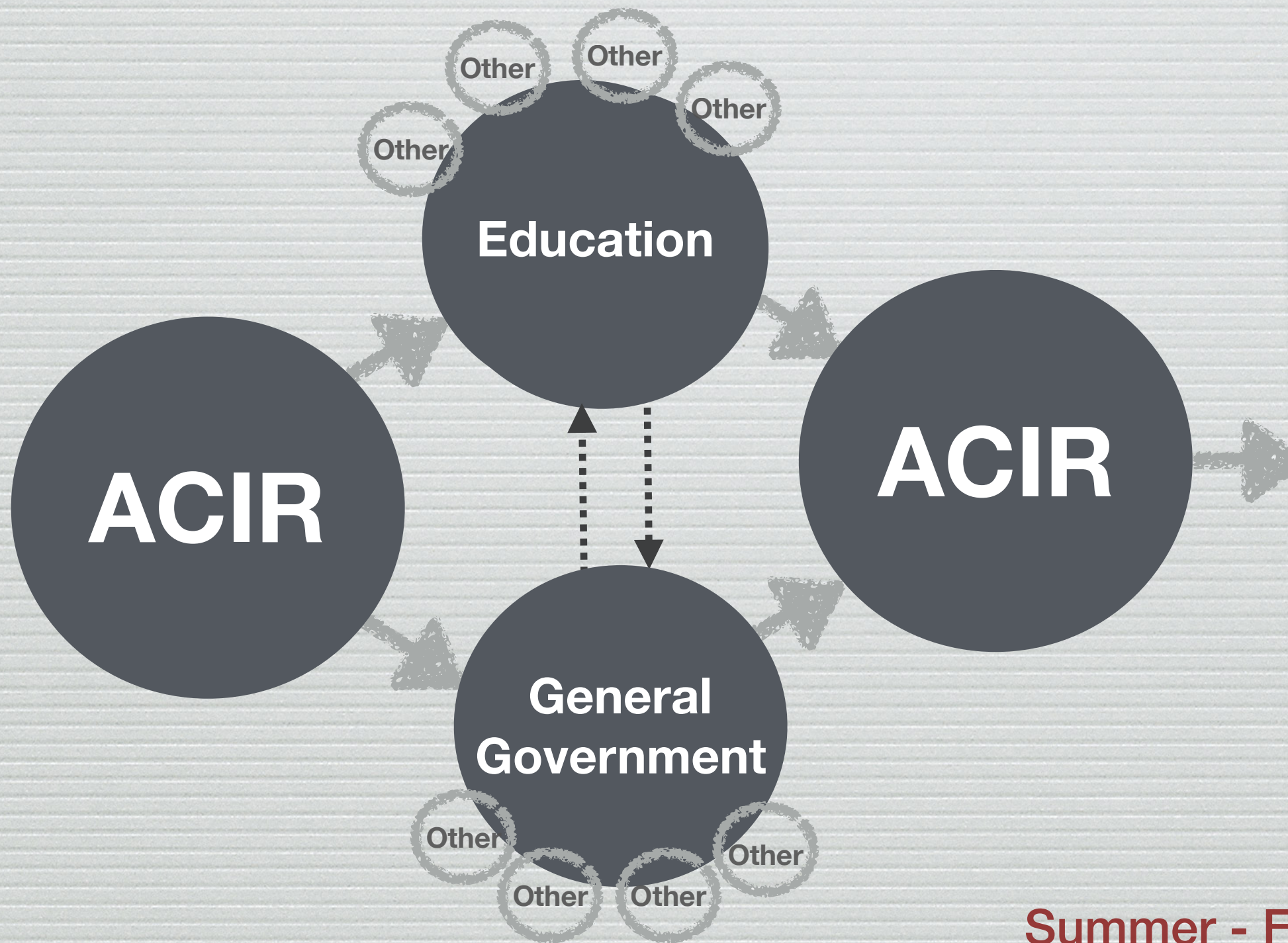
Section 366 of Public Act 19-117 established a special task force to examine:

1. The **examination of functions, activities or services, currently performed by municipalities individually, that might be more efficiently performed by the Office of Policy and Management** on behalf of municipalities willing to opt in or opt out of accepting such performance on their behalf,
2. The **examination of functions, activities or services, currently performed by the state or municipalities that might be provided in a more efficient, high-quality, cost-effective or responsive manner by regional councils of governments, regional educational service centers or other similar regional bodies** that are responsive to residents,
3. The **cost savings of government services**, including, but not limited to, joint purchasing, for a municipality and its local or regional school district,
4. The **cost savings through the sharing of government services**, including, but not limited to, joint purchasing, among municipalities,
5. The **standardization and alignment of various regions** of the state,
6. The **analyses of any other initiatives that might facilitate the delivery of services in a more efficient, high-quality, cost-effective or responsive manner**, and
7. A **recommendation of the division, if any, of revenue in the regionalization sub-account within the regional planning incentive account** established under section 4-66k of the general statutes, between the Office of Policy and Management and the regional councils of governments, regional educational service centers or similar regional bodies for the purposes of subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection.

The **legislation additionally states** that:

“Any initiative recommended to be undertaken by the task force shall be offered to municipalities on a voluntary basis.”

Study Process



Recommendations of the
Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
Work Groups
to the

Task Force to Promote Municipal Shared Services

Section 366 of Public Act 19-117

December 2, 2019

Summer - Fall 2019



3.6 Million People - *29th Most Populous*
5,500 Square Miles - *3rd Smallest*
738 Persons per Square Mile - *Fourth Most*
169 Towns - NO Counties
625 Counts of Government - 17.5 per 100K

3.588 Million People - 1.5 Million Housing Units - Average Age 40.8 (US Is 37.8) - 5,500 Square Miles - 738 Persons per Square Mile - 169 Towns - 625 Counts of Governments - 310 Zip Codes - 84 Cdps - 33 Cities or Boroughs - 2 Tribal Nations - 8 Counties (Eliminated in 1960) - 833 Census Tracts - 2,585 Block Groups - 6 Core-Based Statistical Areas - 17 Urbanized Areas - 15 Adjusted Urbanized Areas - 89,416 Employer Establishments - \$71,755 Median Income - State Budget Of \$20.9 Billion - 77 State Agencies - 35 State Boards, Councils or Commissions - 10 Quasi-Public Agencies - 6 Constitutional Offices - 151 State House Districts - 36 Senate Districts - 26 Standing Joint Committees - 5 Congressional Districts - 2 Senate Seats - 8 MPOs (2 Rural Regions) - 5 Conservation Districts - 2 Wildlife Areas - 2 Resource Conservation Areas - 3 Community Collabora

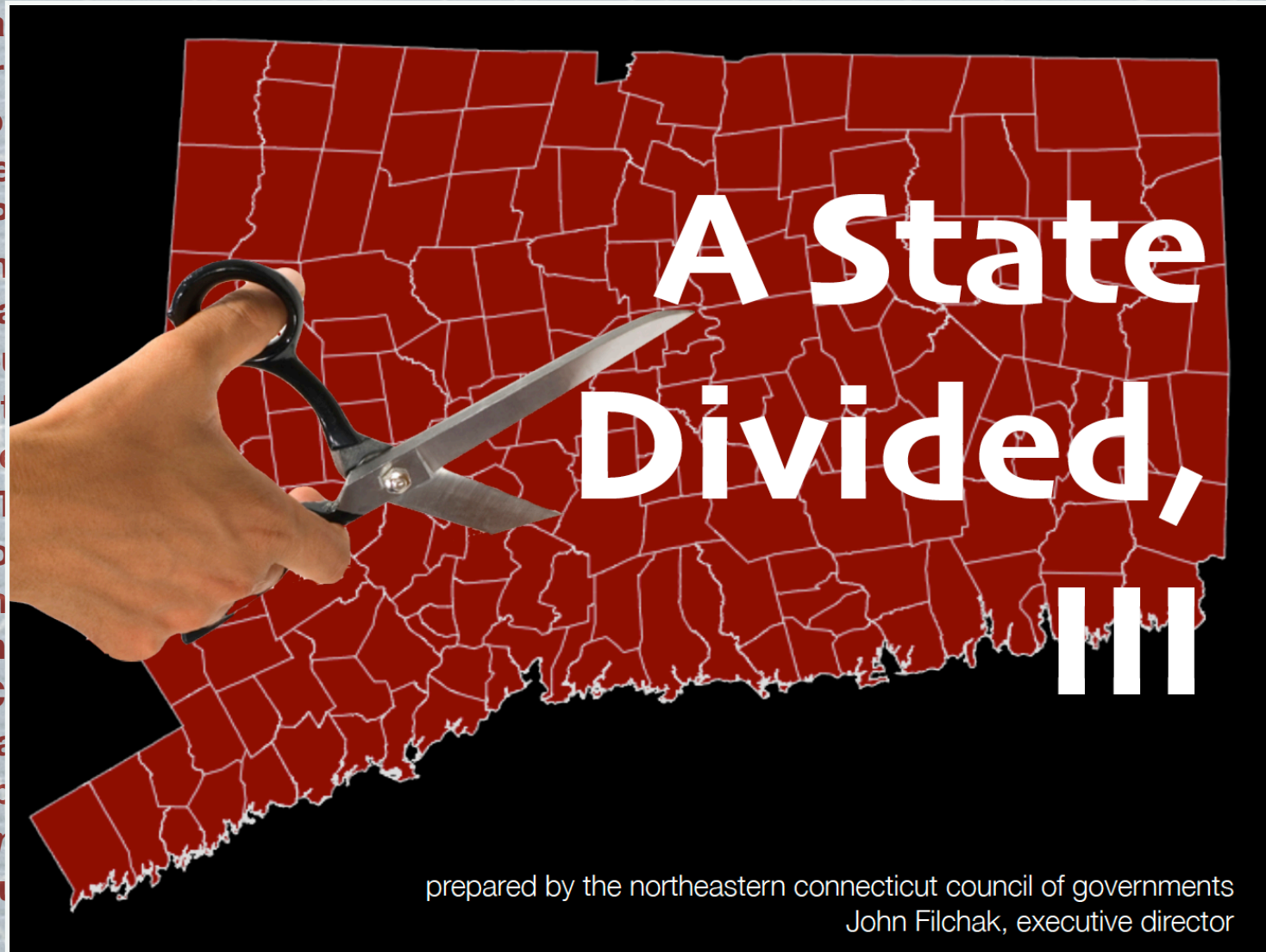
National Heritage Corr
Districts - 3 Migrant Go
Areas - 11 DEEP Conse
Attainment Areas and P
Long-Term Ombudsman
Fall Below the Poverty Ra
Districts - 6 Family S
Continuing Care Re
Developmental Service
Agencies on Aging - 3 T
CT Family Support Netwo
Regions - 3 DDS Comm
Services - 6 DCF Region
DOT Maintenance and C
Facilities - 95 Municipa
Regions - 169 Municip
Fragmented PSAP System
7 Regional PSAPS, 8 M
Juvenile Court Districts

for Housing Programs - 9 Labor Market Areas - 8 Employment and Training Service Delivery Areas - 8 Workers' Compensation Districts - 19 Higher Education Institutions - 12 Community Colleges - 6 Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) - 8 UCONN Extension Education Service Centers - 9 District Reference Groups (DRG) Areas - 33 Alliance Districts - 156 Secondary School Districts - 43 Elementary School Districts - 17 Regional School Districts - 38 Exclusive Areas for Water Supply - 4 Natural Gas Service Areas - 3 Water Supply DPH Planning Areas - 6 Library Association Districts - 6 VFW Regions - 28 Acute Care Hospitals - 18 Community Care Clinics - 42 DPH Mass Vaccination Regions - 73 Health Departments, 26 Part-Time, 34 Full-Time and 19 Regional (Second Most Fragmented in the Nation) -

er Management Areas - 2
n Climate Types - 2 DEEP
ts - 123 Aquifer Protection
g 18 Towns - 3 Ozone Non-
e and Attainment Areas - 3
5 United Way Areas - 10.4%
Sexual Assault Crisis Service
Collaborative Areas - 6 CT
s for the Department of
es - 4 211 Areas - 5 Area
wide Safe Harbor Places - 6
ns - 5 Parent Support Group
Mental Health and Addiction
nt Areas - 52 Rail Lines - 4
Franchises. - 17 State Police
emergency Medical Services
answering Points, 10th Most
s of PSAPS per Square Mile -
Judicial Branch Areas - 12
Development Eligible Areas

A State Divided, III

prepared by the northeastern connecticut council of governments
John Filchak, executive director



Service Delivery Fragmentation

Two Examples

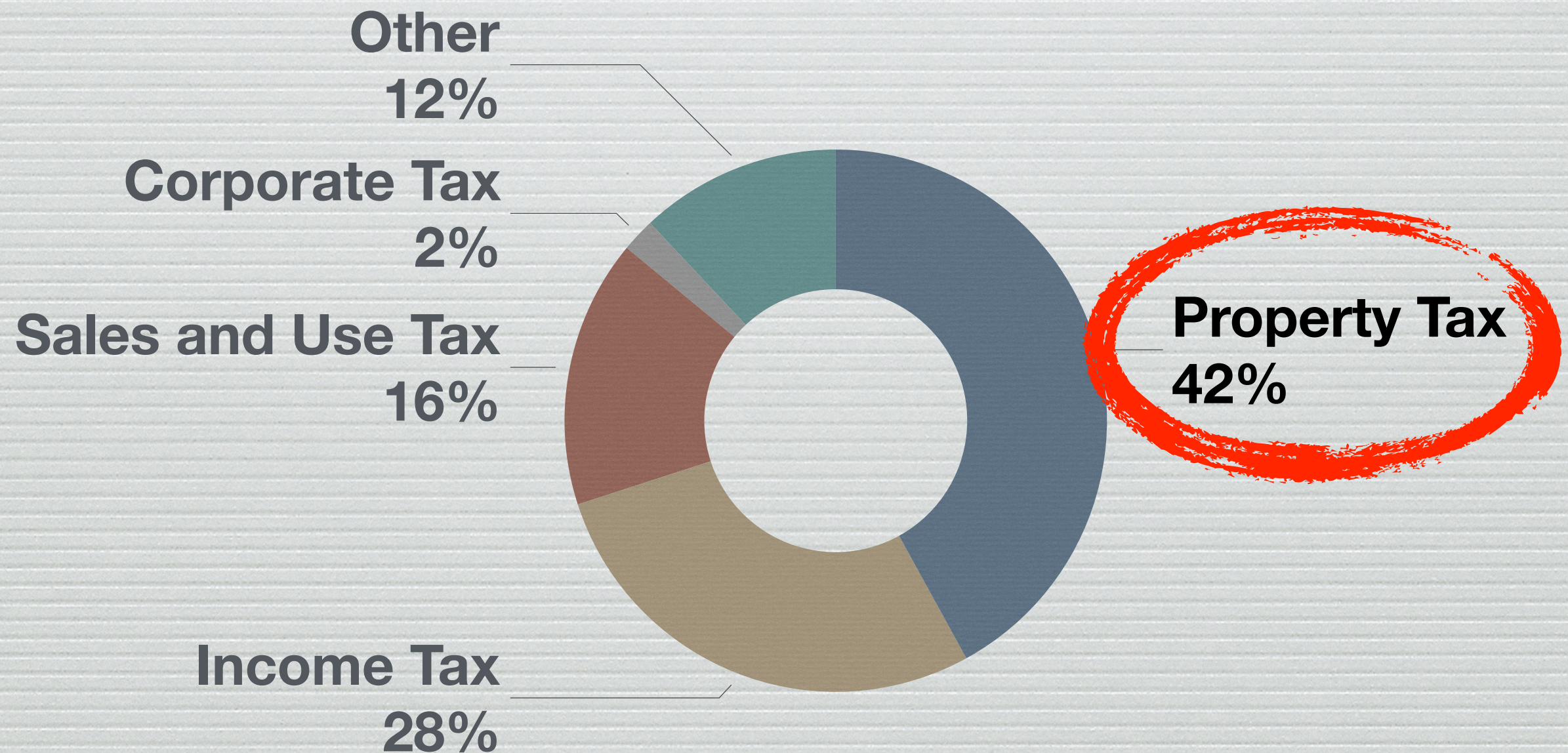
Health Departments - 73

- 9th most fragmented per 100k population
- 2nd most fragmented per 1,000 sq. miles
- 2nd most fragmented per Governments in the Nation
- A **hypothetical consolidation** based on the eight counties would result in having eight regional Health Districts and would **reduce expenses by approximately - 49 % or \$50 million**

911 Centers - 104

- 19th most fragmented per 100k population
- 4th most fragmented per 1,000 sq. miles
- 10th most fragmented per Governments in the Nation
- A **hypothetical consolidation** based on the eight counties would result in having eight regional Health Districts and would **reduce expenses by approximately - 60% or \$64 million**

What drives the need to aggressively pursue shared and regional services?



Connecticut has a growing resource gap for municipalities and the state **resulting in an expanding capacity gap to properly deliver the services ...**

In the long term, **stronger regional capacity** benefits our state by enhancing the ability to put in place shared or regional programs.

Budget savings are a motivator for shared and regional services - must also be **accountable** and **add measurable quality** and **must be undertaken to achieve and maintain social and educational equity**

Priority Recommendations:

- **Shared and regional services should be built on work done previously**
- Connecticut, at each level of government, **must embrace the application of technology and data innovation** *(Administrative and Legislative Action Required)*
- Expand, within OPM, a **government efficiency unit**, within the Intergovernmental Planning and Policy Division to provide the bandwidth needed to implement and foster collaboration at each level of government *(Legislative Action Required)*
- **Flexible school governance is essential** to the function, sustainability and excellence of public education *(Legislative Action Required)*
- **Collaborative regional programs** are needed to help local school districts provide cost effective and efficient high quality services for **Special Education** *(Legislative Action Required)*
- **Pilot and incentivize** shared/regional services to foster real change *(Legislative Action Required)*

Other Recommendations:

In addition to the six Priority Recommendations, ACIR has identified **Forty-two potentially actionable recommendations** for the Task Force to consider. Key amongst these recommendations are:

- Require ACIR to recommend to OPM focus areas for the use of regional performance incentive program funds *(Legislative Action Required)*
- Amend the Regional Performance Incentive Program RPIP to include a cost share element for grantees *(Legislative Action Required)*
- Amend the current Fiscal Indicators Report for the effective use of data measures to inform improvement of municipal operations and service delivery *(Administrative Action Required)*
- Diversification of Local Revenue Sources

Priority Recommendation **One**

Shared and regional services should be built on work done previously

Currently, State Statute enables:

- **Two or more municipalities** to perform **any** function that each may perform separately
- **RESCs** to provide a **wide range of services** on behalf of local school districts - **including** the provision of **special education services**
- **COGs** to **accept or participate in any grant, donation or program** available to any political subdivision of the state and **allow any political subdivision to enter into an agreement with a COG** to perform jointly, alone or in cooperation with any other entity, any service, activity or undertaking that the political subdivision is authorized by law to perform.
- COGs and RESCs have access to **pilot funds** through the **Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP)** to explore new shared services or regional ventures

Priority Recommendation **One**

Shared and regional services should be built on work done previously

- **The state should be looking for opportunities to restructure service delivery and funding through the COGs and the RESCs.**
 - ☒ State agencies and independent regional service delivery agencies that receive funding from the State or federal governments shall, to the greatest extent practicable, **utilize the boundaries of the councils of governments.**
 - ☒ **Legislature should consider distributing funds regionally** for regional delivery unless it can be demonstrated that the COG or RESC mechanism is not available, is not cost effective, or will result in diminished services..

Do Not Further Fragment Service Delivery

Priority Recommendation **Two**

Connecticut, at each level of government, must embrace the application of technology and data innovation

- Funds, through RPIP or some other account, should be used either through regional COGs or RESCs to assist towns and/or school districts, lacking the current capacity to do so, to **fully implement the provisions and intent of Section 7-406(c) - which mandates a uniform chart of accounts for municipalities**

Welcome to the State of Connecticut Municipal Benchmarking Application!

The Municipal Benchmarking application provides the public with an intuitive, interactive web site to explore and better understand how resources are allocated throughout the state, municipality by municipality.

To view the municipal benchmarking data, begin by selecting a year and fund group. Then, choose a data story and click **Explore**.


Select Year:

Note: Municipal Fiscal Year ends on June 30.

Select Fund Group:


Note: All Governmental Funds is a combination of General, Special Revenue, Capital Project and Debt Service Funds.

Data Stories




My Municipality:
View benchmarking data for any single Connecticut municipality.

[Explore](#)



By Population:
Explore municipalities of common population size. View in aggregate, then drill down.

[Explore](#)



Municipality Comparison:
You choose which municipalities to compare, then explore their benchmarking data.

[Explore](#)

© 2018 CT.gov

<https://ucoa.ct.gov/benchmarking>

Municipality Comparison

Period

Fund

View:

2018

General Fund

Dollars

Filter

Selected Towns

☐ Andover

☐ Ansonia

☒ Ashford

☐ Avon

☐ Barkhamsted

☐ Beacon Falls

☐ Berlin

☒ Bethany

☐ Bethel

☐ Bloomfield

☐ Bolton

☐ Branford

☐ Bridgeport

☐ Bridgewater

☐ Bristol

☐ Brookfield

☐ Burlington

☐ Canterbury

☐ Canton

☐ Chaplin

☐ Cheshire

☐ Chester

☐ Clinton

☐ Colchester

☐ Columbia

☐ Cornwall

☐ Coventry

☐ Cromwell

☒ Darien

☐ Deep River

☐ Durham

☐ East Granby

☐ East Haddam

☐ East Hampton

☐ East Hartford

☐ East Windsor

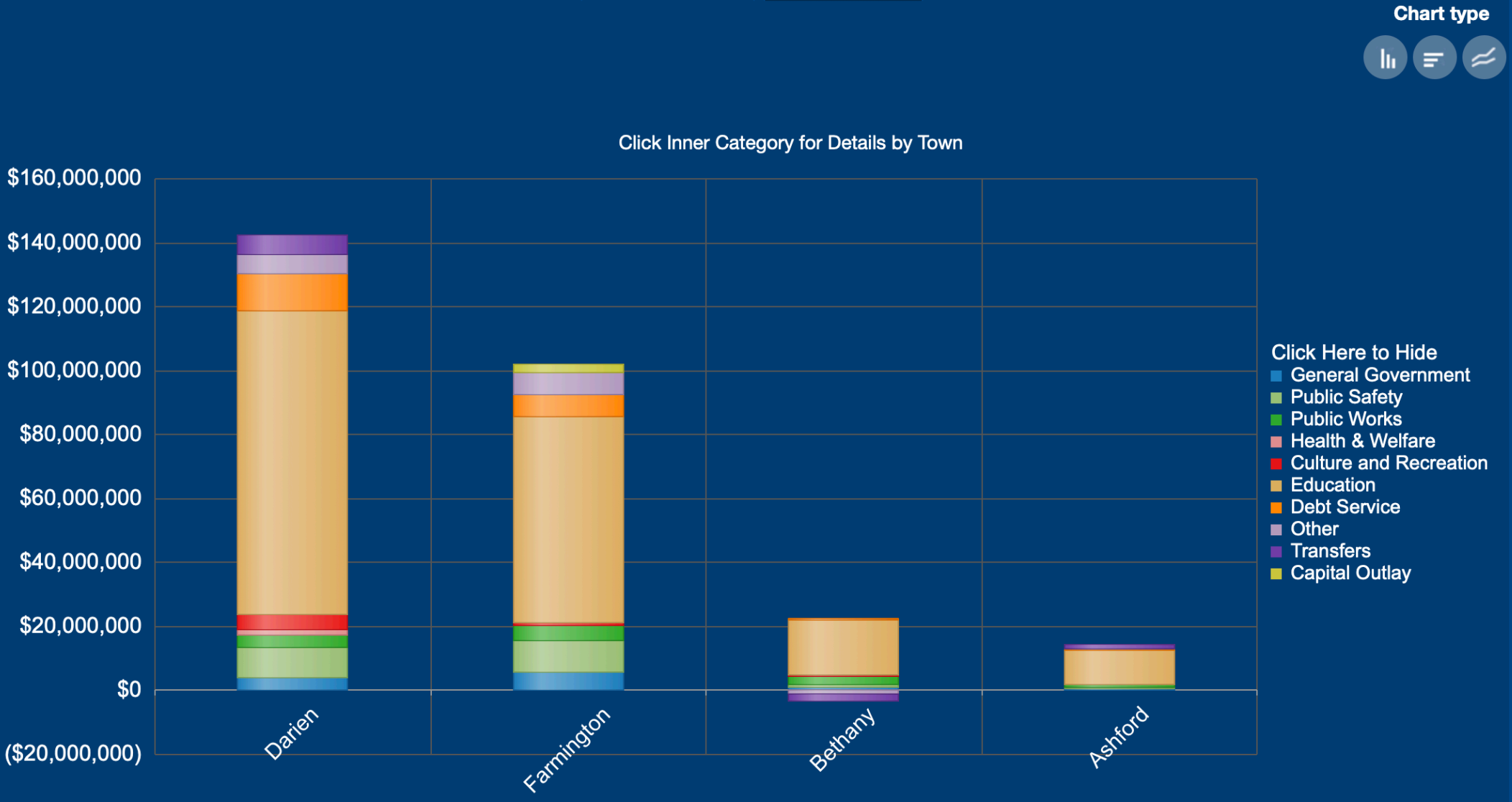
☐ Eastford

☐ Enfield

☐ Farmington

Expenses

Revenue



Priority Recommendation **Two**

Connecticut, at each level of government, must embrace the application of technology and data innovation

ACIR proposes that:

- Adoption **"one stop shop"** experience for state interactions
- Establishment of an **enterprise system approach**
- Modification to Edsight and CTdata sites to allow for **district-to-district comparisons**
- Add a **school projection calculator** to ensure consistency in methodology and comparisons state-wide
- Replace it by 2022 to the highest degree paper reporting with **e-reporting**
- A system to analyze school facilities and advise on opportunities for regional and/or inter-municipal cooperation
- Modernize local to state program and financial reporting - **UCOA**
- Using **data-driven analyses**, to end inefficiency at the state or local level.

Priority Recommendation **Three**

Expand, within OPM, a government efficiency unit , to within the Intergovernmental Policy and Planning Division to provide the bandwidth needed to implement and foster collaboration at each level of government

In other words a - “ Champion” to

- **Identify the best opportunities** to realize efficiency, promote program integrity, and improve program outcomes, including opportunities, consistent ...that **reduce or streamline duplicative paperwork, reporting, and regulatory burdens** and those that **more effectively use state and local resources**
- **Identify not only administrative impediments, but also significant statutory barriers**
- Establish preliminary plans to (1) **consolidate or streamline processes** that state and local governments must use to obtain increased flexibility to **promote the same or better outcomes at lower cost**; (2) **establish transparent criteria** and (3) **ensure continued achievement of program results** while allowing for such increased flexibility.
- **Identify areas where cross-agency collaboration would further reduce administrative and regulatory barriers and improve outcomes.**

Priority Recommendation **Four**

Flexible school governance is essential to the function, sustainability and excellence of public education

- Provide districts with a wider array of **governance options** - Expand the definition of what a school district is. Give towns the authority to create flexible cooperative agreements
- **Enable regional school districts** that have diminished enrollments resulting in decreased opportunities for students and disproportionately high tuition rates to initiate a comprehensive study **regarding options to dissolve or reconstitute**
- Enable towns belonging to regional school districts the **statutory authority to establish regional finance boards** by a region-wide majority vote.
- **Amend the school building project grant process**

Priority Recommendation **Five**

Collaborative regional programs are needed to help local school districts provide cost effective and efficient high quality services for Special Education

- **Provide incentive funds** - in each RESC region for regional diagnostic/intervention programs for students with social emotional, mental health, and behavioral challenges.
- **Develop an electronic regional student transportation tool for students and students with disabilities**
- **Create a task force to study special education Excess Costs funding** – to examine the current model of state reimbursement when the cost of a student's special education services exceeds 4.5 times the average per pupil educational cost of that school district to determine the need for a different reimbursement rate for in-district and regional collaborative programs.

Priority Recommendation **Six**

Pilot and incentivize shared/regional services to foster real change

- **To assist smaller towns and school districts** experiencing challenges in providing the same quality of services as larger districts due to capacity and fiscal challenges - priority should be given to facilitate the full embrace of UCOA
- To assist with **planning as well as funding** for the **transition from school districts into a single or shared school district**.
- **Reward** town governments and school districts **participating in collaborative or regional cost-sharing programs** by **returning savings realized through each service to the participating towns/districts to be utilized for direct town or classroom expenditures**.

Other Recommendations:

Legislative Action Required:

1. Require Plans of Conservation and Development, at each level, to include sections on regional efficiencies and education.
2. Provide inflation adjustments for the minimum value of projects requiring competitive bidding.
3. Allow municipalities and school districts to piggyback on other state and local and federal government contracts for purchasing.
4. Enable School Districts and municipalities to Utilize Reverse Auctions in Contract Bidding
5. Provide a pathway for municipalities to modernize multiple local units of government within their borders.
6. Enable Two or more contiguous municipalities for the creation of a Municipal Consolidation Study Commission.
7. Maintain or strengthen state agency capacity to foster shared services
8. Require each regional education service center to submit an annual report
9. Require ACIR to annually compile a representative sample of each fiscal impact statement completed for all laws passed by the general assembly related to municipalities
10. Require ACIR to annually or as requested recommend to the secretary focus areas for the use of regional performance incentive program funds as may be available.
11. Amend RPIP to require, with a waiver option for the Secretary, a cost share element for grantees.
12. Enable and foster Regional Housing Reform
13. Enable COGs to apply discretionary grants currently only available to municipalities
14. Modify Sections 32-326, 327, 328 to enhance regional economic development
15. Change local appointing authority for zoning enforcement, building inspection, fire marshal to the Municipal CEO.

Other Recommendations:

Legislative Action Required:

16. The Transportation Institute at UCONN should develop metrics that measures the efficiency or efficient use of public funds for student transportation.
17. Modify how local transportation projects, using state funds, are administratively addressed
18. Funding from the regional planning incentive account should be based on a work plan approved by OPM and consistent with priorities set by ACIR.
19. Require the governor to identify regional and/or shared initiatives in each budget presentation
20. Overriding Unnecessary Obstacles - Local charters that inadvertently may prevent consolidations with other towns or town departments; and Statutory mandates without any identifiable purpose
22. Bifurcation of Local Taxing Authority
23. Diversification of Local Revenue Sources to reduce reliance on property taxes for local revenue

Other Recommendations:

Administrative Action Required:

23. ACIR should develop and must articulate vision and values for municipal services and the relationship with the state
24. Assign a representative of the Commissioner of SDE to attend the regular or special meetings of the RESC Alliance.
25. The RESCs and the COG directors should be convened as a standing committee to ACIR to better ensure the understanding, coordination and development of regional programs.
26. Fund a research project through the Connecticut Transportation Institute at the University of Connecticut to study how local school districts can reduce costs by increasing efficiencies in the provision of student transportation
27. Require that the use of public funds for education transportation be based on a measurable system predicated on efficiency.
28. DAS establish an advisory municipal committee from COGs, RESCs, CABA, GFOA-CT, CASE, CEA, Municipal Employee Unions, CCM, COST and others for needed/anticipated procurements.
29. ACIR should study and make recommendations for the overhaul of Title 7 with an emphasis on making it a model for the efficient delivery of services.
30. OPM should, as the budget/policy arm of state government require state agencies to partner with each other, sharing information and back-end databases to give citizens a more convenient, seamless (inter and intra) experience.
31. In consultation with, ACIR, the University of Connecticut School of Public Administration and the Government Finance Officers of CT (GFOA), develop a best practices guide for local budgeting as well as providing an educational outreach program using the COGs as regional education centers) for the delivery of such information
32. Amend the current Fiscal Indicators Report for the effective use of data measures to inform improvement of municipal operations and service delivery
33. ACIR should study ways to complete the State Budget that better allow the municipal budget to be a predictable process

"If we look past the arbitrary walls that separate our communities we can make our state more efficient and more creative at providing services people rely on... We must look to each other to move Connecticut forward and create enhanced, comprehensive regional cooperation to provide state assistance to cities and towns in creative and efficient ways.

As the esteemed economist John Kenneth Galbraith said, "The conventional view serves to protect us from the painful job of thinking"...While our close knit communities help make Connecticut an attractive place to live, we cannot continue to have so many government fiefdoms that expend precious energy protecting the status quo. In fact, the best way to preserve the character of neighborhoods and villages is to find ways to lower their costs and establish a long-term path of sustainability."

*Senate President Pro Tempore Martin M. Looney
opening remarks for the 2019 Legislative Session*

Thank you.