

Commission members—Thanks for your time.. And thanks for joining in like so many others who have sought solutions to the very large, complicated and difficult policy dilemmas facing our state. I hope your efforts foster solutions and don't end up in the closet with all the other shelved reports from myriad task forces, commissions, and investigations. I like big moves. At this point I like ANY forward movement.

For the sake of full disclosure, I am a state employee retiree. A Tier 1 emancipated wage slave. Living high on my annual pension of \$3,788.64 That pension is my return on the investment of my time and talents, to do my state job at UConn Health Center. I am also a former state employee union leader, who along with so many others, helped to invent SEBAC. There is quite the history there. And I am part of the 1000 Friends Tax working group. I call us Tax nerds.

This is déjà vu time for me going back before Hull Harper. That was 1992 I believe. But structurally, not much has changed beyond the names of the investigators, and the investigating bodies. A few had tweaks that became law. But progress was defined more by voting for a commission and receiving the report than actually working to implement.

So here's a few items I may suggest for your thinking...

1. For our public retirement funds – the problem is past service liability. Fringe costs are grossly exaggerated for political purposes by adding in liability. Yes it is a cost of the system but is data weaponized by ill intended commentary disguised as solutions. That approach only makes matters worse.. Good data comes from good sources. We need better data, We suggest an unencumbered research and data source so we can use more real facts than alternate facts. Connecticut is known as a date free zone –a bad decision incubator. With a reliable, credible, deep thinking, deep researching, policy and data institution we can overcome a lot of the smoke that fills our state information vacuum.

On the TRS side of pensions I wish to submit some additional detailed info from us and quickly hit a few more suggestions.

2. Listening to well intended testimony and forming conclusions supplemented by volumes of back up information is great for reports. I have never seen that process include or result in much that resembles the backbreaking work of designing the plan that got everyone together to map out and move on the path from here to there. There are many stakeholders. Many pressure points. We need more agreements and less pushing or pulling in opposite directions. Make a recommendation for a process to really bring people together to fix this.

3. Big changes never move fast. Think short and long. Big moves, like all structures, need strong solid foundations. Foundations need to be built first. We have been madly making bad policy for 40 years. It might be achievable to fix in 10 or 15 but only if enough of the stakeholders are in it to win it.

4.. Our economy is transforming on all fronts. And the pace is increasing. Many old revenue sources are less productive. Spending in a disconnected state-local service structure just doesn't cut it. Chasing revenue trends and spending on effectively coordinated services is a must...and good decisions on that front should be fertilized by good solid data and research..not stinky manure. Our revenue system is definitely out of balance with the economy and needs to be more responsive in proactive and reactive ways.. And when wealth among the few is rising so fast in windfall fashion and workforce pay is flat or declining we need to apply a stronger definition of fairness and equity to decisionmaking.

5. Do all you can to give CT a raise. Good pay benefits pensions health care are a foundation for a great state. Austerity has no record of bringing lasting success and prosperity for all. It only shows people how awful things can be by designed neglect. Wages are stagnant for most, Cutting taxes is not a solution. Raising economic status works better. I say this, assuming it will be discounted, because that's how we do things now. But for you to have a full spectrum of options you need to consider this end of it. Try like hell to shrink the growing wealth disparity and get more folks more cash to spend in local economic development. Be bold – be big - be fair - do no harm... too much harm has been done already.

Thank you.