

**TESTIMONY**  
of the  
**CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES**  
to the  
**TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE CONVERSION OF LEGISLATIVE  
DOCUMENTS FROM PAPER TO ELECTRONIC FORM**

November 18, 2010

CCM represents local governments at the Capitol. Our task, along with other lobbyists and members of the general public, is to educate members of government about the potential impact proposed legislation could have. Much of the legislation before the General Assembly -- about a quarter of the total -- could have impacts on and consequences for our hometowns. The loss of paper documents will have an impact on our ability to do our jobs for towns and cities.

The Task Force is considering eliminating printed copies of certain documents that are important for keeping the public, of which associations like CCM are part, informed about the actions of the General Assembly. Absent some of these documents, the transparency of state government will be compromised.

Please take the following into consideration during your discussions:

- **Without paper copies of bills and file copies being provided on a daily basis - how would an individual know certain items even exist?** The printed bill/file lets the public know that an action has been taken. Absent this format, no one would have knowledge of the existence of an electronic version.
- **It has been suggested that lobbyists and the public could ask committee staff to print anything they might need in hard copy.** Committee staff are already overwhelmed, and therefore often are not able to provide basic information, let alone print copies of bills and other items. Some committee rooms have "Do Not Enter" signs on their doors to allow staff to deal with the crush of business. In addition, all of the legislative copy rooms are labeled with instructions that the rooms are for staff use only and not the public. Please consider the volume of printing that could be sought by the public could impose a burden on committee staff and that those costs could negate some of the anticipated savings.
- **Currently electronic devices of any kind are banned from the Senate gallery.** If key legislative documents are no longer printed, how would the public be able to monitor the live actions of the General Assembly and simultaneously be able to have access to what is being discussed -- file copies of bills, OLR and OFA analyses, and amendments?
- **Electronic media files for public hearings could be very costly and still may not fully achieve the needed legal backup for statutory interpretation.** The information technology services has indicated that it could take several hundred hours of programming to accommodate MP3 or other audio formats for public hearings -- and they would be unsearchable. This could result in higher legal costs for local governments involved in court cases.

# ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT LOBBYISTS

President - Brooks Campion  
Board Member - Lori Pelletier  
Vice President - Patricia Shea  
Board Member - Michael J. Riley  
Treasurer - Michael Doyle  
Assistant Treasurer - Michael J. Johnson  
Secretary - Kylene Perras  
Legal and Legislative Subcommittee Chair - Anita Schepker

## **Testimony of the Association of Connecticut Lobbyists Before the Task Force to Study the Conversion of Legislative Documents from Paper to Electronic Form**

November 18, 2010

On behalf of the over 170 members of the Association of Connecticut Lobbyists ("ACL") we hereby submit these comments to the Task Force for your consideration. Our comments are modeled generally on our preliminary recommendations contained within our memo submitted to the Task Force on October 22, 2010. In the interest of time, we have attached that memo to our testimony to offer greater detail. Our testimony contains both our recommendations and proposed methods to achieve the required savings.

As we have stated from the outset, the ACL fully supports the Task Force's dual mission to 1) ensure transparent and accessible information to the general public on the actions of the General Assembly and 2) to achieve the necessary savings dictated by Public Act 10-3. To do so, we strongly encourage members of the Task Force to assign funding priority to the printing of documents and other legislative activities based on their value in promoting or enhancing public access and transparency.

Given that overlay, we respectfully request that the Task Force consider the following recommendations:

1. With respect to the printing of daily documents, we again suggest that the Office of Legislative Management print reduced volumes of legislative documents, format them differently, especially the Bulletin, to control costs and increase cost sharing as appropriate for daily consumers of the documents. Consider printing House and Senate calendars only on session days and re-prioritize those documents that are printed. For example, the List of Bills should be given a higher priority for printing versus loose proposed bills which generally consist of little more than a statement of purpose when they are first introduced. We believe that the Bulletin, List of Bills, File Copies, Journals and Calendars (on session days) provide the most

value to members of the public who are interested in learning about, and becoming active participants in, the General Assembly's work and must be maintained, albeit at a reduced volume;

2. We believe that the preservation of transcription services for committee public hearings must be maintained to ensure that an accurate, indisputable record of the vital exchange of ideas exists. State agencies and the Courts have consistently looked committee public hearings for guidance to interpret legislative intent. In addition, it has been our experience that there's great variance in the comprehensiveness of Joint Favorable Reports; oral testimony has been overlooked in the absence of corresponding written testimony. Finally, due to the evolving nature of the House and Senate's consideration of bills, i.e. bills adopted on consent, the floor debate varies in its value for understanding legislative intent.

To accomplish these recommendations we believe the Task Force should deploy any and all strategies necessary to accomplish the bottom line savings mandated in P.A. 10- 3. We offer the following considerations:

1. As we have stated, our overarching concern is that, in the context of an overall "printing" line item within the budget of the Office of Legislative Management of \$2,124,973 for FY '11, the elimination of \$410,000 for the printing of daily documents versus a meager \$20,000 for all other items, runs counter to the mission of public access and transparency.

Within that line item we recommend the Office of Legislative Management make the following reductions:

- Significantly limit the number of sets of the Connecticut General Statutes printed for consumption within the Legislative Office Building; nearly a half a million dollars is allocated for their printing presently and they often go unused. Similarly, we recommend that the number of sets of Public and Special Acts printed also be reduced to begin to chip away at their \$46,000 cost.
- Eliminate the printing of the Legislative Record Index which costs nearly \$5,000 and serves virtually no one.
- Eliminate the printing of legislative stationery and instead task the Legislative Office of Information Technology Services ("OITS") with creating a set of uniform computer-generated letterhead templates to be used throughout the building, potentially saving \$86,000.
- Eliminate the printing of the Legislative Guide to save \$6,000. Single copies of the guide which is currently available online should instead be printed from desktop computers and permanently placed at the League of Women Voters' desks, the Bill Information Room (should one still exist) and in the Public Information Room in the basement of the State Capitol.
- Finally, eliminate the printing of the book of Rules and Precedents to potentially save \$3,300.

Beyond the "printing" line item, we believe it is critical that the General Assembly, acting through the Office of Legislative Management, consider another cost savings measure which

they successfully deployed this session. We believe they should, consistent with this year's practice, reduce the number of sessional staff employed immediately following the conclusion of the joint committees' deadlines to report bills, also known as the "JF" deadline. The potential savings achieved with that staff reduction could go a long way toward covering the cost of printing reduced volumes of legislative documents and the transcription of committee public hearings.

We in the ACL stand ready to be a resource to the Task Force and to the General Assembly as you implement these important changes. Thank you for your consideration.

Attachment.