



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY CONVERTING LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS FROM PAPER TO ELECTRONIC

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We would like to thank the task force for this opportunity to provide our thoughts on the issue of streamlining how legislative documents are compiled and distributed. As a state agency, the Department of Public Health interacts with the legislature in a number of important ways. In addressing the agency's policy needs and concerns, DPH does rely on legislative documents to inform our approach to legislative affairs. Similarly, in being responsive to legislators' interests in the department's views on issues and in order to meet our statutory obligations, DPH submits a number of documents to many committees.

With regards to our use of those documents created by the legislature, DPH offers the following observations:

- We would like to echo the sentiment of those points made by the Association of Connecticut Lobbyists. Many of the documents slated for elimination from publication could be reformatted to make them both more useful and less costly. Additionally, items such as the House and Senate Calendars are only widely needed on session days.
- One of the more useful documents printed on a regular basis, particularly in the beginning of session, is the daily list of bills. Were this document to be published online and posted on the CGA main page with the daily Bulletin and Calendars in the same format that it is distributed in hard copy, its publication could be strictly limited if not eliminated.
- The current means for distributing amendments is wasteful and strictly limits transparency of the legislative process. A requirement to have amendments posted online for a minimum period of time prior to being called on the floor of either chamber would greatly improve both of these conditions.
- Expanding access to information and publication technology in the Capitol and LOB is not only imperative to improving public access to the legislative process and cutting costs, it is essential to bringing state government into the 21st century. In the not so distant future, mobile telecommunications and tablet computing will greatly limit the need for any published materials. At that time, government must be prepared to simultaneously meet the needs of those people who use that technology to conduct business and those people who are locked out of the process for the very reason that they do not have access to that technology. Expanding wireless broadband capacity, providing publishing stations and making available

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additional public computer terminals are all actions that must be taken to make the state legislature efficient and accessible.

Savings can also be found in the procedures for how legislative committees receive and handle documents submitted by DPH:

- Transmittal of testimony to all committees should be allowed in electronic form. A consistent procedure for all committees to receive and redistribute testimony electronically would eliminate the mass printing that takes place both at the LOB and by those entities (including state agencies) that submit testimony.
- By far, the most wasteful documents submitted to the legislature by DPH are the 19 copies of regulatory proposals required for review by the Legislative Regulations Review Committee for each proposal that appears before that body. Not only do the multi-page proposals constitute an unneeded expense, they must be submitted in folders that must be custom ordered by agencies on a semi-regular basis. A single electronic package could—and should—be required to the committee administrator eliminating the need for both the aforementioned office supplies, as well as the thousands of dollars in human resources expended on an annual basis by regulatory agencies to compile the sizeable packages.

Finally, DPH would like to point out two ways in which it has helped to reduce its own use of published materials. First, the Office of Government Relations has provided both formal and informal training to agency employees to ensure that there exists agency-wide proficiency in using electronic documents available on the CGA website. Also, DPH leadership has instituted processes as part of our internal legislative tracking that eliminate unnecessary printing and the associated courier and archiving costs.

Second, documents produced and distributed by the Secretary of the States' office, including statute volumes, statute supplements, public acts and Register & Manuals (aka, "blue books") all contain information that is already published online. DPH has cut the annual request it makes for these documents by half. There has been no operational impact from this cut. Those individuals for whom hard copies of these items are crucial to performing their tasks still have them available. The agency is continuing to assess the need for the current numbers ordered and will likely make further decreases moving forward as staff revisit how electronically available resources meet their professional needs.