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**Testimony of  
Ray Rossomando  
Connecticut Education Association**

**Before the  
Planning and Development Committee**

Re:

**HB 6448 AA EXPANDING ACCESS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND MODERNIZING LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**HB 6644 AAC A STUDY OF CERTAIN PROPERTY TAX REFORMS**

**March 22, 2021**

Good afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Senator Hwang, Representative Zullo, and the distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Ray Rossomando and I serve as Director of Policy, Research, and Government Relations for the Connecticut Education Association (CEA). CEA represents teachers in over 150 school districts across the state, including CREC.

We submit testimony today on HB 6448 AAC Expanding Access to Local Government and Modernizing Local Government Operations and HB 6644 AAC A Study of Certain Property.

**HB 6448 AA Expanding Access To Local Government And Modernizing Local Government Operations**

CEA supports clarifying laws to ensure that virtual public meetings are carried out with as much public awareness and participation as possible. We commend the committee for raising this bill and respectfully ask that members also consider:

- 1) Including provisions to ensure that hearing impaired citizens can participate,
- 2) Ensuring that information about who on the elected body is present is available to the audience at all times during the meeting, and
- 3) Requiring that links be available for citizens to watch the proceedings without having to register or otherwise disclose their names or contact information (e.g. The General Assembly broadcasts live via YouTube without requiring registration by citizens).

**HB 6644 AAC A Study Of Certain Property Tax Reforms**

CEA strongly opposes the premise of this study, which is to limit local property tax revenue growth ultimately reducing resources available local public schools.

Policies limiting local property tax revenue have failed already in many states. A limit passed in Massachusetts, resulted in schools and firehouses being shuttered, programs from libraries to varsity sports were cut or eliminated, and fees were instituted for classes like music.

California infamously imposed a limit, Proposition 13, that has decimated public schools and left a wake of unintended consequences. New York more recently imposed a cap that has resulted in schools being unable to keep up with the needs of the children in its schools, and local budgets incapable of responding to rising fixed costs of health care. Michigan's experience illustrated the problems local revenue limits cause in times of recession, and their inability to respond to volatile changes in state funding for municipalities.

Policies that limit revenue growth become vulnerable to rising costs, inflation, and recessions. They have been shown to result in shifts to less desirable and regressive local taxing options. And such policies result in inequities that discriminate against new, younger aspiring homeowners. They tend to preserve "intergenerational wealth" at the expense of individuals and families just beginning to make ends meet.<sup>1</sup>

Limiting local property tax revenue growth is an idea that has been tried over and over again and an idea that has failed communities across the country.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/state-limits-on-property-taxes-hamstring-local-services-and-should-be>