

**Testimony of the
CT Shoreline Chambers Government Relations Committee
Before the Finance Committee
Bruce Wilson, Chairman**

**In Reference to
The \$40.5 Billion Budget Approved by the Appropriations Committee**

Senator Frantz , Representative Davis and distinguished members of the Finance Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this unprecedented budget proposal.

On behalf of the Chambers of Commerce for the towns of East Haven, Branford, Guilford, Madison, Clinton, Westbrook, and Old Saybrook, I would like to convey the concern our members have with the proposed budget.

Our membership is comprised of small businesses of all types as well as non-profit organizations providing vital social services locally in the community. Their concern transcends business type and political party. It is about sustainability. Our small businesses are worried that ever-increasing taxes and revoked tax breaks cannot be maintained. Our non-profit members worry that they are tasked with ever increasing responsibilities while having their funding decreased.

Our small business members are the engine of Connecticut's economic recovery. While many of the approved taxes seem far removed from the average taxpayer, the proposal from the Appropriations Committee looks to pull \$1Billion out of the local economy, just as we are showing signs of growth. Continuing to build on this fragile momentum has to be a priority in the budget.

Members in the nonprofit service sector have embraced the role of providing high quality care and services at a fraction of the price of state run agencies. Yet there is still duplication and competition from state agencies. As a result, precious state money often gets allocated away from these high value resources. The decision to transfer the care of our most needy citizens to these organizations was the right thing to do, it is only right that they receive the funds to continue their mission.

Right now, there are three budget proposals on the table. Each with its' merits, none perfect. We are calling for all of our elected representatives to sit down at the same table and find the compromise in those budgets that provides the services we need at a cost we can afford.

To be clear, we understand the real world concerns of the parties we represent. We are not "anti-taxes," and we certainly understand the significant impacts of budget

cuts. What we are asking for is simple: balance. We simply cannot afford the huge tax burden some of the proposals would implement, but we also fear the impacts of such drastic cuts of other proposals. We need balance. A month from now, when a new budget is passed, we would consider it a success if all parties worked together to find a more balanced approach between the tax burden implemented on our businesses and the services that are funded by our government.

We look forward to working with both sides to this end, and remain available to help in any way we can.