

House Republican Press Release

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Candelora: Democrats Defeat Municipal Fiscal Accountability Measure



HARTFORD –State Representative Vincent Candelora (R-North Branford) today expressed disappointment that majority Democrats on the Appropriations Committee defeated a measure which would allow the state to audit municipalities with over 75,000 people that receive over 35% of their annual operating budgets from state funds.

“This measure would have allowed the state the ability to keep a better track of where state funds go and how they are being used,” said Candelora, a member of the budget-writing Appropriations Committee. “It would also have enabled the state and municipality to evaluate the use of the funds and determine greater efficiency in their use. It is a very real disappointment that the majority on this committee were not interested in pursuing greater financial accountability of state funds.”

Under the provisions of the bill, SB 374, the audit reports must include any recommendations they have to run the municipality more efficiently or improve its financial condition. The municipalities meeting the population criterion are Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Norwalk, Stamford, and Waterbury.

The measure would have also required the auditors to submit each municipal audit to the governor, comptroller, and the Appropriations and Program Review and Investigations committees and file one copy with the State Library. They must also keep the reports on file for at least five years.

“Following what took place recently with the Community Action Agency in New Haven, where the agency has been found to have over-billed the state to the tune of \$1.5 million over three years, I think we have an obligation to examine how state tax dollars are spend,” said Candelora. “Why would you intentionally deprive the state of the ability to examine this? Opposing this measure is an abdication of responsibility, and intentionally looking the other way.”

The audits proposed under the bill would be in addition to the annual municipal audits conducted by independent auditors which all municipalities must retain to review their financial statements. The auditors must submit certified copies of the audit report to various officials, including the Office of Policy and Management secretary, who must review the audits to determine if they were properly prepared and for evidence of unsound or irregular financial management practices.