

**CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COMMISSION ON
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**



*ANNUAL REPORT FOR
2011 - 2012*

A multi-jurisdictional agency of Connecticut state government

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December 2012

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Commission Membership

Officers

W. David LeVasseur, Chair Designee of Secretary of Office of Policy & Management

Members

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| Hon. Steve Cassano | Designee of Senate President Pro Tempore |
| Hon. Frank Nicastro | Designee of Speaker of the House of Representatives |
| James O' Leary | Designee of Senate Minority Leader |
| Ron Harris | Designee of Commissioner of Education |
| Robert Kaliszewski | Designee of Comm. of Energy and Environmental Protection |
| James Watson | Commissioner of Econ. and Community Dev., or Designee |
| Hon. Leo Paul | First Selectman of Litchfield |
| Joyce Stille | Administrative Officer of Bolton |
| Scott Shanley | Town Manager of Manchester |
| Hon. Scott Jackson | Mayor of Hamden |
| Hon. Ryan Bingham | Mayor of Torrington |
| Frederick Baruzzi | Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents |
| Linda Krause | Connecticut Association of Regional Planning Organizations |
| Mark Paquette | Public Member, appointed by Senate President Pro Tempore |
| Carl Amento | Public Member, appointed by Spkr of House of Representatives |
| John T. Finkle | Public Member, appointed by Senate Minority Leader |
| Michael Stupinski | Public Member, appointed by House Minority Leader |
| James Finley | Connecticut Conference of Municipalities |
| Hon. Barbara Henry | Designee of the Council of Small Towns |

Vacancies

Designee of House Minority Leader
Public Member, appointed by Governor
Municipal Official, town of 60,000 or more, nominated by CCM and appointed by Governor
Local Public Education Official, nominated by Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

Staff

Bruce Wittchen Office of Policy & Management

ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

ACIR STATUTORY MANDATE

The Connecticut Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) is a 24-member agency created by the State of Connecticut in 1985 to study system issues between the state and its local governments, and to recommend solutions as appropriate. The makeup is designed to allow for open discussion across broad jurisdictional lines with a common interest in bettering local government.

As specified in [Section 2-79a of the Connecticut General Statutes](#) (CGS), the role of ACIR is to: (1) serve as a forum for consultation between state and local officials; (2) conduct research on intergovernmental issues; (3) encourage and coordinate studies of intergovernmental issues by universities and others; and (4) initiate policy development and make recommendations to all levels of government.

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The Commission has had active participants from all of its constituencies throughout its existence. Commission membership is made up of representatives from the state legislative and executive branches as well as representatives of local government, education and the general public who attend the meetings and fully participate in the deliberations and decisions.

The Commission Chairman is W. David LeVasseur, Director of Municipal Finance Services and acting Undersecretary of the Intergovernmental Policy Division (IGP) of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). He is also a former First Selectman of Killingworth and a former Chairman of the Lower Connecticut Valley Selectman's Association and of the Connecticut River Valley Council of Elected Officials.

The Commission Vice Chair is Alice V. Meyer, a former state representative appointed by the House Minority Leader. She is a former co-chairman of the legislature's Planning and Development Committee.

Administrative support for the day-to-day operations of the Commission is provided by Bruce

Wittchen of OPM's Intergovernmental Policy Division.

COMMISSION MEETINGS

Commission members contributed many hours of volunteer time to the State, both at meetings and through advice and consultation with the staff. Full Commission meetings are scheduled four-five times per year, at which staff work is reviewed, issues and potential recommendations are debated, and direction is given on future Commission activities. Also, the Commission establishes subcommittees for specific issues, which may involve additional meetings.

Commission membership is diverse in background and expertise, assuring lively debate with different viewpoints being analyzed and blended. The ACIR is the only ongoing entity where representatives of state and local government and the public regularly meet together to discuss the governance issues that are so important to each.

FY 2011-2012 COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

NEW STATE MANDATES ON MUNICIPALITIES REPORT - 2011

ACIR is required under [Section 2-32c of the Connecticut General Statutes](#) to submit a report to legislative leaders that lists each state mandate on municipalities enacted during the most recent regular or special session of the General Assembly. Staff followed all municipal-related legislation during the 2012 regular and special sessions of the General Assembly and compiled a listing of those bills that were enacted that create or reduce mandates. This report was adopted by the Commission in June, 2012 (See Publications section of this report).

In 2012, the Legislature adopted one bill that ACIR considered more than minimal mandates. That was three fewer than in 2011 and five fewer than in 2010. The twenty-one minimal mandates adopted this year were sixteen fewer than in 2011, but seven more than in 2010. There also were three mandates that are not specifically directed at municipalities, which is thirteen fewer than in 2011 and three fewer than in 2010.

A long-standing objective of the Commission is to encourage mandate reductions that can lead to administrative and/or fiscal relief for municipalities. During the 2012 session, the legislature enacted fourteen, which is two fewer than in 2011, but eleven more than in 2010. 2011 had the greatest number of reductions since ACIR started collecting this information. Some of these reductions, such as [PA 12-3, An Act Concerning the Exemption from Disclosure of Certain Addresses Under the Freedom of Information Act](#), directly reduce a state mandate. Others, such as [PA 12-27, An Act Authorizing Planning Commissions to Notify Regional Planning Agencies of Subdivision Applications by Electronic Mail](#), allow municipalities to take advantage of improved technologies not envisioned at the time when previous bills were passed. Health insurance mandates receive significant attention and one such mandate was reduced by [PA 12-150, An Act Concerning Guidelines for Health Insurance Coverage for Breast Magnetic Resonance Imaging](#).

The 2011 annual report had noted the passage of [SA 11-9, An Act Concerning a Review of the Cost to Municipalities of State-Mandated Special Education Requirements](#) and pointed that the resulting report could lead to further discussion of state mandates and possibly to future mandate reductions. The Special Act required the state Department of Education to review special education mandates and submit a report identifying every state-mandated special education requirement exceeding minimum federal requirement and the resulting municipal cost to comply with such mandates. The report is now available at:

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Summary_Report_Special_Act_11_9.pdf

and a fiscal data addendum is available at:

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/special/addendum_special_act_11_9_response_report.pdf

***COMPENDIUM OF
STATUTORY &
REGULATORY
MANDATES REPORT***

CGS Section 2-79a requires the Commission, every fourth year starting in 1998, to submit to the General Assembly a report listing all state mandates on municipalities, categorizing them, providing their enactment dates along with a brief history, and describing the cost incurred by local governments in implementing these mandates. In the interim three years, the Commission must submit a supplement containing statutory mandates changed in the previous legislative session as well as any regulatory changes made during the year. The Commission published the report entitled: [A Compendium Of Statutory & Regulatory Mandates On Municipalities In Connecticut](#) in 2010 and the most recent supplement in January, 2012. (See Publications section of this report).

***ACIR SUBCOMMITTEE FOR THE
STUDY OF FUTURE FISCAL
CHALLENGES FACING
CONNECTICUT
MUNICIPALITIES***

The ACIR occasionally selects topics for a major research project. In fiscal year 2008 the Commission decided to do a major study concerning the future fiscal challenges facing both the State and the municipalities. The Commission surveyed municipalities and found healthcare costs as the foremost concern of respondees. The Commission intended to hold a symposium in Spring, 2009, but it was deferred due to budgetary considerations and, to date, has not been scheduled.

2012-13 PUBLICATIONS

STATE MANDATES ON MUNICIPALITIES: ACTIONS IN 2012

In accordance with CGS Section 2-32c, staff reviewed every public and special act adopted by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor. All such acts that were determined to be state mandates on municipalities were included in this report. The report includes a description of each mandate, the committee of cognizance, a listing of all committees that reviewed the bill and a summary of the Office of Fiscal Analysis' municipal fiscal impact statement relating to the mandate. The report also includes a section on mandate reductions and the report is available online at:

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/2012_Mandates_Report.pdf

MUNICIPAL BUDGET ADOPTION EXPERIENCES IN CONNECTICUT 2011-12

Over the past decade, the ACIR has conducted annual surveys of all 169 Connecticut municipalities and 17 regional school districts to collect data regarding their budget adoption process. A report of the 2012 findings is available online at:

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/2012_Municipal_Budget_Adoption.pdf
(report to be available after ACIR approval)

Among the results of the 2012-13 survey are the following: 76 municipalities adopted their budget by means of a referendum, which is similar to recent years. Unlike 2011, some municipalities required more than three votes to adopt a budget in 2012, but 148 municipalities adopted their budgets on the first vote, which is a decline of only two. Seven municipalities did not adopt a budget until after the July 1 start of the new fiscal year, which was more than in the previous three years, but less than any other year since 2000. All towns had adopted budgets by the time the 2011 report was published, although one intends to hold a referendum after the conclusion of the fiscal year.

Two regional school districts adopted its budget by means of a district meeting, an increase of one and only the second time since 2003 that as many as two districts adopted a budget by means of a district meeting instead of by referendum.

Fourteen of the seventeen districts adopted their budgets on the first ballot, one less than had done so in 2011, and, like in 2011, all but one district adopted its budget before June 1.

This was the twenty-second year that the Commission surveyed local governments. The Commission collected budget data in the survey again and hopes to use this data in the future. Establishing a database with the information derived from local officials allows a more comprehensive examination of the local budget adoption process than was previously possible.

***A COMPENDIUM OF
STATUTORY AND
REGULATORY MANDATES ON
MUNICIPALITIES IN
CONNECTICUT***

The Commission, in accordance with CGS Section 2-79a, annually compiles a listing of state mandates on municipalities by category (statutory or regulatory), with a brief history of each mandate and the cost incurred by the municipalities. Legislation adopted in 1997 requires the Commission to compile a complete listing every fourth year (beginning in 1998) while in the interim three years it publishes a supplemental listing.

The 2012 Compendium supplement includes all the new statutory and regulatory mandates that were adopted since the 2011 Compendium supplement and is available at:

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/2012_Compndium_Supplement.pdf