

An Open Letter to State Legislators

The push to balance the state budget by shifting costs to cities and towns doesn't sit well with Connecticut voters and should be rejected. Any cost shift plan would increase property taxes and cut needed town services for Connecticut residents, whose property tax rates are already among the highest in the country.

According to a new Local Property Tax Responsibility Survey, 67 percent of Connecticut voters are against plans to use local property taxes to balance the state budget. Even more voters, 72 percent, oppose balancing the budget by using local property taxes, instead of state funds, to cover teacher retirement costs. The survey found that residents do not want the state to shift its financial obligations onto them, and if that happens, voters will make their dissatisfaction known at the polls next year.

While we recognize that the state is facing ongoing budget challenges, shifting state funding obligations for essential services onto already-strapped cities and towns is not a viable solution. Town and city budgets are already strained from having to fund a growing portion of the costs of critical public services, due to more than a decade of minimal increases in state funding for municipalities. This massive shift in additional state costs onto cities and towns for the teacher retirement plan will force both big increases in property taxes and deep cuts in critical municipal services—further hurting the economic

stability of our cities and towns and our overburdened taxpayers already struggling under tough economic times.

Connecticut residents deserve honest, fair, sustainable solutions to the state's budget crisis, not increased property taxes. The state must pay its own bills, not transfer its financial burden onto property taxpayers.

We urge you to listen to your constituents, who are clearly saying no to shifting the state's responsibility for teacher retirement costs onto their already overburdened cities and towns. They know that any cost shift will mean higher local property taxes and reduced funding—jeopardizing much-needed resources and public services.

Increasing property taxes for residents is not the comprehensive solution Connecticut needs to balance the state budget. We need a budget that works for all of us by investing in our public schools, protecting children and seniors, and ensuring public safety and other critical services. This plan does nothing to curtail state spending that leads to continued state budget deficits, nor does it help to address the chronic underfunding of our public schools.

We join the public in urging you to vote against any plans that place additional financial burdens on municipalities and property owners.



The Connecticut Education Association • The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities • The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education • The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents • The Connecticut Association of Schools • The Connecticut Federation of School Administrators • The American Federation of Teachers-CT • The Connecticut Parent Teacher Association • The Connecticut Council of Small Towns • The Connecticut Association of School Administrators

