

CT Tax Collectors' Association

Spring Meeting 2016

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Agenda

- + Legislative Overview
- + People – Key Legislative Players
- + Legislation of Interest – Quiet Year?
- + Grassroots – Participating in the Legislative Process
- + Questions

Legislative Overview



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Budget Crisis Continues

- + 2015 Session
 - + Raised \$1.3 billion in taxes
 - + Canceled or Delayed Nearly \$500 million in previously approved tax cuts
- + December Special Session:
 - + Governor & GA Leaders Agree cut spending by \$350 million
- + Still in Budget Deficit for Current Fiscal Year
 - + \$266 million
- + Budget Deficit for Next Biennial will Top a Billion Dollars (Again)
- + Annual budget deficits are becoming the new normal

2016 Legislative Timeline

- + Short Session
 - + February 3rd to May 4th
- + Just 6 ½ weeks left in the 2016 session
- + By April 1st all Committees will hit their deadline
- + 4 weeks to:
 - + make budget adjustments
 - + 1,115 bills (642 House & 473 Senate)
 - + Deal with hundreds of Amendments

General Assembly by the Numbers

- + 187 Members of the General Assembly
- + 151 Members of the House of Representatives
 - + 86 Democrats (1 vacancy)
 - + 64 Republicans
- + 36 Members of State Senate
 - + 21 Democrats
 - + 15 Republicans

Key Legislative Players



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Leaders of the General Assembly

+ **Speaker of the House**

+ J. Brendan Sharkey (Hamden)

+ **House Majority Leader**

+ Joe Aresimowicz (Berlin & Southington)

+ **House Minority Leader**

+ Themis Klarides (Derby, Orange & Woodbridge)

Leaders of the General Assembly

+ **President Pro Tempore**

+ Martin Looney (Hamden, New Haven & North Haven)

+ **Senate Majority Leader**

+ Robert Duff (Darien & Norwalk)

+ **Senate Minority Leader**

+ Len Fasano (Durham, East Haven, North Haven & Wallingford)

Key Committees

- + 24 Legislative Committees
 - + Transportation
 - + Banking
 - + Government Administration & Elections
 - + Planning & Development
 - + Finance Revenue & Bonding

Committee Leaders

+ Banking Committee

- + Sen. Gary Winfield (New Haven)
- + Rep. Matt Lesser (Durham & Middletown)
- + Sen. Henri Martin (Bristol, Harwinton, Plainville, Plymouth & Thomaston)
- + Rep. Bill Simanski (Barkhamstead, Hartland, Granby & New Hartford)

+ Transportation Committee

- + Sen. Carlo Leone (Darien & Stamford) – Vice Chair
- + Rep. Tony Guerrera (Newington, Rocky Hill & Wethersfield)
- + Sen. Toni Boucher (Bethel, New Canaan, Redding, Ridgefield, Weston, Westport & Wilton)
- + Rep. Tom O’Dea (New Canaan & Wilton)

Committee Leaders

+ Planning & Development Committee

- + Sen. Cathy Osten (Columbia, Franklin, Hebron, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Marlborough, Montville, Norwich & Sprague)
- + Rep. Phil Miller (Chester, Deep River, Essex & Haddam)
- + Sen. Art Linares (Chester, Clinton, Colchester, Deep River, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Hampton, Lyme, Old Saybrook, Portland & Westbrook)
- + Rep. Bill Aman (South Windsor)

+ Government Administration & Election Committee

- + Sen. Steve Cassano (Andover, Bolton, Glastonbury & Manchester)
- + Rep. Ed Jutila (East Lyme & Salem)
- + Sen. McLachlan (Bethel, Danbury, New Fairfield & Sherman)
- + Rep. Richard Smith (Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford & Sherman)

Committee Leaders

+ Finance Revenue & Bonding Committee

- + Sen. John Fonfara (Hartford & Wethersfield)
- + Rep. Jeff Berger (Waterbury)
- + Sen. Scott Frantz (Greenwich, New Canaan & Stamford)
- + Rep. Chris Davis (East Windsor & Ellington)

Legislation of Interest



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Registration of Delinquent MV

- + **HB 5055 – An Act Decreasing Wait Times at the DMV**
 - + Introduced by Governor Malloy
 - + Referred to the Transportation Committee
 - + Public Hearing on Feb. 29th
 - + Approved by Transportation on 3/15
- + In order to shorten lines at the DMV the Governor proposed a change to permit individuals to register MV without paying property tax.
- + Transportation deleted those sections from the bill.

Interest Rate on Property Taxes

- + **SB 91 – An Act Concerning the Interest Rate on Delinquent Property Taxes**
 - + Introduced by the Planning & Development Committee
 - + Public Hearing on February 19th
 - + P&D has until Monday, March 21st to act
- + Seeks to give municipalities the local option to charge an interest rate between 10 and 18 percent per annum.

Lien Assignments

- + **SB 409 – An Act Concerning the Assignment of Certain Liens & Expanding Homeowner Protections Under the Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program**
 - + Introduced by the Banking Committee
 - + Public Hearing on March 8th
 - + Merged into SB 408

- + The bill would:
 - + Prohibit the assigning of tax liens of \$5,000 or less.
 - + Cap attorney fees
 - + Define the rights & responsibilities associated with tax liens
 - + Expand the emergency mortgage assistance program

Interest Rates for Delinquent Homeowners

+ **SB 408 – An Act Concerning the Protection of Delinquent Homeowners**

- + Introduced by the Banking Committee
- + Public Hearing on March 8
- + SB 409 Merged into this bill

+ This bill:

- + Would create a lower rate of interest on delinquent real estate taxes during the term of a judicial foreclosure by a municipality.
- + Eliminate the interest accrual entirely upon the assignment of real estate liens to a third party.
- + Lowers the interest rate to 8-percent for all delinquency.

Privatization of DMV Functions

- + HB 5055 – An Act Decreasing Wait Times at the DMV**
 - + Introduced by the Governor
 - + Referred to Transportation Committee

- + SB 256 – An Act Establishing a Task Force to Study the Performance of Certain Limited DMV Functions by Town Clerks**
 - + Introduced by GAE Committee (Sen. Cassano)

- + HB 5041 – An Act Concerning the Privatization of DMV**
 - + Introduced by Republicans
 - + Referred to Transportation Committee

Grassroots Communication



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"A Tiny Ripple of Hope"

- + "Each time a person stands up for an ideal . . . they send forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of resistance."

Legislators Care About Your Opinion

- + They are elected by YOU!
- + Who do legislators listen to:
 - + Their constituents
 - + Community Leaders
 - + Experts & Leaders
 - + Donors
 - + Their Social Network
 - + Kids, School, Religious Organizations, Family, Clubs & Professional or Civic Organizations
 - + Lobbyist

Best Way to Communicate

- + Face to Face
- + Telephone – Home or Capitol
- + E-mail
- + Social Media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- + Personal Letter
- + Form Letter or Postcard
- + Petition
- + Failure to Communicate is Not an Option

Your 'Elevator' Speech

Verbal or Written Communication

- + Your Name. Your Organization. I'm a constituent.
- + What is the Issue. Note the Bill Number.
- + Make it Personal – Why is it Important to You.
- + **The Ask** – Vote for, co-sponsor or introduce . . .
- + Thank them and Outline Next Steps
- + Follow-up with Note or Email to Confirm and Politely Remind them of their commitment

Do's & Don'ts for Advocacy

- + Be clear about what you want them to do for you.
- + Don't be afraid to ask them to take action.
- + Always be polite and respectful.
- + Be organized & prepared. Bring supporting documents.
- + Be concise & to the point. Respectful of their time.
- + Don't be all business. A little chit-chat can be a good icebreaker.

Do's & Don'ts for Advocacy (cont'd)

- + Know with whom you are speaking. Read their bio.
- + Do your homework on the elected official.
 - + Have they supported or sponsored our legislation in the past? If so, start of the meeting by thanking them.
 - + Are they on key committees?
- + Don't waste an opportunity to interact.
- + Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know the answer." But get back to them with the answer.

Do's & Don'ts for Advocacy (cont'd)

- + Get to know your state legislators before you need them in a crisis.
 - + Volunteer on their campaigns.
 - + Host a neighborhood event.
 - + Invite them to your office for coffee and to meet your staff
- + But don't hesitate to call them in a crisis
- + Frequent and various types of contact with your legislators works. Build a relationship where they call upon you.
- + Never waste an opportunity. Create opportunities.

Public Hearing Testimony



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Delivering Testimony

- + Keep your verbal remarks to 3 minutes.
- + Best if you summarize your written testimony.
- + Written testimony can be as long as necessary to convey your message. Written testimony should be submitted to committee to be part of the record.
- + Thank the chairs, ranking members and committee members for the opportunity to testify.
- + At the beginning identify yourself, your organization and what legislation you're speaking on.

Delivering Testimony (cont'd)

- + Coordinate your testimony with others in your organization. It's important not to be repetitive.
- + Use the question & answer portion of testimony to cover key points more thoroughly.
- + You know your subject matter better than legislators. View testimony as an opportunity to teach them.
- + It's OK to say you don't know the answer to a question. Follow-up is important.

Find Your Legislator



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How You Can Help

- + Contact Your Legislator
- + General Assembly website: cga.ct.gov
- + Click on "Find Your Legislator"
- + Google "CT Find Your Legislator"
- + Provide Street Address & Town
- + Legislator Contact Information

Legislative Alerts



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Legislative Alerts

- + Occur at Key Points During the Session
- + Need to Act Before COB
- + Use the Messages in Alert to Craft Your Message
- + Multiply Your Numbers – co-workers, family & friends
- + Tell CTx Leadership About Your Response

Questions?

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