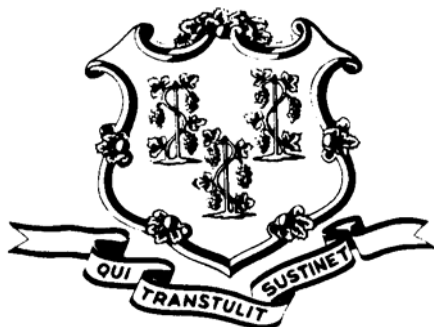


**CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COMMISSION ON
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**



***ANNUAL REPORT FOR
FISCAL YEAR
2007 - 08***

A multi-jurisdictional agency of Connecticut state government

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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 contained 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, the Undersecretary of the Intergovernmental Policy Division (IGP) of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), and a former First Selectman of Killingworth. He is also a former Chairman of the Lower Connecticut Valley Selectman's Association, and 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.

The day-to-day operations of the Commission are run by Richard Van Ausdall. Mr. Van Ausdall has professional experience as a

budget analyst with OPM and currently serves that Office as a Director of Policy Development. Commission Research Analyst Brian E. West has professional experience with the General Assembly and the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council.

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 five-six times a year, at which staff work is reviewed, issues and potential recommendations are debated, and direction is given on future Commission activities. Also, the Commission continues to make use of 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.

COMMISSION BUDGET

ACIR projects are supported by the Office of Policy and Management's operating budget. OPM provides the staffing and office space for the Commission within the Intergovernmental Policy Division.

FY 2007-08 COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

NEW STATE MANDATES ON MUNICIPALITIES REPORT - 2008

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 2008 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 is scheduled for Commission action in September 2008.

In 2008, the Legislature adopted eleven bills that ACIR considered more than minimal mandates; this is two more than in 2007. The eleven mandates adopted in this legislative session represents the most mandates adopted in one year since the ACIR started reporting these activities in 1995. The three minimal mandates are nine less than in 2007. This is the lowest number of minimal mandates since 2003. One of the long-standing objectives of the Commission has been the reduction of existing state mandates that will result in various levels of administrative and/or fiscal relief for municipalities. During the 2008 session, the legislature enacted fourteen mandate reductions, the highest number since ACIR started collecting this information. These bills include P.A. 08-43 *An Act Concerning Continuation of Water Liens*, which extends from one year to two years the time a lien for delinquent municipal water rates and charges runs before it must be continued by filing a certificate with the town clerk; and P.A. 08-160 *An Act Concerning School Learning Environment*, which extends from July 1, 2008 to July 1, 2009, the implementation date of the mandate requiring all school suspensions to be in-school suspensions.

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 an update containing those statutory mandates changed in the previous legislative session, as well as any regulatory changes made during the year. In January 2008, the Commission published the report entitled: *A Compendium Of Statutory & Regulatory Mandates On Municipalities In Connecticut: 2008 Supplement*. (See Publications section of this report.)

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

Each year, the ACIR selects topics for a major research project. In fiscal year 2008 the Commission agreed to do a major study concerning the future fiscal challenges facing both the State and the municipalities. The study will examine the overall problem, make conclusions and possibly make recommendations to the legislature. The Commission surveyed municipalities and found healthcare costs as the foremost concern of respondees. The Commission will hold a symposium, with a targeted date for Spring of 2009.

2007-08 PUBLICATIONS

***STATE MANDATES ON
MUNICIPALITIES:
ACTIONS IN 2007***

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 adopted by the General Assembly.

This report noted that there were 45 public acts that contained some type of mandate including twenty-three that the Commission considered significant, ten that were considered minimal mandates and twelve that were mandates directed at all employers, including municipalities. The report also commented on the four public acts that eliminated or reduced mandates in 2007.

***MUNICIPAL BUDGET
ADOPTION EXPERIENCES IN
CONNECTICUT 2007-08***

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. The budgets for five had not been adopted when the report was published.

Among the results of the 2007-08 survey are the following: 73 municipalities adopted their budget by means of a referendum; 14 municipalities required 4 or more ballots to adopt a budget, six more than in the previous year. Twenty municipalities required 2 or 3 ballots to adopt their budget, the fewest number since 2000. The 133 municipalities that adopted their budgets on the first vote are the most since 140 municipalities did it in 2001. Seventeen municipalities did not adopt a budget until after the July 1 start of the new fiscal year, with the exception of 2003, the highest number since 1996.

For the third year in a row all seventeen of the regional school districts adopted their budgets by means of a referendum, the first time this has happened since the Commission started keeping this

information. Fourteen of the seventeen districts adopted their budgets on the first ballot, down from the previous year, but still more than every year since 2000 and only one district adopted its budget after July 1, the same as last year.

This was the Commission's eighteenth year in surveying 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 2008 Supplement included all the new statutory and regulatory mandates that were adopted in 2007.