



The M.O.R.E. Commission, originally chaired by then-Representative Brendan Sharkey in 2010, has been recreated this session as a bi-partisan, bi-cameral commission, chaired by now-Speaker of the House Sharkey with helping municipalities find opportunities and efficiencies through regional cooperation. The commission is comprised of four working groups: Municipal Taxation, Board of Education, Regional Entities, and Mandate Relief.

FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY WITHIN OUR TAX SYSTEM

The Municipal Taxation working group looked closely at how our tax system works and how it can be improved. Recommendations from the working group emphasized the need to lessen the reliance of municipalities on the car tax. The working group also makes recommendations for greater transparency in municipal tax bills.

IDENTIFYING AND ENHANCING EDUCATION EFFICIENCIES

The Board of Education working group recommends the creation of a common school-year calendar in order to regionally reduce costs. The working group also recommends the creation of a task force to look at the savings that can be realized by utilizing alternative fuel sources on school bus fleets, and study the potential savings of creating a state-wide health insurance pool for school districts or bus drivers.

MANDATE RELIEF FOR TOWNS

The Mandate working group supports the removal of the mandate that requires the newspaper publication of public notices and changes to the notification of sewer and water lines. They also recommend continuing to explore removing or lessening existing mandates on municipalities.

REGIONALIZING TO SAVE TOWNS MONEY AND PROVIDE BETTER SERVICES

The Regional Entities working group recommends connecting every municipality in the state to the existing Nutmeg Network, a statewide, fiber-optic infrastructure expands the availability of high-speed networking. The working group also recommends normalizing regional service boundaries across administrative agencies.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The M.O.R.E. Commission's recommendations will be contained in four bills:

HB 5102 - An Act Providing an Exemption from Property Tax for Motor Vehicles

- The phase out of our current motor vehicle tax system. The phase-out, beginning July 1, 2014, creates an 80 mill ceiling for towns in regards to motor vehicle taxes. The next year the ceiling drops to 72 mills, then 10 mills every consecutive year until the car tax is eliminated.
- Changes in the classification of antique and classic cars.
- Creates the Municipal Reimbursement and Revenue Account to assist municipalities.
- Allows and encourages municipalities to bifurcate their municipal tax bills.
- Creates a tax incidence study
- Creates a land value taxation pilot

HB 6629 - An Act Concerning Regionalism in Connecticut

- Creates a common school calendar that will be created by the Commissioner of Education and be administered by RESC district.
- Creates a task force that will research the use of alternative fuel and alternative energy school busses to replace the current diesel school busses and save school districts money.
- Creates 5 Master Planning Organizations (MPO's) state-wide.
- Connects town halls, major municipal facilities and COG's to the Nutmeg Network.
- Studies the creation of a statewide health insurance pool for school districts or bus companies to enroll drivers in.
- Commissions a report by CT DOT to provide suggested guidelines and a process relating to the new MPO structure

HB 5267 – An Act Concerning the Regional Delivery of Human Services

- Re-aligns DSS, DCF, DDS and DMHAS service boundaries
- Establishes regional human service coordination councils

SB 1113 – An Act Eliminating Certain Municipal Mandates

- Eliminates mandate on public notices in newspapers
- Studies the feasibility of Connecticut adopting the Massachusetts Sub-Filed Bid Laws
- Studies adjusting Connecticut's prevailing wage thresholds
- Studies CCM's MBR proposal as a pilot program and looks at allowing district performance as a criterion for MBR changes.