



NEW HARTFORD

A TOWN FOR ALL SEASONS

Daniel V. Jerram
First Selectman

March 2, 2026

RE: Public Hearing Testimony for Increased ECS Funding - HB 5002 & SB7

To Whom it May Concern:

I support the efforts of those in the Connecticut General Assembly who aspire to improve the education of our children. For far too long, our state's leaders have ignored their responsibilities and provided nominal ECS funds to the vast majority of our Connecticut municipalities while the larger cities in Connecticut have taken the lion's share of annual increases to ECS funding.

ECS funding for the Town of New Hartford was \$3,145,486 in 2010. Fifteen years later (2025), ECS grant funding was \$2,924,674, a **REDUCTION** of seven (7) percent over the term, **while our education budgets have increased** over 35% due to unfunded state mandates like the minimum budget requirement (MBR), binding arbitration, special education and increased graduation requirements. This lack of State support illustrates a fundamental lack of understanding of how municipal budgeting works and is the primary reason why local property taxes in Connecticut have skyrocketed and our State has become unaffordable to so many working-class families.

Both HB 5002 & SB7 seek to improve the "foundation grant" of ECS that currently is \$11,500 per student. HB 5002 seeks to increase the funding annually through inflation adjustments (tracked through increases in personal income or inflation). SB 7 seeks to increase funding \$1,000 annually to \$15,500 in Fiscal Year 2030 with inflation adjustments applied thereafter. This is a noble effort, yet incomplete to address the entirety of the problem. What's missing within the proposed legislation is the fundamental understanding that most communities don't receive anywhere near the current "foundation grant" of \$11,500 per student! New Hartford's grant allocation currently equates to roughly \$3,500 per student which is just a small portion of the overall cost of educating students (average cost per student in 2025 was roughly \$27,500 per student)!

To effect positive change for all, both HB 5002 and SB 7 need to be amended to include one basic change that will benefit all communities. The legislation needs to include a statement that "under no circumstance shall any Municipality receive less than 100% of the foundation grant per student in any given year".

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel V. Jerram
New Hartford First Selectman
Chairman – Northwest Hills Council of Governments



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