

**CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COMMISSION ON
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**



***ANNUAL REPORT FOR
FISCAL YEAR
2008 - 09***

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.

Administrative support for the day-to-day operations of the Commission is provided by Bruce

Wittchen of OPM's Intergovernmental Policy Division.

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.

FY 2008-09 COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

NEW STATE MANDATES ON MUNICIPALITIES REPORT - 2009

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 2009 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 was adopted by the Commission in September 2009. Note that the report and the following data do not include the results of the General Assembly's September Special Session. Those results will be included in the 2009-2010 report and in the upcoming 2010 Compendium of Statutory & Regulatory Mandates Report.

In 2009, the Legislature adopted twelve bills that ACIR considered more than minimal mandates; this is one more than in 2008. The twelve mandates adopted in this legislative session represents the most mandates adopted in one year since the ACIR started reporting these activities in 1995. The six minimal mandates are three more than in 2008, which had been 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 2009 session, the legislature enacted eleven mandate reductions. That was three fewer than in 2008, which was the highest number since ACIR started collecting this information. These bills include PA 09-60, *An Act Concerning A Municipal Option To Delay Revaluations, A Program Allowing Regional Revaluations, And The Repeal Of The Municipal Option To Make Annual Adjustments In Property Values*, which allows municipalities to delay revaluation; those towns phasing in assessment increases to suspend the phase-ins for up to two years until 2011; and also allows a postponement of a revaluation to

allow two or more towns who will be doing joint revaluations to synchronize their revaluation schedules.

***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 2009, the Commission published the report entitled: *A Compendium Of Statutory & Regulatory Mandates On Municipalities In Connecticut: 2009 Supplement*. (See Publications section of this report.)

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

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 Commission surveyed municipalities and found healthcare costs as the foremost concern of respondees. The Commission intended to hold a symposium in Spring, 2009, but it was deferred due to budgetary considerations.

2008-09 PUBLICATIONS

STATE MANDATES ON MUNICIPALITIES: ACTIONS IN 2009

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.

MUNICIPAL BUDGET ADOPTION EXPERIENCES IN CONNECTICUT 2009-10

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.

Among the results of the 2009-10 survey are the following: 72 municipalities adopted their budget by means of a referendum; no municipalities required more than three ballots to adopt a budget, as compared to six in the previous year. Nineteen municipalities required 2 or 3 ballots to adopt their budget, one less than in 2008, which had been the fewest number since 2000. The 149 municipalities adopted their budgets on the first vote, 16 more than 2008, which had been the most since 140 municipalities did it in 2001. Three municipalities did not adopt a budget until after the July 1 start of the new fiscal year, fourteen fewer than 2008, which, with the exception of 2003, had been the highest number since 1996. Only one town had not yet adopted by the time the report was published

For the first time since 2004, some of the regional school districts (two) adopted their budgets by means of a district meeting instead of by

referendum. Fifteen of the seventeen districts adopted their budgets on the first ballot, matching the highest level this decade and every district adopted its budget before July 1, for the first time since 2000.

This was the Commission's nineteenth 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 2009 Supplement included all the new statutory and regulatory mandates that were adopted in 2008.