



**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATE**

**SENATOR TONI BOUCHER**  
TWENTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 3701  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591  
CAPITOL: (860) 240-0465  
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1421  
E-MAIL: [Toni.Boucher@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Toni.Boucher@cga.ct.gov)  
WEBSITE: [www.SenatorBoucher.com](http://www.SenatorBoucher.com)

**CHIEF DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER**

**RANKING MEMBER**  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**  
FINANCE, REVENUE & BONDING COMMITTEE  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Testimony Before the Spending Cap Commission

By Senator Toni Boucher

October 13, 2016

Good afternoon, distinguished members of the Spending Cap Commission, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The spending cap was envisioned as a balance to the adoption of the state income tax, and an important factor in limiting state spending. Although, overwhelming majority of Connecticut voters approved its adoption, the spending cap has failed to appreciably limit the expansion of government. The growth of state expenditures has vastly exceeded the growth of personal income. The lack of enforceable definitions necessary to implement the cap has effectively allowed the state to ignore the financial restraints that the people of Connecticut placed upon it.

The commission has done deeply important work in rectifying this oversight and developing two of these necessary definitions. Defining "Increase in Personal Income" and "Increase in Inflation" will be instrumental in providing a more realistic sense of how much the people of the state will be able to pay toward the operation of their government.

The third definition (General Budget Expenditures), which the commission has yet to adopt, will prove to be the most crucial. The success of the spending cap as a means of limiting the growth of state government depends on the spending items that fall under its purview. In order for the spending cap to be effective, it must give a true and inclusive account of state spending. Exempting items such as state employee pension contributions would undermine the cap's effectiveness and continue the tradition of irresponsibility that has defined Connecticut's financial state for decades. I hope that the commission to adopt a definition of general budget expenditures that is comprehensive and gives a complete and realistic account of all the money that the state spends. When considering this definition, is equally critical that the legislature not be allowed to move what was once an expenditure included under the cap to bonding, or fund it with a revenue intercept for the purpose of undermining the cap's integrity.

The future of Connecticut depends to a great extent on whether we are able to impose greater financial discipline on state government. Many citizens have already reacted to the ongoing cycle of budget crises followed by tax increases by relocating their families and businesses to more tax friendly states. I urge the commission members to remember the impact of Connecticut's precarious fiscal condition on its residents, and to recognize the critical need for the state to implement a spending cap that is strong and enforceable.

Thank you for your time and consideration.