



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
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October 21, 2021

Senator Cathy Osten
Co-Chair, Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Representative Toni E. Walker
Co-Chair, Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2702
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Senator Osten and Representative Walker:

The allegations of improper and fraudulent use of COVID-19 relief funds in West Haven are alarming and infuriating. The alleged criminal activity also raises serious questions about the lack of protections put into place by Governor Ned Lamont's administration in overseeing the distribution of federal COVID-19 relief funds.

The legislature's Appropriations Committee must immediately turn their attention to safeguarding COVID-19 relief funding. Therefore, we request that the committee hold a public hearing next week to seek answers from the Governor's administration and the Office of Policy and Management on the process and protections currently in place overseeing the distribution of relief funds.

The people of Connecticut had no choice but to trust that the Governor's administration would create a system to properly distribute and safeguard these funds intended to help residents and communities recover during one of the most challenging times of a generation. To learn that the system in place did not protect against the alleged theft of more than half the funds awarded to a town in need is deeply troubling. It demands the immediate attention of the legislature, the representatives of the people.

It is unacceptable for government to suggest that current protocols are sufficient because this problem has now come to light. We must have a system that prevents against the misuse of the funds in the first place, not one that acts only after an FBI investigation of alleged wrongdoing and the loss of over \$600,000. Disturbingly, people in need in West Haven lost hundreds of thousands of dollars of relief. We cannot allow that to happen to another community in need, and therefore must act to protect these relief funds designed to help individuals, families, and communities hurting from the pandemic.

We have sent a letter to Office of Policy and Management (attached) with multiple questions that we believe would be most appropriately answered during a public hearing before the legislature's Appropriations Committee.

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Public trust has been shattered by these allegations. We are talking about funding that was intended to help the most vulnerable, to provide immediate aid to those struggling, to keep our communities safe and healthy, and to help people rebuild and recover. We need answers and full transparency from the Governor's administration. We have a long road ahead to rebuild trust.

Sincerely,



Senator Kevin C. Kelly
Senate Republican Leader



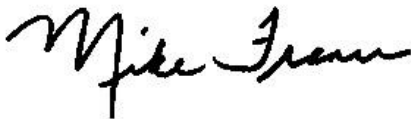
Representative Vincent Candelora
House Republican Leader



Senator Paul M. Formica
Senate Republican Leader Pro Tempore



Senator Craig Miner
Appropriations Committee, Ranking Member



Representative Mike France
Appropriations Committee, Ranking Member