



OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

Michael R. Criss
First Selectman, Town of Harwinton
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
February 21st, 2024

Good afternoon, my name is Michael R. Criss, I am the First Selectman for the Town of Harwinton and I am submitting testimony regarding H.B. 5173 "Online Publication of Legal Notices by Municipalities".

H.B. 5173 "Online Publication of Legal Notices by Municipalities".

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and submit testimony on proposed "Online Publication of Legal Notices by Municipalities". The Town of Harwinton is in support of H.B. 5173.

H.B.- 5173 will save municipalities time and money by allowing required legal notices to be posted on municipal websites instead of print newspapers. In addition to reducing costs, posting the information on municipal websites will provide residents and businesses better access to this information because the information is more easily accessible, and the public has become accustomed to visiting municipal websites for information.

A single legal notice can cost a municipality a few hundred dollars to publish in a newspaper. Our town budgets \$ 5,400.00 per year for publishing legal notices, funds which could be put to much better use in our community.

There are 149 separate statutes requiring municipalities to publish legal notices in newspapers. Recognizing the savings and greater public accessibility associated with posting notices online, Connecticut has adopted legislation allowing various state agencies to post certain legal notices on their website rather than in newspapers. Why are municipalities not afforded the same option. In addition, the Connecticut court system now allows required legal notices to be published on its website, citing lower costs and the potential to reach a wider audience.

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Shifting publication of legal notices from print newspapers to websites has not created any issues or concerns in our communities because people have become accustomed to visiting their municipal website to obtain timely information. Also, our town has a town wide notification system in which all residents receive the same information.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in **support of H.B.- 5173**.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of H.B. 5173 on behalf of the Town of Harwinton. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Michael R. Criss
First Selectman, Town of Harwinton
Vice Chair, Northwest Hills Council of Governments
Legislative Chair, Northwest Hills Council of Governments

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