



Testimony on House Bill 6354 (an act concerning state contract assistance provide to certain municipalities)

Submitted by Scott Shepard, Policy Director

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Good afternoon. My name is Scott Shepard. I am the Policy & Research Director for the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, Connecticut's free-market think tank. I submit this note in support of **House Bill 6354**.

One of the fundamental tenets of the theory of representative government and a central principle of separation-of-powers doctrine is that the legislature must hold the purse strings. Connecticut has veered from that path by putting so much independent expenditure power in the hands of the executive branch, and by reducing its own authority by deeply unrepresentative dodges such as the "deemed approved" maneuver. This bill reverses that trend by returning oversight power for municipal debt-service agreements to the legislature. This is sound both doctrinally and practically, and we support it.

Additionally, we note with approval Governor Lamont's oft-repeated desire and intention to put Connecticut on a debt diet. As he indicated in his first budget address, he will need all the help he can get to resist the special interests, including municipalities, who support the debt diet in theory, but object to its practical application to their own pet projects. This bill provides legislative support to the governor in resisting and restricting these municipal blandishments, and in realizing his highly salutary debt diet. He deserves all the support and assistance he can get in that resolution.

For all of these reasons, we support **House Bill 6354**.