



*News from:*

## **COMPTROLLER KEVIN LEMBO**

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### **COMPTROLLER LEMBO APPLAUDS FINANCE COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADVANCE TRANSPARENCY IN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE**

Comptroller Kevin Lembo commended the General Assembly's Finance Committee for voting today in favor of his proposed legislation that will establish greater transparency surrounding the hundreds of millions in dollars invested every year in economic assistance programs.

Lembo said this action follows several weeks of negotiations with representatives from both within and outside of government, particularly representatives of the business community, in an effort to find common ground on this initiative.

House Bill 6566, An Act Concerning Transparency in Economic Assistance Programs, would establish a publicly accessible online database for information on state tax credit and economic assistance programs, and lay the framework for the state to plan to conduct tax incidence analysis reports to determine the impact of the state's tax policies throughout Connecticut.

"Policy cannot be developed in a vacuum – so it was imperative to bring all stakeholders to the table to find common ground," Lembo said. "After weeks of negotiation, this is a critical first step towards shining greater light on economic assistance programs, while also recognizing the needs of Connecticut businesses.

"I am grateful to the Finance Committee for confirming its support for greater public access to state financial information. We'll continue to work with interested parties to get this bill passed by the full General Assembly.

"As a state, we provide hundreds of millions of dollars in business assistance every year – in the form of loans, grants, tax credits and abatements," Lembo said. "In this environment we must make every effort to ensure that the dollars we invest to generate greater economic output are well spent – and I believe this legislation achieves that."

The bill would build on Lembo's transparency efforts on "Open Connecticut" ([www.osc.ct.gov/openct](http://www.osc.ct.gov/openct)), a website he recently launched to make state financial documents more publicly accessible.

This legislation does not favor or disfavor any particular economic assistance program, Lembo said. It would simply provide a vital mechanism to measure the success and value of these programs so that policy makers have the means to make informed investments.

Specifically, this bill will create a searchable database where the public can simply and easily perform searches to answer the questions:

- What industries are receiving economic incentives?
- How much they are receiving?
- What are the conditions of the assistance?
- What are the results of the state's investment in terms of jobs, economic impact and state revenue?

For statutory credits administered by the Department of Revenue Services, this information will be available by industry, for credits and economic assistance programs administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), the information will be available by individual entity.

"Providing this information to the public will improve the state's investment strategy," Lembo said. "Programs that are working will have accessible data to reinforce their value and programs that don't can be identified and the funds repurposed toward more productive uses."

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