



**James Berardino
Legislative Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Labor & Public Employees Committee
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The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) has concerns regarding **HB-5496, An Act Concerning Workplace Violence Protections for Utility and Public Works Employees.**

HB-5496 requires municipal employers to undertake a risk assessment to determine whether utility and public works employees are at risk of violence when dealing with the public. It also requires municipal employers to develop and implement a workplace violence prevention and response training program that meets the specifications outlined in the bill.

Municipalities recognize that worker safety is a top priority. As such, municipalities actively comply with Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration (OSHA) standards, including providing required training. These standards include provisions to help protect the safety of workers from hazards, such as workplace violence.

HB-5496 appears to duplicate this requirement, imposing overlapping and inconsistent obligations on employers and employees.

COST urges committee members to refrain from imposing any additional unfunded mandates on towns, particularly mandates that overlap with existing requirements.

Given rising costs associated with the delivery of critical services, small towns are working hard to control property tax levels. Unfunded mandates drive up municipal costs and place a greater burden on property taxpayers.

For these reasons, COST **opposes** HB-5496 as currently drafted.