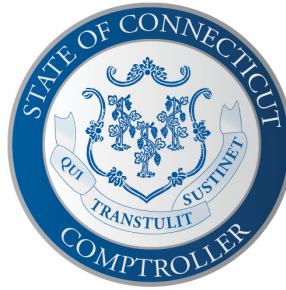


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STATE COMPTROLLER



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**Written Testimony  
Comptroller Kevin Lembo  
February 28, 2020**

**H.B. 5277 An Act Decreasing Fees for Copying Records Under the Freedom of Information Act**

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Senator Sampson, Representative France, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 5277 An Act Decreasing Fees for Copying Records Under the Freedom of Information Act.

Transparency and open government have been, and continue to be, key priorities for me as the State Comptroller. Access to public records and documents is a necessity for an open and honest government. To put these values to practice, my office established OpenConnecticut – an online hub of every checkbook, payroll and pension dollar that goes through the Core-CT system in real time. As I speak, we're also preparing to launch a new feature that will expand OpenConnecticut to include quasi-public agency checkbook and payroll expenditures. We do this because financial barriers to an open government are simply counterproductive to that mission.

Under H.B. 5277, constituents will no longer be forced to pay fees for using their phones to copy public records. Removing barriers to public record access is important for civic engagement and government oversight. This legislation also decreases the cost of copies from fifty cents to fifteen cents. While I believe there should be no charge at all, I also recognize the costs associated with providing printed copies and believe this is a step in the right direction.

Thank you to the chairs and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee for leading on this issue and for the opportunity to testify in favor of H.B. 5277.