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**Written Testimony  
Comptroller Kevin Lembo  
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**Concerning**

**H.B. 1031: An Act Concerning Thresholds for State Construction Contracts, the Sharing of Executive Branch Agency Data and the Repeal of a Provision Concerning Appraisal Fees**

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Senator McLachlan, Representative Devlin and members of the GAE Committee:

Thank you for raising this legislation and for the opportunity to show my support specifically for section 4 of HB 1031 An Act Concerning Thresholds for State Construction Contracts, the Sharing of Executive Branch Agency Data and the Repeal of a Provision Concerning Appraisal Fees. This section codifies Governor Malloy's Executive Order 39, which requires executive branch agencies to regularly publish data that is of high value to the public.

Since being elected Comptroller in 2010, I have stressed the need to increase and improve transparency in state government. In order to be responsive to Connecticut residents, we must ensure that the public has a clear view of government activities. Making raw data regarding state agency performance and operations available to the public increases accountability. Access to data allows third parties in the public, including journalists and academics, to review and critique government performance, resulting in a more efficient and responsive government.

Transparency in Connecticut state government has vastly improved in recent years. In 2009 the state received a C- in PIRG's annual "Follow the Money" state financial transparency ranking. In the most recent ranking (2016), Connecticut was one of only 5 states to receive an A+ grade.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the state has added an open data hub, data.ct.gov, where agencies publish raw data sets related to their operations. Codifying Executive Order 39 ensures that Connecticut will continue to build on the progress made in recent years to expand public access to government data.

Currently, under Executive Order 39, state agencies are required to publish data on the state's open data website and under the leadership of the state's Chief Data Officer, Tyler Kleycamp,

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<sup>1</sup> US PIRG, "Following the Money 2016"

<http://uspargedfund.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/USP%20FollowMoney16%20Report%20Apr16.pdf>

the site continues to expand with more and more high value datasets. Section 4 of this legislation would create a statutory requirement for that practice to continue. Codifying Executive Order 39 is important for two reasons: 1) it will ensure that the state's commitment to open data continues under future administrations; and 2) it places additional pressure on state agencies to comply with the requirements of regularly publishing high value data sets to the open data platform (to date compliance has been inconsistent across agencies).

I have a vested interest in ensuring the executive branch continues to support open data initiatives. The Comptroller's office initiated and maintains Open Connecticut – a centralized online hub for state financial data. It includes tools like OpenCheckbook, OpenBudget and OpenPayroll, which are built upon the state's open data platform. These applications take complex financial data and make it easy for users to search, study and export key state financial information. Codifying Executive Order 39 will help ensure the state's open data platform is maintained in the future.

Section 4 of this legislation affirms Connecticut's commitment to open government. It allows existing transparency efforts to evolve and grow, providing easy access to public data while increasing government accountability and responsiveness.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue and I hope that this concept will move forward through the legislative process and become law this year.