



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE SERVICES

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**Written Testimony of Mark D. Boughton
Appropriations Committee
Monday, February 22, 2021**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Mark D. Boughton, Commissioner designate of the Department of Revenue Services. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on budgetary funding for the next biennium.

The Department of Revenue Services (DRS) is well-run, efficient, and highly professional. I have also learned that the DRS role as state tax collector is just one of its many important contributions. In fact, I have been struck by the breadth and scope of work that draws upon agency expertise and resources.

Despite the extraordinary circumstances of the past year, DRS accomplished a great deal, including:

- To protect health and safety, DRS implemented remote work procedures – which remain in force – with no interruption in critical services, and no wait times for taxpayers who call the agency during business hours.
- To provide relief to Connecticut taxpayers in 2020 (for tax year 2019), DRS used its statutory authority to extend filing and payment deadlines for corporate, individual, and other state tax returns. The DRS continues to work with individual taxpayers and businesses who may be unable to meet their state tax obligations due to the impact of Covid-19.
- Last September, the agency successfully launched the first phase of a multi-year IT modernization initiative that is improving how we administer taxes, and how taxpayers interact with the agency. The launch was highlighted by a new, customer-facing tax filing and payment portal – **myconneCT** – which delivers user-friendly features such as mobile-friendly design and secure web messaging.

The agency remains focused on excellent customer service, fair and equitable tax administration, and voluntary taxpayer compliance. As Commissioner, I plan to listen, empower problem solving, and support a work environment that values inclusion and different perspectives, while keeping lines of communication open. I expect all of the professionals at DRS to share in these responsibilities.

I would like to thank Governor Lamont for the confidence demonstrated in his DRS budget proposal, and note the DRS path forward aligns with his vision to digitize state government services and improve the customer experience. The recommended allocation for the biennium positions the agency to maintain current staffing levels, flexibly adapt to tax changes, deploy innovative measures to drive compliance, and administer new programming, if adopted.

Budget funding also affirms the DRS commitment to data-driven management and execution, and leverages analytics to streamline compliance efforts, target and close tax gaps, and further build out fraud prevention capability. Use of analytics in tax administration is not a frontier; it is here now. Neighboring tax jurisdictions, as well as the Internal Revenue Service, have all invested recently in both powerful data tools and staff to deploy them.

Strategic investments in people and technology, a commitment to improvement, and our ongoing, relentless effort to automate internal processes will allow DRS to best serve taxpayers and support the State of Connecticut, while ensuring operational continuity as more DRS professionals near retirement.

The DRS looks forward to contributing to budget deliberations during the 2021 session, and will be happy to provide additional information as needed to further inform the work of the committee and subcommittees. Thank you.