

# COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS AND MANDATORY PROPORTIONAL VOTING

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Office of Policy and Management

## Introduction

Section 116 of Public Act 16-3 of the 2016 May Special Session required the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to conduct a study to determine if:

- (1) each member of a regional council of governments, having a population of fifty thousand or more, as shown by the last preceding United States census, should be entitled to one additional representative on the council for each additional ten thousand inhabitants;
- (2) each additional representative should be appointed by the chief executive officer of such member or in the manner provided by ordinance of the legislative body of such member; and,
- (3) each additional representative of a member should be entitled to one vote in the affairs of such council.

The findings of this study have been compiled in this report and are hereby submitted to the Planning and Development Committee in accordance with this section.

This report includes a brief description of the way in which regional Councils of Governments (COGs) currently operate, as well as a summary of their history in Connecticut. In preparation for this report, OPM compiled an inventory of COG bylaws and conducted a survey of COGs. COGs were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. How would any potential increase in the number of representatives affect the council's ability to achieve a quorum and to conduct its business?
2. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it optional for your council to allow additional representatives, based on each member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, for what types of purposes do you think that option might be utilized?
3. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it mandatory for your council to allow additional representatives, based on the member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, do you think it would have an effect on the council's overall membership going forward?
4. Given the uncertain role of COGs in the future construct of Connecticut's MPOs, how might either the optional or mandatory scenario from questions 2 and 3 above influence (or not) MPO governance?
5. In your opinion, will existing or potential future regional shared services efforts be affected positively or negatively by either scenarios 2 or 3 above, relative to the current one member, one vote requirement?

Responses to this survey are included in Appendix A of this report. All of the responses received by OPM indicated that COGs, including those who would not be directly affected by the mandatory

proportional voting proposal, were not in favor of mandatory proportional voting as described in PA 16-3. The issues identified by the COGs are discussed further in this report, but the concerns were consistent. Those concerns about the mandatory proportional voting proposal all related to the ability to achieve consensus, and the potential for alienating smaller towns in the region. Outside of written responses solicited from COGs, the City of Stamford shared oral comments of its experience and favorable view of the proposal with OPM staff.

### **Councils of Government: History, Current Operations**

Authorized in 1971, COGs carry out the planning duties and responsibilities for the region. These responsibilities include preparing the required plan of conservation and development and reviewing certain zoning matters. At the time of authorization, COGs were one of three types of legislatively authorized governance structures for regional planning organizations. Subsequently, Section 250 of Public Act 13-247 required each regional planning agency previously formed under CGS Chapter 127 and each regional council of elected officials formed under CGS Section 4-124c through 4-124h to restructure as a COG under C.G.S. 4-124i to 4-124p by January 1, 2015.

Today, COGs exist in each of the state's nine planning regions, and are authorized to perform any service, activity or function that a political subdivision of the state is authorized to perform. COG membership is as follows:

1. *Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG – 38 members)*: Andover, Avon, Berlin, Bloomfield, Bolton, Canton, Columbia, Coventry, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Mansfield, Marlborough, New Britain, Newington, Plainville, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, South Windsor, Southington, Stafford, Suffield, Tolland, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Willington, Windsor, Windsor Locks
2. *Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments (MetroCOG – 6 members)*: Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford, Trumbull
3. *Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG – 17 members)*: Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook
4. *Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG – 19 members)*: Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethlehem, Bristol, Cheshire, Derby, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Oxford, Plymouth, Prospect, Seymour, Shelton, Southbury, Thomaston, Waterbury, Watertown, Wolcott, Woodbury
5. *Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG – 16 members)*: Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sterling, Thompson, Union, Voluntown, Woodstock
6. *Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG – 21 members)*: Barkhamsted, Burlington, Canaan, Colebrook, Cornwall, Goshen, Hartland, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, New Hartford, Norfolk, North Canaan, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, Washington, Winchester
7. *South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG – 15 members)*: Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, Woodbridge

8. *Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SECCOG – 22 members\*)*: Bozrah, Colchester, East Lyme, Franklin, Griswold, Town of Groton, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Preston, Salem, Sprague, Stonington, Waterford, Windham (\*includes the City of Groton, Jewett City and Stonington Borough, which are also voting members. The Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Tribal nations are also represented, but are non-voting.)
9. *Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WCCOG – 18 members)*: Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Norwalk, Redding, Ridgefield, Sherman, Stamford, Weston, Westport, Wilton

C.G.S. Sec. 4-124k requires only one representative from each municipality on the council. It states:

“Each member of a regional council of governments shall be entitled to one representative on the council who shall be the chief elected official of such member, or in the absence of any such chief elected official, an elected official appointed in the manner provided by ordinance of the legislative body of such member. Each representative of a member shall be entitled to one vote in the affairs of such council.”

The only exception to the single seat provision is the City of Hartford, which was allowed to have three additional seats on the CRCOG Policy Board via Special Act 73-79. There is no record of Hartford ever using its three additional seats to vote in the affairs of the council.

As illustrated above, the number of member municipalities varies greatly among COGs. Accordingly, the level and breadth of services provided by COGs varies across the state. While their membership and services offered varies, all COGs share similarities in the way in which they operate.

COGs typically do not move forward on a project or proposal unless and until there is consensus from its member municipalities. Throughout the survey responses offered by COGs, the ability to achieve consensus was a top priority. According to the COGs, without consensus, they would have no authority to act on behalf of a region.

COG membership is not required of municipalities, and a COG can cease to exist if its membership falls below 60% of eligible members. CGS Sec. 4-124j states:

“Within any planning region of the state a regional council of governments may be created by the adoption of sections 4-124i to 4-124p, inclusive, by ordinance of the legislative bodies of not less than sixty per cent of all towns, cities and boroughs within such planning region entitled to membership on such council as hereinafter provided. All towns, cities and boroughs within a planning region shall be entitled to membership on such council, including any city or borough with boundaries not coterminous with the boundaries of the town in which it is located. Any nonmember town, city or borough entitled to membership may join the council by the adoption of said sections by ordinance of its legislative body. Any member town, city or borough may withdraw from the council by adoption of an appropriate ordinance of its legislative body to become effective on the date of such adoption; provided, however, that any such withdrawing member shall be obligated to pay its pro rata share of expenses of operation and pro rata share of funds committed by the council to active programs as of such date of withdrawal.”

Responses from the COGs indicated that equality among members is a draw for smaller towns. As one COG response noted, “Equally weighted voting...foster[s] respect and mutual collaboration among all

municipal leaders.” COG responses consistently identified collaboration and respect as essential to achieving the consensus required for COGs to operate.

**Question 1: Should each member of a regional council of governments, having a population of fifty thousand or more, as shown by the last preceding United States census, be entitled to one additional representative on the council for each additional ten thousand inhabitants?**

With regard to the first requirement of this study, if each member municipality having a population of fifty thousand or more were entitled to one additional representative for each additional ten thousand inhabitants, the hypothetical change in representation for each COG would be as follows:

- CRCOG (38 members/48 representatives – Hartford +7; New Britain +2; West Hartford +1)
- MetroCOG (6 members/15 representatives – Bridgeport +9)
- NECCOG (16 members/16 representatives)
- NHCOG (21 members/21 representatives)
- NVCOG (19 members/26 representatives – Bristol +1; Waterbury +6)
- RiverCOG (17 members/17 representatives)
- SCRCOG (15 members/24 representatives – Hamden +1; Meriden +1; New Haven +7)
- SECCOG (22 members/22 representatives)
- WestCOG (18 members/32 representatives – Danbury +3; Greenwich +1; Norwalk +3; Stamford +7)

(**Note** – a municipality must have a population of at least 60,000 to be entitled to an additional representative for each additional 10,000 inhabitants over 50,000)

The proposed change would add members to CRCOG, MetroCOG, NVCOG, SCRCOG, and WestCOG, whereas NECCOG, NHCOG, RiverCOG and SECCOG would be unaffected. CRCOG would gain seven new representatives from Hartford, two from New Britain, and one from West Hartford. MetroCOG would see nine new representatives from Bridgeport. NVCOG would add one representative from Bristol, and six from Waterbury. SCRCOG would gain one additional representative from Hamden, one from Meriden, and seven from New Haven. Finally, WestCOG would see three new representatives from Danbury, one from Greenwich, three from Norwalk, and seven from Stamford.

These additional representatives would change the makeup of affected COGs. For example, MetroCOG has six member municipalities. This change would give Bridgeport an additional nine representatives, more representatives than the entirety of the current COG membership. WestCOG has 18 member municipalities. With this change, two of its members (Norwalk and Stamford) would make up nearly a third of its representatives.

COG responses to the survey questions indicated that a mandatory increase in the number of representatives would pose logistical and administrative challenges. COGs responded that if additional representatives were required on the council, they would find it difficult to achieve a quorum in order to conduct business and provide sufficient staff support. Budgetary concerns were also raised. In their

survey responses, COGs revealed that in order to support the mandatory increase in representatives, staff time and resources would have to be reallocated, and direct services to municipalities could suffer.

COGs are membership organizations of municipal CEOs. In theory, municipal CEOs will always act in the interest of the municipality as a whole. Increased representatives would require the membership to expand to other municipal or civic leaders, who may not have the same overall interests as the leader of the municipality. These diverging interests could potentially lead to diverging votes on critical issues. COGs were concerned about the ramifications for potential projects and services that require consensus among municipalities in a scenario where a single municipality was unable to find consensus within its own representation.

COGs also responded that small towns and communities may be reluctant to continue their membership in an organization where state statute requires that their interests are overwhelmingly outnumbered by the interests of big cities. If the COGs were created to facilitate regional cooperation, smaller municipalities may withdraw if they do not feel their voices are being adequately heard. For example, in MetroCOG, the City of Bridgeport would carry a complete majority on its own. The remaining five towns affectively would have no power or say in the COG, and may find that it is no longer beneficial to maintain its membership in a COG. In this example, if only three towns withdrew from MetroCOG, the COG would cease to exist, as its membership would fall below the 60% threshold.

For these reasons, rather than make it mandatory across all COGs, it may make more sense to provide COGs with the option of increased membership for larger municipalities. Another option is to utilize special acts similar to what was done in 1973 with the City of Hartford and CRCOG.

**Question 2: Should each additional representative be appointed by the chief executive officer of such member or in the manner provided by ordinance of the legislative body of such member?**

Any change in the makeup of COG membership as described in the mandatory proportional voting proposal should avoid further change in the structure and role of COGs. As COGs were created to act as municipal CEO member organizations, any additional representatives from a municipality should be appointed by the municipal chief executive officer.

**Question 3: Should each additional representative of a member be entitled to one vote in the affairs of such council?**

If additional representatives are added to the council as part of a mandatory proportional voting scheme, each additional representative should be entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council. There should not be different sets of rules for representatives of each city if mandatory proportional voting is imposed. Because COGs identified difficulty achieving consensus as a potential consequence of the mandatory proportional voting proposal, any change that may further disrupt the council's ability to achieve consensus and foster collaboration should not be imposed by the state. All representatives on the council should hold the same responsibilities and be equally accountable to the residents of their individual municipalities for decisions made by the council.

**Conclusion**

Based on the survey results and the outcome of Special Act 73-79, mandatory proportional voting does not appear to serve the interests of COGs that must function through consensus building. The issues identified above raise concerns about the role and existence of COGs moving forward if proportional voting were to ever be mandated.

If the General Assembly is interested in considering other options beyond that which was the subject of this report, OPM recommends that any such options be limited to considerations of voluntary authorizations for COGs. For example, any proposals to authorize either proportional or weighted voting should provide COGs the ability to delineate, through their bylaws, the circumstances under which such alternative voting would be allowed. Such voluntary authorization could be accomplished either comprehensively by amending C.G.S. Sec. 4-124k, or on a case-by-case basis by special act.

## Appendix A

### *RiverCOG*

1. How would any potential increase in the number of representatives affect the council's ability to achieve a quorum and to conduct its business?

RiverCOG is unaffected by this proposal. However, I think the definition of a quorum in statute or COG bylaws should be representation of a majority of member municipalities, not just the presence of a majority of voting members.

2. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it optional for your council to allow additional representatives, based on each member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, for what types of purposes do you think that option might be utilized?

I believe that additional seats for larger municipalities should be more symbolic, than proportional. The precedent of Hartford is a good one to follow. They are entitled to more seats, but they chose not to use them. Also the four seats Hartford currently is eligible to fill, is fewer than the seven provided by the proposal.

3. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it mandatory for your council to allow additional representatives, based on the member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, do you think it would have an effect on the council's overall membership going forward?

If central cities start using their additional votes, particularly in split or controversial votes, smaller municipalities may choose not to participate in the COG. At the same time, some larger cities have poor COG meeting attendance, so there may be limited impact.

4. Given the uncertain role of COGs in the future construct of Connecticut's MPOs, how might either the optional or mandatory scenario from questions 2 and 3 above influence (or not) MPO governance?

The MPOs hosted by COGs are not bound to follow the same state statutes or bylaws as the COG. In fact, MPO membership at RiverCOG is different that COG membership. Our two transit districts and our chamber of commerce have votes on the MPO, but do not have a vote on the COG. The MPO could adopt its own bylaws and rules for who is voting member of the MPO policy board.

5. In your opinion, will existing or potential future regional shared services efforts be affected positively or negatively by either scenarios 2 or 3 above, relative to the current one member, one vote requirement?

Although RiverCOG is not affected directly by this proposal, proportional voting in other COGs may make it more difficult to convince smaller municipalities to regionalize services. Once

again, the governance of regional shared services does not necessarily have to follow the COG statute.

## **CRCOG**

1. How would any potential increase in the number of representatives affect the council's ability to achieve a quorum and to conduct its business?

This would considerably affect our ability to achieve a quorum. Hartford currently has two additional representatives and usually sends only 1 representative, if any. Requiring Hartford and New Britain to send an additional staff would be a burden on Hartford and New Britain and would affect CRCOG's ability to do business.

CRCOG would have to modify its bylaws and quorum requirements in order to accommodate for the additional representatives.

2. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it optional for your council to allow additional representatives, based on each member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, for what types of purposes do you think that option might be utilized?

CRCOG already has a modified version of this in place wherein Hartford has 3 additional representatives on the board but does not utilize the additional members. As a consensus organization, CRCOG rarely does anything without consensus and sometimes will not do things that have minority dissension. Additional representatives would not affect how CRCOG conducts its business and we do not see an occasion when additional representatives would be utilized.

3. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it mandatory for your council to allow additional representatives, based on the member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, do you think it would have an effect on the council's overall membership going forward?

CRCOG sees this as potentially having a negative impact on our membership. As a consensus organization, if the municipalities with additional representatives were to use the additional representatives to push through initiatives that may be controversial or divisive, the cooperative and collaborative environment that CRCOG has created over many years would begin to break down and severely affect CRCOG's ability to work effectively.

4. Given the uncertain role of COGs in the future construct of Connecticut's MPOs, how might either the optional or mandatory scenario from questions 2 and 3 above influence (or not) MPO governance?

CRCOG believes this would only serve to complicate MPO governance. Although MPOs hosted by COGs are not required to follow the same state statutes or COG bylaws and could adopt its own bylaws, consistency across MPOs and COGs would be helpful to avoid confusion by the towns regarding membership in either MPOs or COGs.

5. In your opinion, will existing or potential future regional shared services efforts be affected positively or negatively by either scenarios 2 or 3 above, relative to the current one member, one vote requirement?

As stated previously, CRCOG does not have one member, one vote membership, as Hartford has a three additional votes. If Hartford, New Britain and West Hartford member numbers are increased, CRCOG does not see positive affects in regional shared services efforts.

- 1) Everything CRCOG does is already by consensus. Adding additional members would not add value to the consensus process
- 2) Proportional voting will only serve to marginalize smaller communities, the very communities who need COG's assistance in standing up shared services

### ***Southeastern CT Council of Governments***

While the potential change to the statutes would not currently impact us (no towns over 50,000 people), I think it would be very bad law. Our small towns now participate as equal partners with our cities, and they might not do so if larger municipalities were provided more representation/votes. In fact, our smaller town CEOs have been some of our best leaders and participants, and I fear this would not be the case if non-chief elected officials were allowed to sit regularly and vote on COG matters.

Finally, and as I have emailed Dan Morley, I do not wish to see this change forced down our throats. If the statute has to be changed, I would hope that it would be made voluntary and leave it up to each COG how it wants their members to be represented. Below are my responses to your specific questions.

1. Would not impact us as we consistently have 17-18 of our municipalities represented at our monthly COG meetings. However, if the contemplated were to become law and if it ever applied to us, then I fear it might discourage members from smaller towns to attend.
2. I do not think our membership would ever opt to allow additional membership from larger towns for any reason.
3. See response to #1 above. I think the smaller towns having only their CEO as representative would stop coming to meetings, and even withdrawing from the COG.
4. MPOs are governed by federal transportation rules and regulations and should not be impacted. I also do not believe that we will see change in our MPO structure in the immediate future, as the COG/MPOs are not going to allow that to happen.
5. Negatively. Towns with only one representative on the COG will band together to thwart/resist the shared services efforts of larger towns. This would be bad public policy having bad consequences if it is made law.

### ***Northwest Hills Council of Governments***

- 1) No impact as we are not directly impacted.
- 2) Only to secure more voting power for the larger towns, which would serve to undermine the spirit of cooperation that now exists with the one town, one vote consensus building policy.
- 3) No, unless neighboring towns now within larger COGs wished to join our rural COG.
- 4) Not applicable as our towns are not served by a MPO.
- 5) Probably not.

## *MetroCOG*

1. How would any potential increase in the number of representatives affect the council's ability to achieve a quorum and to conduct its business?

This would have a significant effect on the ability to achieve a quorum as the majority of the board would be from a single municipality and given that it is still not 100% clear how the additional representatives would be appointed, any meeting could require 9 separate City staff/appointees to attend a meeting.

2. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it optional for your council to allow additional representatives, based on each member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, for what types of purposes do you think that option might be utilized?

Currently, our board works very cooperatively making decisions that are beneficial for both individual municipalities and the region as a whole. Even if this was amended to be optional, I believe the fact that proportional voting could be enacted at any point would significantly hinder the strong regional partnership our agency has created within the Greater Bridgeport region.

3. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it mandatory for your council to allow additional representatives, based on the member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, do you think it would have an effect on the council's overall membership going forward?

If this statute were amended to make mandatory a system of proportional voting it would significantly affect the organization and its future membership. Under this proposal the City of Bridgeport would carry a complete majority for the region (10 votes out of 15) making the 5 remaining members effectively obsolete. Under this scenario, there would be very little reason for these municipalities to continue their membership in an organization where they have no say.

4. Given the uncertain role of COGs in the future construct of Connecticut's MPOs, how might either the optional or mandatory scenario from questions 2 and 3 above influence (or not) MPO governance?

MPO governance and COG governance are two completely separate issues governed by separate by-laws and regulatory authority. The GBVMPO has 10 member municipalities and 2 transit district chair votes. Furthermore, the COG and MPO boundaries are not coincidental so the effect of proportional COG voting would no impact on MPO governance. However, given the fact that COGs and MPO are closely aligned, the effect of proportional COG voting could greatly affect the operation of a federally designated governing body.

5. In your opinion, will existing or potential future regional shared services efforts be affected positively or negatively by either scenarios 2 or 3 above, relative to the current one member, one vote requirement?

Yes, I believe any amendment to the current COG voting structure would significantly reduce existing and future regional shared services. Under the current statutes, each COG member has one vote and therefore each member has the ability to play a major part in the direction and regional services provided by the COG and its staff. Under either scenario, 5 of the 6 members would be devoid of any authority over the COG and therefore would likely see less value in dedicating time and energy to working the organization.

Please provide any additional comments that you feel relate to this study.

I will not speak for other regions, but at MetroCOG, we enjoy a very cooperative environment among all member municipalities. There has been considerable work done by the previous Executive Director to ensure that the goals and objectives of each municipality are addressed through regional programs. I believe proportional voting would significantly reduce this regional cooperation/collaboration and negatively affect all 6 municipalities and the region as a whole. To that end, I would adamantly oppose additional voting representatives as it would undermine our technical advisory structure and lead to unbalanced cooperation among municipalities. Our board has found the equally weighted voting to be one of the biggest assets of our organization as it fosters respect and mutual collaboration among all municipal leaders.

### ***SCRCOG – South Central Regional Council of Governments***

1. How would any potential increase in the number of representatives affect the council's ability to achieve a quorum and to conduct its business?

SCRCOG monthly meetings reliably draw 12 or more of our 15 CEO members. I am skeptical that non-CEO members would be as diligent in their attendance, so it could very likely cause problems with the ability to achieve a quorum for our meetings. If enhanced representation of larger municipalities created a situation where a majority of votes was concentrated in one, two or three municipalities, and this developed into a pattern of voting over time, I would envision a situation where there would be a disincentive for smaller communities to attend.

2. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it optional for your council to allow additional representatives, based on each member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, for what types of purposes do you think that option might be utilized?

SCRCOG has operating very effectively on a one vote per municipality for over 50 years. The municipal members thoroughly understand their roles as being part of a regional assemblage and they vote on the basis of what is best for the region. They check their individual interests at the door and always have. All municipal members are aware of, and take into account, the importance of the central city and the different sizes of the municipalities when making distributive decisions. I do not think that SCRCOG members would vote to allow additional representatives for any purpose, because the long history of one vote per municipality has worked so well in all circumstances.

3. If CGS Section 4-124k was ever amended to make it mandatory for your council to allow additional representatives, based on the member municipality's population, and that each additional representative was entitled to one vote in the affairs of the council, do you think it would have an effect on the council's overall membership going forward?

If the municipalities with larger populations and greater voting power were to start using their additional votes to favor their own municipal interests, the entire atmosphere of regional cooperation and doing what is best for the region at our SCRCOG meetings would be destroyed. Where now the COG functions as a regional body, operating on the basis of consensus and regional fairness, proportional voting would likely unleash parochial and individual interests that would be counterproductive and divisive to the region.

4. Given the uncertain role of COGs in the future construct of Connecticut's MPOs, how might either the optional or mandatory scenario from questions 2 and 3 above influence (or not) MPO governance?

It is vitally important that the COG be composed of the chief elected officials of each municipality. If additional representatives were to be permitted from certain larger municipalities, the SCRCOG meeting would no longer be a meeting of municipal CEOs exclusively. The municipal CEOs represent the entire interest of their municipality and are authorized to represent their municipalities vis-à-vis the other municipalities in the region. Adding non-CEO representatives who would have equal votes as those of the CEOs of smaller municipalities will destroy the cohesiveness of the group and will empower staff representatives who are not elected and who do not represent the entire interests of their respective municipalities.

5. In your opinion, will existing or potential future regional shared services efforts be affected positively or negatively by either scenarios 2 or 3 above, relative to the current one member, one vote requirement?

Proportional voting in SCRCOG may make it more difficult to convince smaller municipalities to regionalize services. The current system of one vote for municipality works as well in the shared services arena as it does in the other areas of SCRCOG voting and governance. As a Mayor (Hamden, 1999-2005), and as Executive Director (2010-current), I have witnessed a very effective, regional interest-driven, consensus and fairness-driven SCRCOG membership assemble each month to discuss and vote and ultimately do what is right for our region. It would be a shame to destroy the effectiveness of this system by trying to fix something that is in no way broken. The current voting system encourages consensus decision-making, and that is a real positive for the region.