

From: [David @ Eyes Of Steel](#)
To: [Shaw, Ramya](#); [Montalvo, Barbara](#); [Board of Representatives](#); [Morson, Eric](#); [BOR AllReps](#)
Subject: Request for Board Action on Ordinance 1321 — A Critical Moment for the New Term
Date: Friday, December 5, 2025 10:54:51 PM

Dear President Shaw, Majority Leader Morson and to the other Members of the 32nd Board of Representatives,

Congratulations on the beginning of a new term. I hope each of you enters this session with a strong sense of purpose, commitment and pride in serving the residents of Stamford. The Board of Representatives is the institution people rely on most to protect their welfare, uphold ethical governance and act when the moment requires courage.

My name is David Michel and am a Stamford resident (Rockledge Drive) and a former CT State Rep from January 2019 to January 2025.

As you know, Ordinance 1321 — regulating the sale of dogs and cats in pet shops — passed the previous Board with overwhelming bipartisan support, 35 yes votes, one no and one abstention. That level of unity was rare, and it reflected something deeper than ordinary policy debates: a clear consensus that Stamford should not participate in the cruelty pipeline that funnels animals from mass-breeding facilities into our community.

The recent mayoral veto places this new Board at a defining crossroads. The reasons cited in the veto statement are framed as legal barriers, yet the underlying conflict is not legal, but political. The ordinance was crafted upon the same combination of municipal authorities that Stamford has used for years to enact environmental protections, business regulations, public-health rules and consumer-protection measures. These include the city's authority to prevent cruelty, regulate the keeping of animals, regulate businesses that pose health or fraud risks and enact ordinances in furtherance of these powers under §7-148.

None of these statutes prohibit the City of Stamford from acting.

The suggestion that municipal regulation in this area is “preempted” simply does not align with the text of state law or with long-standing municipal practice. Stamford has previously enacted ordinances stronger than state law — including our plastic-bag ordinance — without facing preemption. The difference today is not statutory language. It is political pressure from the Department of Agriculture, an agency that, as many advocates across the state have already noted, has repeatedly opposed reforms in animal-welfare policy.

Supporting statewide legislation does not prevent Stamford from leading locally. Municipal leadership is often what breaks stalemates at the Capitol, not the other way around.

Members of the previous Board strongly expressed that if the ordinance were challenged in court, they would welcome the opportunity to defend it. Legal support was offered by national organizations. The will of Stamford residents remains overwhelmingly united behind the ordinance. And in neighboring Danbury, where public outrage emerged after the opening of a puppy-mill-connected pet shop, officials are now exploring the same type of legislation Stamford just passed.

If Danbury moves forward while Stamford retreats, the message will be unmistakable.

This is not the legacy Stamford should choose.

As representatives, you now carry the responsibility to decide whether this ordinance — passed with overwhelming public support and near-unanimous legislative support — should stand. The charter provides you with the authority to override a veto when necessary to defend the public interest. That threshold exists precisely for moments like this, when the legislative and executive branches diverge in vision and values.

I urge you respectfully to place the veto of Ordinance 1321 on your agenda and allow a vote to override it. Doing so would honor the work of the previous Board, respect the overwhelming will of residents, protect consumers, safeguard animal welfare and ensure Stamford does not cede its leadership on an issue where communities across the state are now looking to us.

More importantly, it would affirm that the Board — as an independent and coequal branch of government — will act when the public interest requires action. This early test can set the tone for the next four years, demonstrating that the Board will stand with residents, not with pressures exerted from outside Stamford.

I believe strongly that each of you has the capacity to lead with integrity, compassion and courage. Stamford is watching, and so are communities across Connecticut. I hope you will rise to this moment.

Thank you for your service and for considering this request.

Respectfully,

David Michel

Former Rep. Michel (he/him) 2019-25

Proud to have represented Stamford's Downtown, Shippan, and the South End,

Former Assistant Majority Whip

Former Co-Chair of the Connecticut Animal Advocacy Caucus

Former Member (& Proponent) of the Offshore Wind Commission for Environmental Standards

Former Member of the Environment - Planning & Development - Public Health - & Transportation Committees

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From: [David @ Eyes Of Steel](#)
To: [BOR AllReps](#)
Subject: Fwd: Committee Consolidation or Civic Erosion, What Is Stamford Really Being Asked to Accept
Date: Friday, December 5, 2025 11:28:56 PM

FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **David @ Eyes Of Steel** <davidmichel74@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 2:09 PM
Subject: Committee Consolidation or Civic Erosion, What Is Stamford Really Being Asked to Accept
To: Ramya Shaw <rshaw@stamfordct.gov>, Morson, Eric <emorson@stamfordct.gov>, Board of Representatives <bdreps@stamfordct.gov>
Cc: Montalvo, Barbara <bmontalvo@stamfordct.gov>

Honorable President Shaw, Majority Leader Morson, and Members of the 32nd Board of Representatives,

Congratulations on the formation of the new Board. I hope your term reflects genuine transparency, a commitment to fairness, and a strong respect for the independence of Stamford's legislative branch.

I am writing with deep concern regarding the stated intention to consolidate the Education Committee, the State and Commerce Committee, and the Housing, Social Services and Community Development Committee into one body. These three committees have entirely separate cognizances and statutory responsibilities. Combining them would impair their ability to function and diminish essential oversight that Stamford residents depend on.

The Education Committee has clear roles that are not redundant to the Board of Education. It provides legislative oversight of school construction contracts, appropriations, academic programs, and internal structures. It reviews Board of Education policies from the standpoint of the legislative branch, not as an extension of school administration. Stamford's school system is facing overcrowding and aging infrastructure, and this independent oversight is crucial.

The State and Commerce Committee should be one of the busiest committees during the Connecticut legislative session. It should meet regularly with our state delegation, review proposed bills, communicate municipal priorities, and ensure that constituent voices are represented by legislators, not only filtered through the Executive Branch. During my years in Hartford, I experienced firsthand how communication between Stamford and the state delegation often went solely through the Executive Branch, which did not always reflect the perspectives of the people most affected. This committee is essential to restoring legislative balance.

The Housing, Social Services and Community Development Committee is already responsible for three overloaded cognizances. With Stamford's rapid growth, housing oversight alone demands a dedicated committee, especially since Stamford lacks an independent Housing

Commission and many housing concerns remain unresolved despite official assurances. Social services require focused policymaking, and CDBG and HOME fund oversight is a full workload. This committee should be expanded, not merged into a mega structure where none of its responsibilities will receive adequate attention.

Legislative bodies create separate committees to ensure independence, prevent conflicts of interest, and preserve the integrity of policymaking. The public deserves to know who initiated this consolidation proposal and why. Stamford has seen a long term pattern in which both the Executive Branch and the Democratic City Committee prioritize development agendas over addressing constituent issues. Weakening legislative oversight through committee consolidation aligns too closely with that pattern.

Assigning identical membership to all three committees and using that alignment to justify merging them is a reversal of proper governance logic. Legislative structure should follow civic purpose, not convenience or political alignment.

Before pursuing any changes, the Board must hold a public discussion, publish its rationale, and invite testimony from educators, state policy experts, housing advocates, social service providers, and residents. Anything less risks being seen as misgovernance within the earliest days of the new Board.

Stamford needs a legislative branch that strengthens oversight, not one that dilutes it. I urge you to reconsider this consolidation for the sake of institutional integrity and public trust.

Respectfully,

David Michel

P.S. Hello Barbara Montalvo, may you please ensure the whole board receives this email?
thank you in advance

David Michel
Stamford CT 06902

[David Michel, Author at CT Examiner](#)

[Former Rep David Michel | Substack](#)

[National Lawyers Guild Legal Observer](#)

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