

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Rep. Godfrey, Sen. Bye Hold Forum on Future of CT-N

State **Rep. Bob Godfrey** (D-Danbury) and state **Sen. Beth Bye** (D-West Hartford) hosted an informational forum Monday on the status of the Connecticut Network (CT-N), which provides limited livestreaming of some state government proceedings.

After CT-N's budget was halved from \$2.4 million to \$1.2 million in 2017, and the General Assembly insisted on having program control, the Connecticut Public Affairs Network (CPAN), which had operated CT-N since its creation in 1999, announced that they could not continue operating within the laws governing non-profit organizations. Legally, non-profits cannot be run by governments. CPAN ceased operating CT-N in November 2017. CT-N is currently being managed by the legislature's Office of Legislative Management.

Since the transition, CT-N has stopped providing off-site coverage of government events outside the Capitol complex and reduced coverage of executive and judicial branch proceedings.

"CT-N played an important role in making state government proceedings transparent and accessible to the public. The organization's current status falls far short of the mission those of us in the legislature envisioned when it was first created," **Rep. Godfrey** said. "CT-N should be independent from the legislature and other government bodies, and to achieve that we're going to have to fund it appropriately. I hope the forum will bring renewed attention to an issue that has fallen off the radar in recent months."

"What I heard today from the various stakeholders and users of CTN is that they value the mission of CTN to provide a window into Connecticut's democracy, and they want to ensure editorial control and independence for CTN along with an identified and ongoing funding stream to pay for their operations," said **Sen. Bye**. "The next step is to approach legislative leaders to see where we are in the request for proposals process to secure an independent, third-party group to run CTN."

Speakers included former state representative Brian Flaherty; David McGuire, Executive Director, CT ACLU; Cheri Quickmire, Common Cause; Jim Smith, Connecticut Foundation for Open Government and Connecticut Council of Freedom of Information; Jeff Shaw, Connecticut Non-Profit Alliance; Carolyn Reimers, League of Women Voters; Mike Savino, Society of Professional Journalists; Sheldon Toubman, New Haven Legal Assistance Association; and Pat Sheehan, Chairman, Connecticut Public Affairs Network.

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