

***Moccia, Herbst and Tetreau Statement on School Safety Following Winter Meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors***

**January 22, 2013** -- Norwalk Mayor Richard Moccia, Fairfield First Selectman Michael Tetreau and Trumbull First Selectman Timothy M. Herbst recently returned from Washington DC, where the three were among several Connecticut Mayors and First Selectmen to attend the United States Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting. Discussed at great length during the conference was the horrific tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut which claimed the lives of twenty children and six adults. The Fairfield County chief executives participated in a series of workshops that discussed enhanced school security measures. Also participating in the discussion was Bernard Melekian, Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Department of Justice and David Esquith, the Director of the Office of Safe and Healthy Students, Department of Education.

These roundtables were also conducted with municipal police chiefs and those that specialize in developing school security plans for individual schools and school districts. Among the many topics discussed was federal legislation that would provide local funding for school resource officers, more commonly known as SRO's. "This was a very important and productive meeting," stated Mayor Moccia. "As Connecticut municipal leaders we were able to meet with critical decision makers and offer our perspective as to what needs to be done to enhance and improve school security. We are hopeful that Congress will act to allocate funds for the COPS program and also for school resource officers. There can be no more important of a commitment of federal dollars than protecting our kids." Among the many issues discussed included the scope and depth of each emergency management plan, additional tools to provide to police officers in responding to emergencies where schools have an active shooter, better training for school officials and improved communication between local school districts and law enforcement about potential threats.

First Selectman Timothy Herbst indicated that information sharing is critical between local school districts and local law enforcement. He said he hopes that any federal legislation adopted by the Congress includes provisions that allow for more preventative and pro-active measures be undertaken before a threat materializes to the point of a deadly rampage like Sandy Hook. "We need to streamline the process for law enforcement and education officials to collaborate and share information about any potential dangers to the community or our schools. Making sure school buildings are absolutely safe at the same time we enact preventive measures that ensure that a risk does not rise to a fatal incident is a necessary bilateral approach that we must take." The First Selectman noted that the Town of Trumbull will have a gun, ammunition and violent video game turn in program this Saturday, January 26, 2013.

First Selectman Tetreau indicated that the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy hit very close to home and reinforced the need for local, state and federal officials to work in a bipartisan manner to develop a solution that keeps school children safe and prevents further school based tragedies from occurring. "Given the recent tragedy that occurred in neighboring Sandy Hook, it is important that communities work together to ensure our children's safety by making enhancements to school security and strengthening our emergency preparedness plans. We must also seek to support a ban on assault weapons and magazines along with universal background checks on all sales."