

Testimony  
Of  
John W. Shannahan  
Connecticut Preservation Action  
Before the Planning and Development Committee  
Public Hearing March 3, 2008

Senator Coleman, Representative Feltman and members of the Planning and Development Committee, my name is John W. Shannahan and I am providing testimony in opposition to raised bill No. 452, An Act Concerning Notification To Municipalities of Proposed Designation of Structures on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Between 1973 and 2003 I served as Director of the Connecticut Historical Commission and Connecticut's State Historic Preservation Officer, responsible for nominating properties to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Let me begin by explaining the differences between the State and National Register designations.

The State Register of Historic Places was established by an act of the Connecticut General Assembly in 1975 as a means of identifying significant historic properties in Connecticut based on the historic merits of the property and by removing politics from the process. The State Register designation is only honorary and does not restrict what an owner of property does with their property including demolition.

The National Register of Historic Places was established by Congress in 1966 and provides for a review process whenever a Federal project might have an impact on a National Register listed property or even for a property which is not listed on the National Register but may be eligible for listing on the National Register. In addition to providing for eligibility to apply for Federal tax credits and grants-in-aid, the listing also provides for some protection in accordance with the provisions of the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act C.G.S. Section 22a – 19a. All nominations to the National Register must be in compliance with Federal Regulations and most importantly must provide for owner objection when private property is being nominated.

In both of these programs numerous notices are provided to the affected municipalities of all proposed nominations. Also the State Historic Preservation Board holds a public hearing before taking action on all nominations.

In summary the existing state process in place for more than 30 years provides for notice to Connecticut's municipalities in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Finally, if it ain't broke don't fix it.

Thank you.