



State of Connecticut
Department of Economic and
Community Development

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSING COMMITTEE
February 19, 2009

Rick Robbins, Executive Director
Office of Housing Finance and Development
Department of Economic and Community Development

HB 6413 AN ACT REVISING CERTAIN HOUSING STATUTES

Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Green, and members of the Housing Committee. My name is Rick Robbins and I am the Executive Director of the Office of Housing and Finance Development at the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).

I am here this afternoon to offer comments in support of HB 6413, *An Act Revising Certain Housing Statutes*.

As the title implies, this bill is meant to address several technical issues in several different housing development statutes. These proposed changes will increase the efficiency and ease the implementation of impacted programs. I would like to briefly summarize the proposed changes.

Sections 1, 2 and 3 pertain to Housing Partnerships. We are requesting that Housing Partnerships be eligible applicants for our Resident Service Coordinator and our Congregate Housing programs. We are also requesting that Housing Partnerships be codified into the statutes as an eligible recipient for operating subsidies under the Congregate Housing Program similar to the provisions of the Elderly Housing programs. This will significantly reduce the administrative burden on both DECD and Partnerships since presently we must pass these funds through a third party such as a Housing Authority.

Section 4 deals with our database of available units suitable for persons with disabilities. Due to time constraints and DECD's inability to enforce these requirements, some of the required information cannot be practically maintained. This amendment will allow DECD to collect data "to the extent practicable".

Sections 5 to 9 deal with the Predevelopment Loan Program, the Housing Trust Fund Program, and the State-Assisted Housing Sustainability Fund. I know that Commissioner McDonald has met with the chairs on these proposals and there are several items that we will continue to work on with the Committee in order to provide clarification.

Knowing that, I would like to briefly comment on them.

Section 5 pertains to our Predevelopment Loan Program. Currently, the program is only open to non-profit developers. We would like to open this program up to allow all housing developers, both for-profit and non-profit, to qualify.

Sections 6, 7, and 8 all pertain to the Housing Trust Fund Program. Proposed changes include allowing 3rd party contract administrators to receive funding and also allowing for the receipt of funding from other sources. Our primary objective behind this change is to be prepared in case we received Federal Housing Trust Fund monies.

Section 9 amends the State-Assisted Housing Sustainability Fund to make the regulations permissive. Because the money has already been committed, we no longer need regulations and preparing them would be time consuming and financially burdensome to DECD.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments and we look forward to working with you.